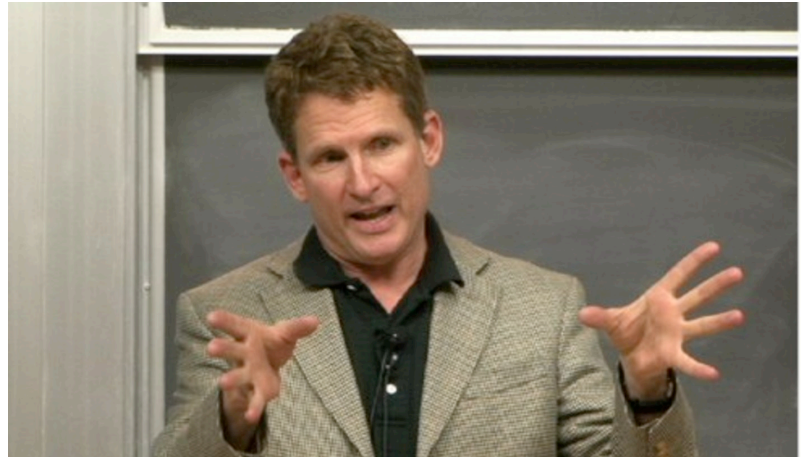


URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/hiring-the-best-in-human-resources>

Chairman and CEO of Pacific Biosciences Hugh Martin was quick to hire a top-notch VP of Human Resources - despite the strong objection of his board and his investors. Martin stands behind his unusual decision, and largely credits it with the company's success. PacBio's need to hire and integrate a highly-skilled workforce in a short period of time mandated the resources, says Martin, who hired over 1200 people in three years - many of whom were lured from the field's largest competitors.



Transcript

So with ONI, I founded it, I was the CEO and the president, and we started this company in 1998.. It was a metropolitan area telecommunications company.. We built long-haul telecom gear and there were a number of things that we did that caused that company to be remarkably successful.. In fact, the board would many times say to me, "Hugh, this is the most complicated company we've ever been involved in, but you make very, very few mistakes.. Why is that?" It's because in all these other three companies I just described, I either made the mistakes or seen the mistakes of many other people and if you learned from those, it turns out that you can do a great job.. So here are some of the things that I think we did well at ONI.. First, over the board's strong objections, the second executive that I hired after the VP of Development was the VP of HR.. So employee number six was the Vice President of HR.. Most executives and boards think you've hired HR way down the road when you need to manage benefits and so on and so forth.. We had to hire a tremendous number of people very, very quickly..

We had to integrate them and we had to make the company work.. And the woman that we hired to be the VP of HR was masterful at this.. For instance, we had to hire a whole cadre of optical engineers, people who actually knew what a photon was and how to manipulate it.. At that time, there were very few of those in Silicon Valley.. So she decided that we were going to go to Nortel in Ottawa and we were going to right in as she said to the belly of the beast so she made a reservation for us and she and I went up to - I forget the name of the hotel, it looks like a castle.. And I lived in this hotel for four days and with a steady stream of Nortel people that we invited in to come join us.. From those four days, we hired 35 people from Nortel.. Over the life of the company, we hired 125 people out of Nortel in Ottawa and Montreal and we moved them all to Silicon Valley.. And primarily, because this VP of HR was so focused on building a team.. To give you an idea, I joined in 1998 in January as employee number two, and three years later in February of 2001, we had 1200 employees worldwide..

So that's 1200 people hired in three years, and that's what can happen if you have a VP of HR who understands the hiring process and knows organically how to grow a company...