

Developing a culture fit: more than just who you hire

Issued by [Ackermans](#)

13 Feb 2019

Given that a healthy culture is what keeps us engaged at our place of work and offers employees a deep sense of purpose, job satisfaction and belonging, it makes sense that many companies are concerned with hiring for a cultural fit.

However, the challenge with recruiting for a culture fit, says Saleemah Salie, HR Manager: Operations at Ackermans, is that “it is all too easy for recruiters and line managers to fall into the trap of assessing ‘fit’ based on whether or not the candidate is someone they could see themselves getting along with”.

However, recruiting for a culture fit is so much more than just that. “It’s about assessing compatibility and an individual’s potential, along with the value they could bring.”

‘Culture fit’ does not mean ‘company mould’

“Care needs to be taken to educate those responsible for recruitment that ‘culture fit’ doesn’t necessarily mean the candidate should be a clone of other employees, or even that a candidate’s personal ‘brand’ should replicate that of the company. Diversity in the workplace is critical and adds its own flavour to culture.

“For example, consider a clothing retail brand that is regarded as fashion-forward, dynamic and youthful. There would be great benefit in hiring and developing a culture that is inclusive of young, trendy employees who relate well to the market segment as well as experienced retailers in fashion, who are knowledgeable and have proven insight into the commercial mechanics of sales and trade in the industry. A healthy culture is inclusive and diverse, with the right people in the right roles.”

At Ackermans, South Africa’s leading value retailer with over 10,000 employees, care is taken to identify candidates whose core values are congruent with the company’s own. “We look for individuals who are comfortable being part of a team, and who are delivery-orientated. We seek out those who we believe will contribute to the success of the business through their approach to problem-solving, skills or experience.”

Culture is a two-way process

“Whilst it is true that one of the things we look for is ‘brand fit’ and whether a prospective candidate would thrive in our environment and resonate with our company values and ethos; we also understand that it’s a two-way process. Just as we are trying to establish whether the candidate would be a good fit, so too must the candidate decide whether our business is a place where they can be successful.”

It’s important to hire candidates who will add value to the business, but Salie believes that it is also equally – if not more – important for a company to be focused on the value it adds to employees.

“We understand that not every employee we bring on board will be an automatic or immediate fit, but with our purposeful focus on each employee’s potential and through supporting their development, the fit starts to feel far more comfortable, for both parties.”

Because our employees come together through shared purpose, values and behaviour in order to successfully drive and entrench culture, Salie says that a business should start by assessing its own contribution to the lives of its staff members. “You cannot expect your employees to advance your company culture, if your business does not actively practice and demonstrate its values through the role it plays in employees’ lives.”

Advancing culture through employee-centricity

“We ask, what are we doing to grow and develop employees holistically – not only in a key skill set? How are we ensuring that every single employee – across every one of our 700 plus stores – believes in our purpose and feels part of something bigger?”

“We strive to contribute to the success of our employees’ lives as well as their current and future careers – even if we are not going to be part of it forever. Culture is a long term commitment for us and this includes our staff members’ future success and wellbeing”.

Instilling culture throughout the business – especially one as large as Ackermans – is not something that happens by chance; it is intentional and purposeful, and led by the company’s internal values.

“We work hard to ensure that every employee, whether based in a smaller rural store, a Distribution or Support Centre, has the same experience of our culture.” The retailer regularly runs internal initiatives which transcend location bringing individuals together through common experiences.

“Ultimately, a healthy, sustainable company culture is one that embraces among those who make up the workforce, as well as one where responsibility is shared equally between the business and employees to drive the permeation of culture throughout the organisation,” concludes Salie.

About Ackermans:

With over 700 stores nationwide, Ackermans is a leading South African value retailer and stockist of affordable family clothing, footwear, general goods, cellular and value-added services. Call the Customer Care line on 0860 900 100 or (International) +27 (0) 21 928 1040 or visit www.ackermans.co.za for any queries.

▪ **Ackermans a cut above for quality kids' denim** 29 Jul 2022

▪ **Textile waste recycled into building blocks** 12 Jul 2022

▪ **Mix and match with tracksuit options from Ackermans** 16 Mar 2022

▪ **Ackermans' new activewear range sprints ahead** 15 Mar 2022

▪ **Get straight A's with Ackermans** 13 Jan 2022

Ackermans

ACKERMANS

Ackermans' success story began in 1916 when Gus Ackerman opened the very first store in Wynberg, Cape Town, setting a benchmark for competitive prices that few could match. Today, with more than 380 outlets in Southern Africa, including Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, the business continues to go from strength to strength. Ackermans' proud heritage was built by focusing on the things that matter most to our customers; namely affordability, fashion and durability.

[Profile](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [RSS Feed](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>