



# The Talent eQuation

Selecting Elite Talent

# Who's the BEST?

This age old question spurs personal and professional debate across a wide range of categories. Members of the eQ team recently convened to ponder the following question:

***What or whom comes to mind when you think about the most elite and high performing teams, groups, or companies across any category?***

Interestingly, the majority of those in attendance provided the same answer:

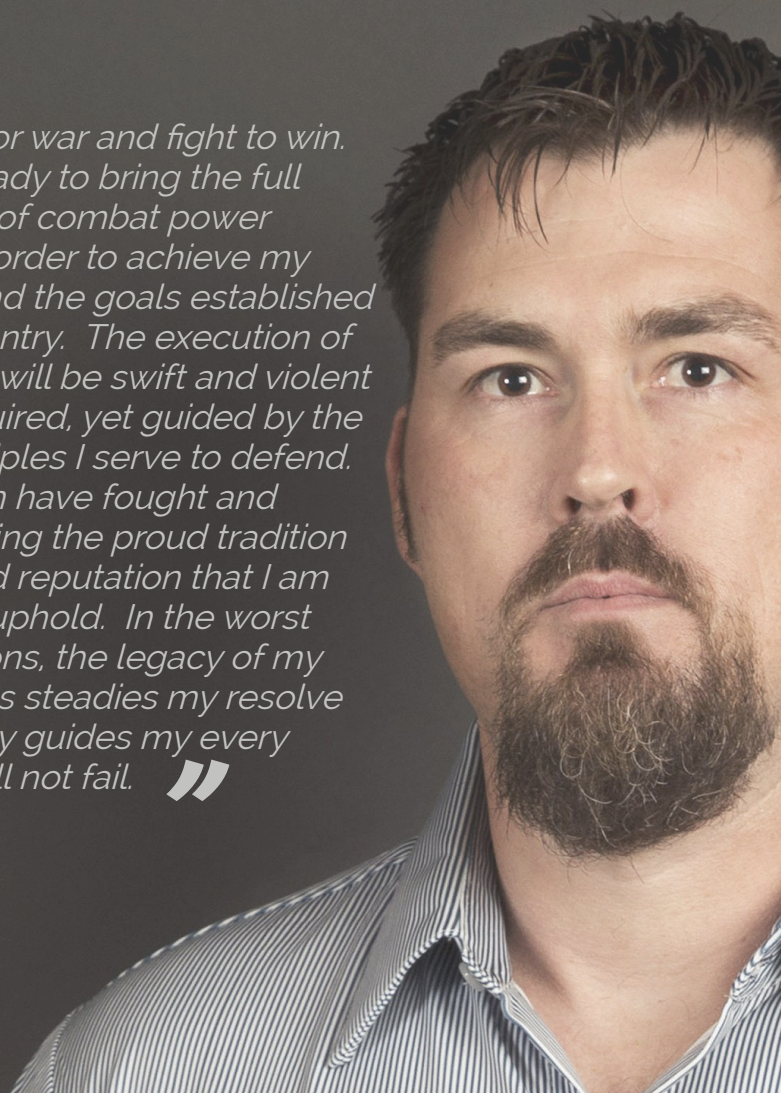
## THE NAVY SEALS



Hard to argue with that choice, right? Recent news and media attention only serve to remind us of the elite nature of this amazing team through the accounts from former Navy SEALs as described and depicted in books and movies like Lone Survivor and Zero Dark Thirty.

This powerful excerpt from the official U.S. Navy SEAL philosophy, as provided by Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell in his book, Lone Survivor, provides insight into the gravity of the SEAL mission:

*“ We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required, yet guided by the very principles I serve to defend. Brave men have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I am bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail. ”*





