

INTERNAL PROMOTIONS ARE A HARD CHOICE



Promotions especially internal ones are very difficult. We hear always “I don’t want to promote someone just because they’ve been with the company forever”.

“I want to use this opportunity to really assess whether they are ready for more responsibility and to help the employee realize what this means for them, for my department and my company”.

We all agree a promotion should be the result of dialogue between the employer and the employee, and it should be handled something like a job interview. Of course, you know a lot more about an existing employee than you do someone applying for a job. But I agree that you should not waste the opportunity to help your employee step up to the challenge that a promotion really is. This should be a bit of a test where the employee demonstrates what they can do.

Follow your instincts by considering how this person has performed in the company. You should base the promotion on your estimate of how they will perform going forward, on the specific tasks and objectives they will soon face.

It’s no easy task for a manager to decide who is worth promoting. It’s always risky to assign additional responsibilities or authority to an employee: Will he/she lighten the manager’s load or just add to it?

I think there’s a simple initial test for promotion ability, though you should consider other factors and criteria that make sense to you. My goal with this method is to stimulate a dialogue between you and

the employee that will help you decide — and that will also help the employee grasp the importance of new responsibilities and authority.

This is based on the idea that the farther up the ladder a person goes, the more impact (positive or negative) they can have on the company. This test has two parts.

First, ask the employee to explain (a) how his/her current job contributes to the company's profits.

Second, ask (c) what three things has he/she has done in their current job to optimize profits and (d) what three things they would do in the "next job up the ladder" to optimize profits.

Remember your goal is to get the best work out of them that you can. That makes you a mentor and a guide. If the employee fails, you fail. So, you must do everything you can to help the employee at getting promoted, just as a normal boss does to help an employee to get their work done effectively every day.

The two challenges above must be "open-book test" and you must give the employee adequate time to respond. You must be ready and able to answer any questions they have as they prepare their responses.