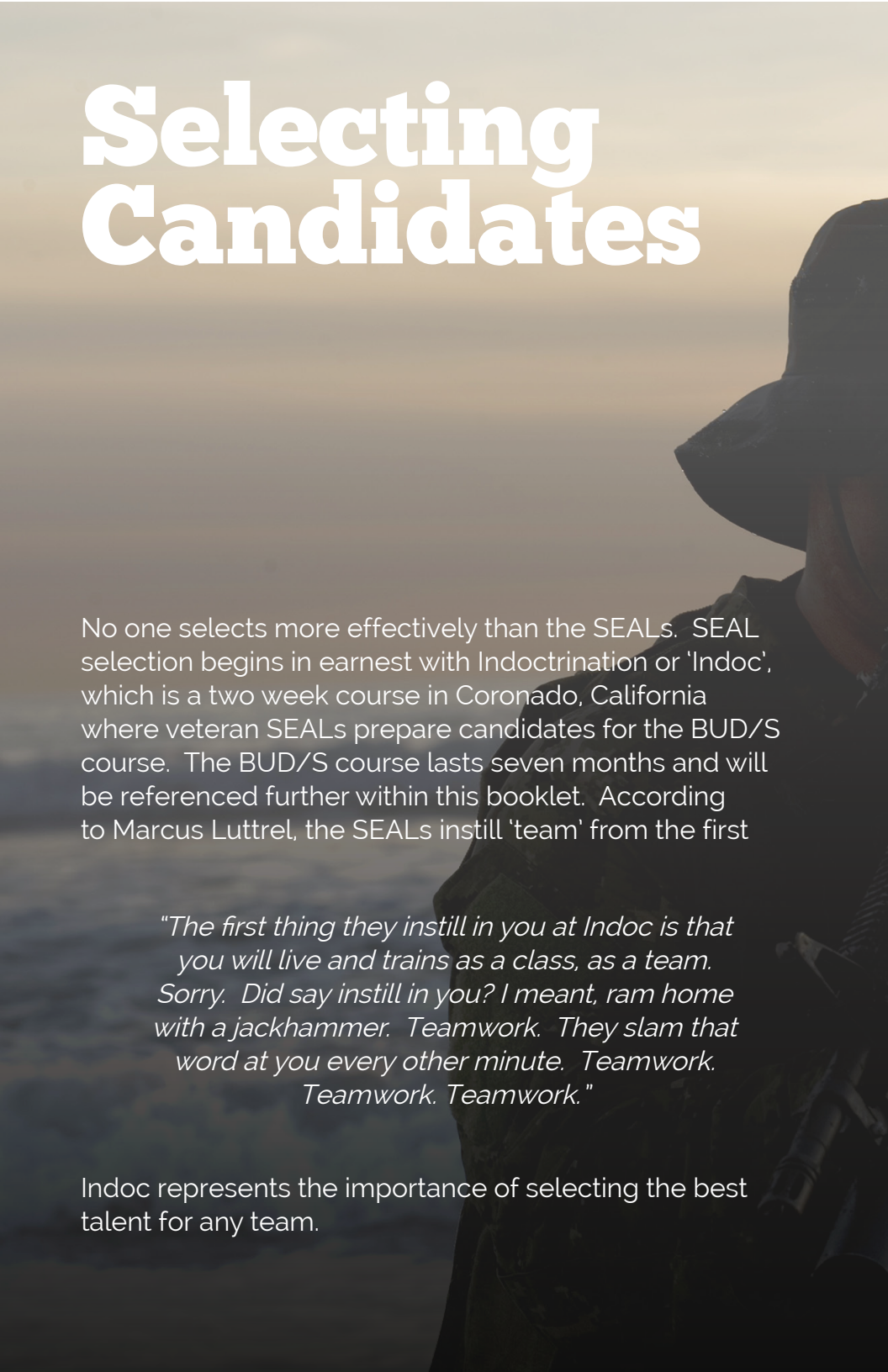
**H**ow does an organization select talent to meet such a lofty and noble standard? No organization can create an environment like the SEALs' Indoctrination and Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) process, as more fully developed on the following page, but that should not prevent an organization from developing its own best practice approach to talent selection.



**So...**

how ready is  
your company to  
fill key positions  
with **ELITE**  
talent?

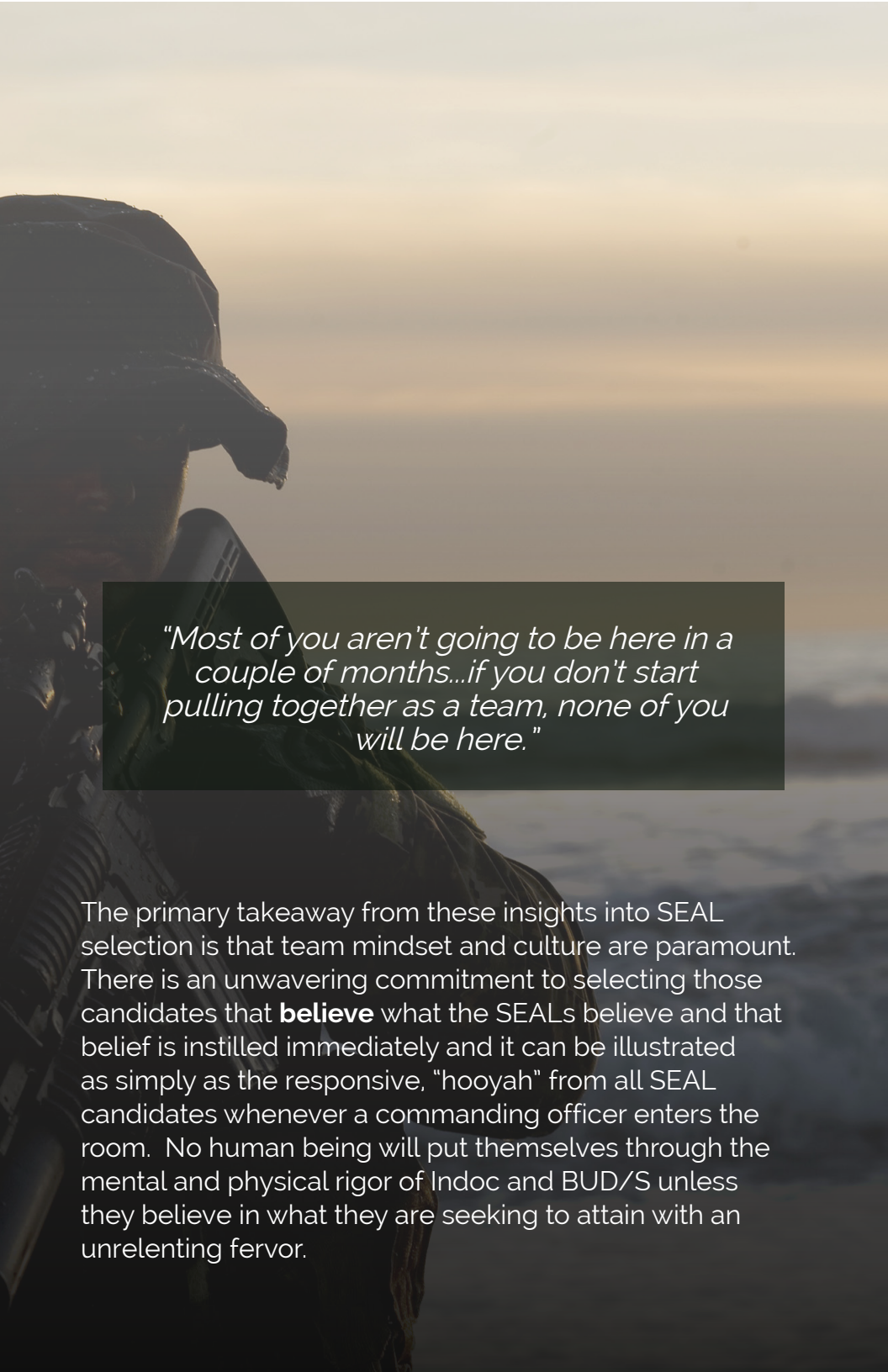
# Selecting Candidates

A silhouette of a person wearing a bucket hat, likely a SEAL, is visible on the right side of the image. The background is a soft, hazy sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon.

No one selects more effectively than the SEALs. SEAL selection begins in earnest with Indoctrination or 'Indoc', which is a two week course in Coronado, California where veteran SEALs prepare candidates for the BUD/S course. The BUD/S course lasts seven months and will be referenced further within this booklet. According to Marcus Luttrell, the SEALs instill 'team' from the first

*"The first thing they instill in you at Indoc is that you will live and trains as a class, as a team. Sorry. Did say instill in you? I meant, ram home with a jackhammer. Teamwork. They slam that word at you every other minute. Teamwork. Teamwork. Teamwork."*

Indoc represents the importance of selecting the best talent for any team.



*"Most of you aren't going to be here in a couple of months...if you don't start pulling together as a team, none of you will be here."*

The primary takeaway from these insights into SEAL selection is that team mindset and culture are paramount. There is an unwavering commitment to selecting those candidates that **believe** what the SEALs believe and that belief is instilled immediately and it can be illustrated as simply as the responsive, "hooyah" from all SEAL candidates whenever a commanding officer enters the room. No human being will put themselves through the mental and physical rigor of Indoc and BUD/S unless they believe in what they are seeking to attain with an unrelenting fervor.


# A Better Approach

Talent is not a commodity.

Talent is fundamental to growth and high performance. Anyone can find candidates, but not every organization understands a common definition of what 'good' is in their organization, how to create an outcomes-based approach to selection, why a particular position exists or the science behind selecting the best talent to ensure high performance. It is settled that companies that integrate and align business strategies with talent management deliver higher shareholder value. In other words, those with the best alignment had significantly higher financial performance than those that did not.

## How can organizations select elite talent?





An effective talent selection process ensures that your talent strategies support, and align with, your overall business strategy. An effective talent approach also produces a best practice mindset to talent with job benchmarking, key accountabilities, and data-driven sciences as core best practices, in order to find rock stars with the right DNA for your culture. We would all be well served to acknowledge that effective selection starts with belief and mindset for your organization like it does with the SEALs.



# Benchmarks & Science

Don't you think the SEALs know what the 'job' looks like; **the key accountabilities?** Don't you think they know what 'good' is? Don't you think they know how to measure high performance after thousands of missions?

## The SEALs let the job talk!

Over decades of battle tested engagements, the SEALs identified the ideal candidate. They benchmarked it after every mission. What worked and why? Who worked and why? And we should shape our training and selection process to then measure the talent against it.

Recent data reveals that benchmarking and the sciences can lead to **92 percent retention of new hires**. Yet we know that people are scared to make a bad hire. We also know that the job description is dead as an effective means of selection. By investing in job benchmarking, you will secure the talent necessary for success while eliminating common biases often associated with the hiring process. An accurate job benchmarking process is a unique and effective solution because it benchmarks a specific job, not the person in the job.

To do this, let the job talk through an interactive process and job assessment. When job benchmarking is implemented properly, it will have a direct effect on your business' bottom line. You will not only attract the best candidates but you will save time and money by hiring the right people the first time and reducing the learning curve with new employees who are strategically matched to fit your company.

*"Remember, there's just a few of you here who we'd probably have to kill before you'd quit. We know that, and I've already identified some of you. That's what I am here to find out. Which of you can take the pain and the cold and the misery. We're here to find out who wants it most. Nothing more. Some of you won't, some of you can't and never will. No hard feelings. Just don't waste our time any longer than necessary."*





# What is 'Good'?

The **benchmarking process** serves as an opportunity to realign each position with the most up-to-date strategic business initiatives. The Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will clarify why the job exists and how it fits into the company's strategy going forward. As key accountabilities are defined, weighed and prioritized, a clear picture emerges. The behaviors, values, personal skills and task preferences required for success in the position can now be used to screen a suitable candidate. An additional outcome from the process is that a benchmarking process may also close past accountability gaps between positions that give rise to recurring efficiencies in communication or productivity. It's important to assess the existing team against the benchmarks produced so that any gaps in the current team can be accounted for when planning for new positions, training, or succession. Once jobs have been benchmarked, the critical competencies and attributes required for each job are used as guidelines both for hiring and for training high potentials to excel.

Job Benchmarking can be broken into four key phases. Each phase is contingent on the one prior, and the entire benchmarking process can be duplicated across all positions within the company.

## **1. Setup**

Identify the Job and SMEs

It is important to understand why the job exists, how success in the job is measured, the history of the position and how it fits the company strategy. The SMEs are people within the organization who have a direct connection to the job. Their expertise will help you create the job benchmark.

## **2. Key Accountabilities**

Define, Prioritize and Weigh Key Accountabilities

Through discussion, the SMEs will define a comprehensive yet succinct group of three to five key accountabilities for the position. These will be ranked by importance and time requirement.

## **3. Assessment**

Job Assessment and Review the Multiple Respondent Report

The SMEs will respond to the Job Assessment keeping the Key Accountabilities in mind. Based on a unique analysis, the Multiple Respondent Report combines the input of all SMEs to create a benchmark for the job.

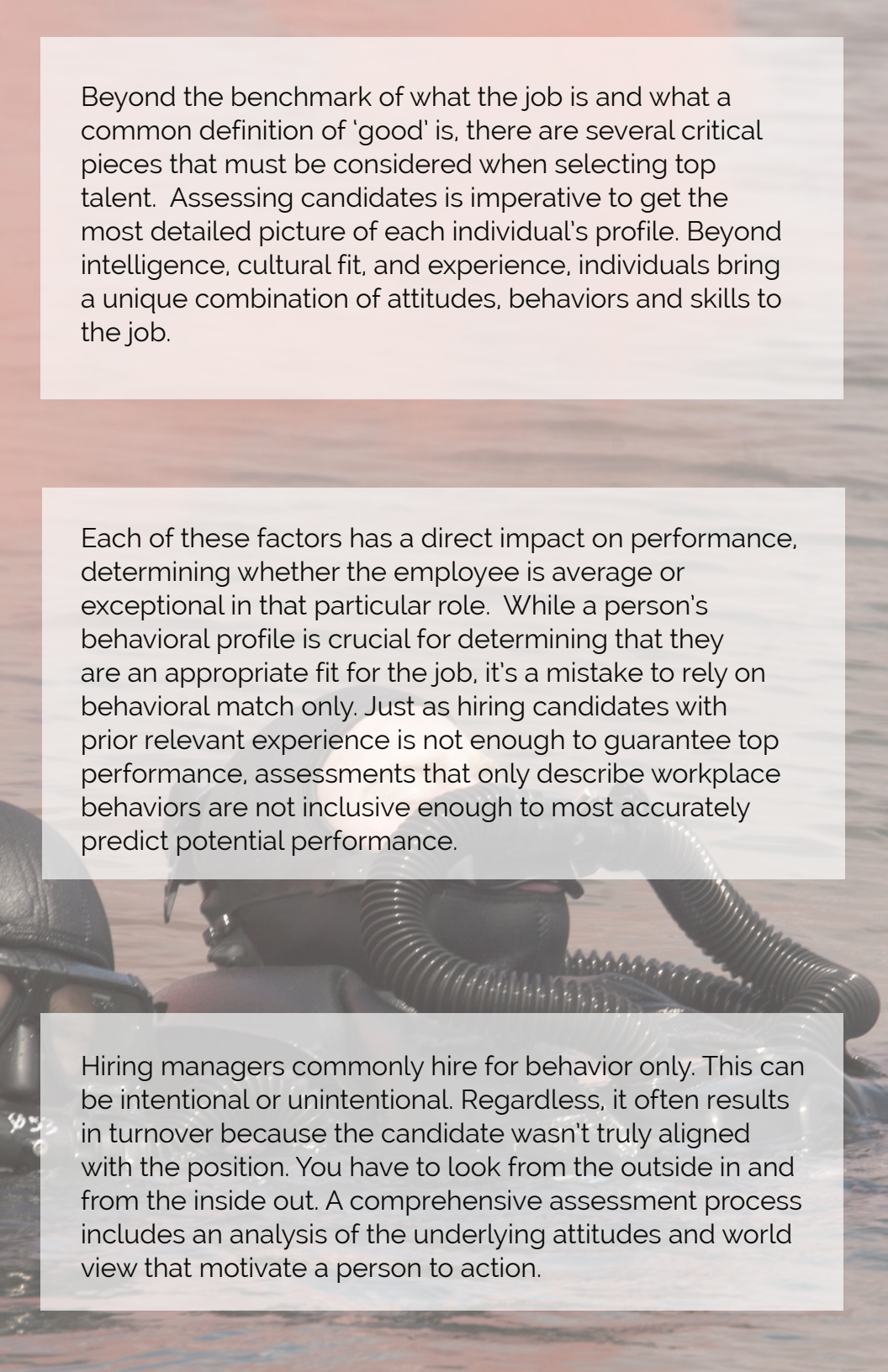
## **4. Results**

Compare Talent to the Job Benchmark using Comparison Reports and Gap Reports.

# The Sciences

A diver in the water, wearing a black wetsuit and a diving mask, is holding a torch that is emitting a bright orange flame. The diver's arm is extended upwards, and the torch is held in a gloved hand. The background is a soft, hazy orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The diver's head is visible in the lower right corner, looking towards the camera.

*" This is a school for warriors, understand? This is the most serious business there is! "*



Beyond the benchmark of what the job is and what a common definition of 'good' is, there are several critical pieces that must be considered when selecting top talent. Assessing candidates is imperative to get the most detailed picture of each individual's profile. Beyond intelligence, cultural fit, and experience, individuals bring a unique combination of attitudes, behaviors and skills to the job.

Each of these factors has a direct impact on performance, determining whether the employee is average or exceptional in that particular role. While a person's behavioral profile is crucial for determining that they are an appropriate fit for the job, it's a mistake to rely on behavioral match only. Just as hiring candidates with prior relevant experience is not enough to guarantee top performance, assessments that only describe workplace behaviors are not inclusive enough to most accurately predict potential performance.

Hiring managers commonly hire for behavior only. This can be intentional or unintentional. Regardless, it often results in turnover because the candidate wasn't truly aligned with the position. You have to look from the outside in and from the inside out. A comprehensive assessment process includes an analysis of the underlying attitudes and world view that motivate a person to action.

# Behaviors

Behavior is the 'how.' How we learn; how we make decisions; how we communicate; how we like to be communicated to in the workplace. Behavioral research suggests that the most effective people are those who understand themselves, both their strengths and weaknesses, so they can develop strategies to meet the demands of their environment. Understanding behavior allows for more effective leadership, sales skill, or strengthened relationships, to name a few. The four dimensions of normal behavior are dominance, influence, steadiness, and compliance. These dimensions are assessable.



# Motivators

Motivators are the 'why?' Why do you do what you do? Motivators tell us which topics you care about. What do you value positively or judge negatively in life? Knowledge of an individual's motivators help to tell us why they do things. Motivators influence our decision making and understanding our motivations allows for more effective communication with those who do not share the same motivation as you. Similarly, you are able to assess motivators when you are selecting elite talent.





# Competencies

An individual's hierarchy of competencies is key to their success in your

organization. Skills or competencies are experience based and learned. Skills speak to the question of, 'did I do it?' For many jobs, personal skills are as important as technical skills in producing superior performance. Research across thousands of businesses reveals that superior performers will score above average in a certain number of core competencies. Competencies are the 'what' a person has demonstrated an ability for and are, inextricably, part of the selection process.

# EQ and Acumen

The Emotional Quotient (EQ...not to be

confused with eQ), looks at a person's emotional intelligence, which is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions to facilitate high levels of collaboration and productivity. In other words, are you self-aware and able to regulate yourself and show empathy and elite social skills? Research by Target Training International (TTI) shows that self-awareness continues to take a more prominent role in elite selection. The ability to filter through emotions, yours and others, to achieve clear thinking in the work environment is increasingly critical to high performance. What about acumen? Well, acumen is the capacity to do it and the 'can I do it?' Acumen understanding can help the company understand what is 'good.' With accurate information about acumen, you have a better idea of how a person will interact with the external world from a personal perspective. In other words, acumen illuminates how clearly someone understands situations, and thus, their capacity for meeting challenges in business.



# Poor Predictors

The Navy SEALs will not lean on poor predictors because the stakes are too high. This is why SEALs select those who will not quit and whom will not crack or succumb; in other words...resilient. It is a rare soul that will prevail during BUD/S. The SEALs know that if you are tempted to quit or crack during BUD/S, then you will quit when it counts.

*"For those of you who make the teams, remember you're joining a brotherhood. You'll be closer to those guys than you ever were to friends in school or college. You'll live with them...and, in combat, some of you may die with them. Your family must always come first, but the brotherhood is a privileged place. And I don't want you to ever forget it."*

Because the SEALs do not make the mistake of hiring based upon poor predictors, they are not going to only evaluate the biggest or the smartest or the fastest, because history tells them that those predictors can be a false positive. You cannot determine resilience based upon a resume or an interview but only through a well-established selection process that produces high performers.

Research reveals that companies hire based upon poor predictors 90 percent of the time. Those poor predictors include experience, education and intelligence. Your organization can take a page from the SEAL Indoc and BUD/S book to ensure that you are leaning on predictors that are relevant to YOUR company. Our innate biases can be the biggest barrier to selecting elite talent. We all see the world from our own view point. This view is influenced by how we value experience, knowledge, economics, etc.







Bill Bonnstetter of TTI explains bias this way,

*"When we are confronted by a person who sees the world differently, these views could be called biases. Biases are simply a reflection of our personal view point. This personal viewpoint is unknowingly injected into the hiring process even when it is not relevant to a specific position or to the organization itself. When this happens, it creates a barrier, preventing us from selecting true superior performers. In addition, people bring much more to the job, including their passions, beliefs, personal skills, and behaviors."*

Bonnstetter goes on to say,

*“Many people are also unknowingly biased on experience, education, and intelligence, and this keeps them from selecting superior performers.”*

# Barriers

## 1. Failure to use assessments

This failure as a part of your hiring or screening process limits your ability to accurately select elite talent. It is possible for successful people to differ on 'how' they do the job.

**Discovering 'why' successful people do a job will provide a better understanding. When a person's intrinsic passions are fulfilled on the job, they will perform better than those who do not receive intrinsic rewards.**

Cloning the identical behavior of your top performer will not get the same results if they have different attitudes. Assessments must be more complete in order to have the most positive impact.



***In addition to bias, Bonstetter contends that there are other barriers that prevent us from hiring elite talent:***

## **2. Failure to let the job talk**

If the job could talk, it would clearly identify the knowledge, personal skills, hard skills, behavior, motivators, and intrinsic rewards that are needed for elite performance. Our personal biases keep most people from hearing the job talk. Everyone involved in the selection process must be willing to admit their biases and be open to other views. It is important that this session be led by an experienced job benchmarking facilitator. It is when we think of a person in the position that our biases also enter the process. You must benchmark jobs, not people.



# How much do a bad hire and a disengaged team **COST?**



You may already be aware of the recent Gallup data regarding disengaged workers, which provides that only 13 percent of global workers are engaged. In the U.S., only 29 percent are fully engaged. There are real and tangible costs associated with bad hires. Further, there are 'soft' impacts with disengaged workers that include poor morale, attitude, teamwork, efficiency, productivity, happiness, and passion.

**Depending on the research, the cost of a mishire is as little as 150 percent of a first year salary or ten times the amount of an annual salary.**

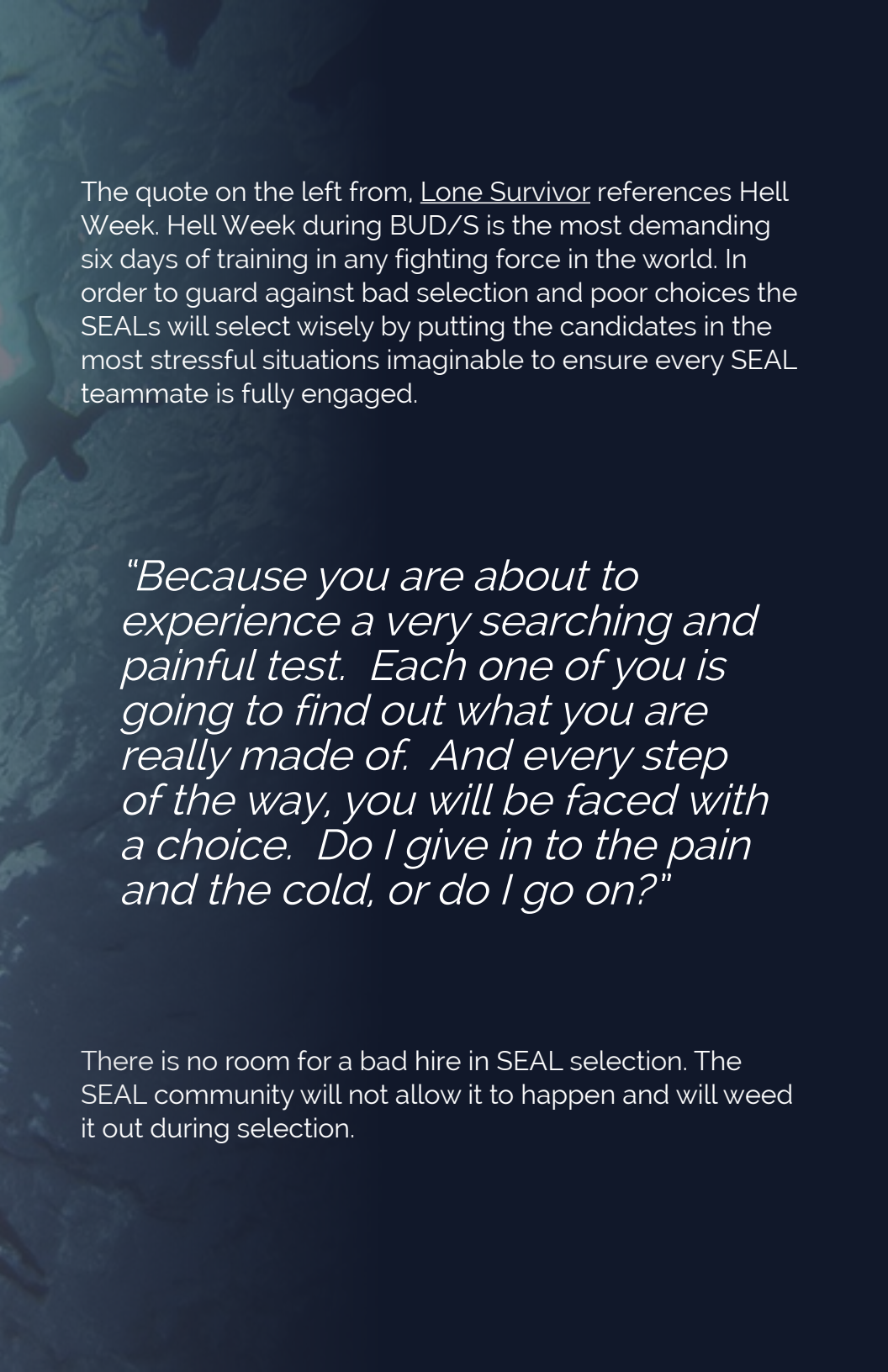
In his latest book, The Alliance, LinkedIn founder, renowned investor, and entrepreneur, Reid Hoffman, opines that we must avoid disengaged relationships and build a new type of loyalty that both recognizes economic realities and allows companies and employees to commit to each other. In other words, Reid contends that we should move from a framework of transactional to relational approach. We should think of our talent relationships as alliances, where employer and employee develop a relationship based on how they can add value to each other. In a prosperous relationship, Hoffman offers, employees invest in the company's success and the company invests in the employees' market value.

According to Hoffman, this can only happen when the talent selection process works and there is an employee who seeks this mutually beneficial arrangement; one in which we treat each other with respect, appreciation and compassion. Hoffman suggests that Silicon Valley's 'success' comes from the way its companies build alliances with their employees. Talent really is the most valuable resource and employees are treated accordingly.





**“Welcome  
to Hell,  
Gentlemen.”**



The quote on the left from, Lone Survivor references Hell Week. Hell Week during BUD/S is the most demanding six days of training in any fighting force in the world. In order to guard against bad selection and poor choices the SEALs will select wisely by putting the candidates in the most stressful situations imaginable to ensure every SEAL teammate is fully engaged.

*"Because you are about to experience a very searching and painful test. Each one of you is going to find out what you are really made of. And every step of the way, you will be faced with a choice. Do I give in to the pain and the cold, or do I go on?"*

There is no room for a bad hire in SEAL selection. The SEAL community will not allow it to happen and will weed it out during selection.



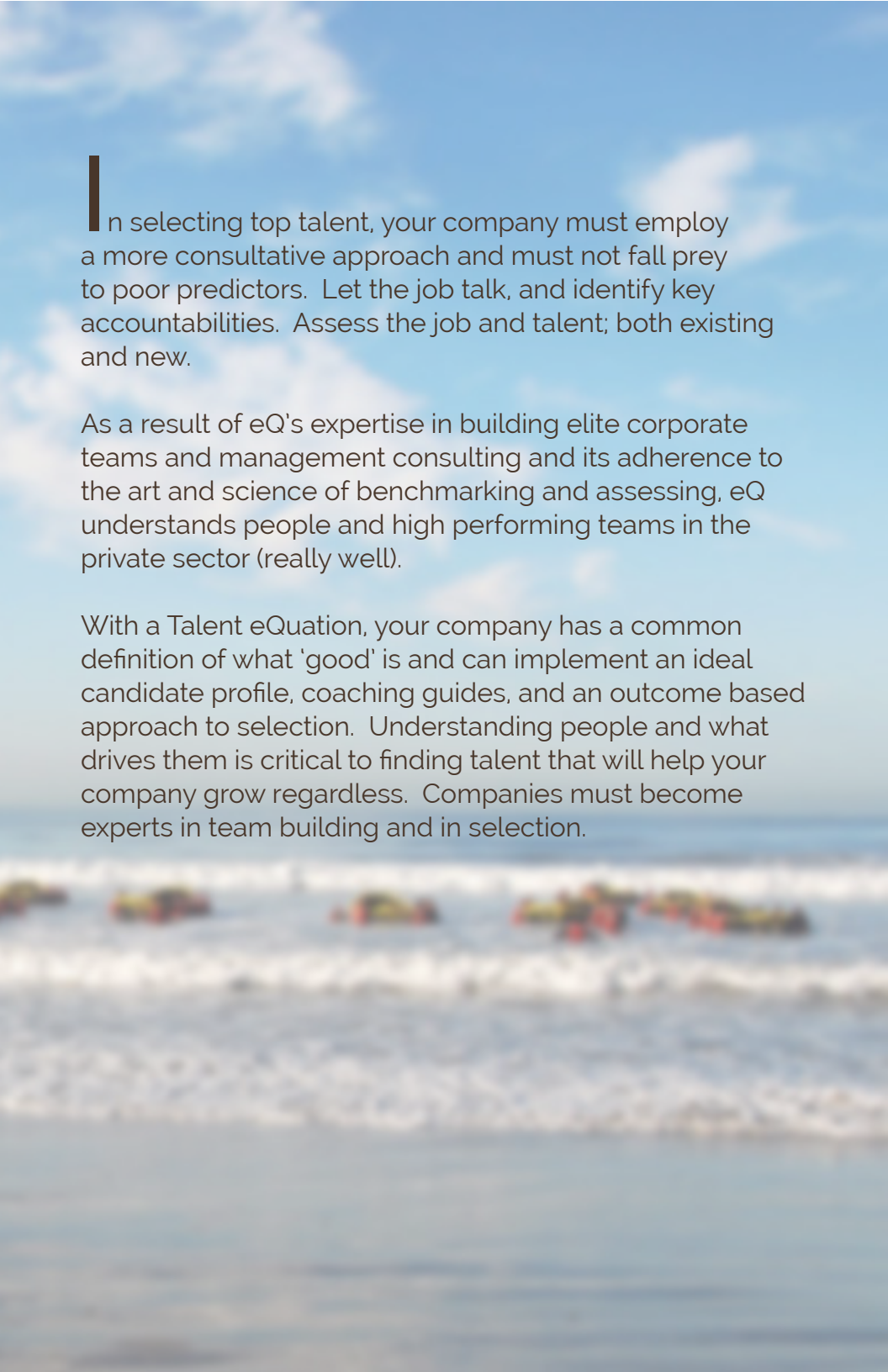
# **Talent eQuation**

# TALENT

**S**election is one part of the eQ Talent eQuation. Talent is fundamental to growth and performance. The Navy SEALs set the standard for talent selection and could not take talent selection more seriously. The 'talent war' in the private sector could not be less similar to the nature of war as the SEALs know the term to mean but the talent war exists, nonetheless, and you need a consultative approach to address it's impact on the future of your business.

**A**ccording to a recent Society of Human Resources Managers (SHRM) survey, the number one challenge facing companies today is the ability to attract and retain top talent. So, how do we do it when we know that the job description is dead? And how can we create a common definition of 'good' so that we can set up an effective process to select and retain top talent based on an outcomes based approach?

**It's all about  
talent**

The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of a beach. In the foreground, there are gentle waves with white foam washing onto the shore. In the middle ground, several people are visible, some standing and some sitting, enjoying the water. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall tone is bright and positive.

In selecting top talent, your company must employ a more consultative approach and must not fall prey to poor predictors. Let the job talk, and identify key accountabilities. Assess the job and talent; both existing and new.

As a result of eQ's expertise in building elite corporate teams and management consulting and its adherence to the art and science of benchmarking and assessing, eQ understands people and high performing teams in the private sector (really well).

With a Talent eQuation, your company has a common definition of what 'good' is and can implement an ideal candidate profile, coaching guides, and an outcome based approach to selection. Understanding people and what drives them is critical to finding talent that will help your company grow regardless. Companies must become experts in team building and in selection.





Works cited:

Lone Survivor – Marcus Luttrell

Ernst & Young Global Talent Management Survey

The Alliance – Reid Hoffmann

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Target Training International (TTI) – Bill Bonnstetter

Photos Provided by: U.S. Navy. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnavy>. 2014.

Grow Regardless.

# entreQuest

If your  
dreams don't  
scare you  
they're not  
big enough.