

## The Five H Culture Defined

The first thing to remember is that these five characteristics apply to the organizations that our candidates want to work for, to the candidates that our clients want to hire and to the way we work for our clients and candidates. We are all on a journey to achieve these characteristics. They combine the humility required of true team leaders with the personal accountability and drive needed in high growth high performance organizations.

**1. Hard Working.** We always do what is necessary to get the job done. There may be long hours needed to convert an ERP system at our client, or reporting deadlines that have to met. And in our case, working long and hard to find the right candidates to fill an urgently needed position. This H factor is at its best when the work is fun for all involved. We never want to be the contributor who slows down the team. At the same time our clients realize that over time they have to allow time for their employees to balance work with family and community.

**2. High Achieving.** Need for Achievement (N-Ach) refers to an individual's desire for significant accomplishment, mastering of skills, control, or high standards. The term was first used by Henry Murray in "Explorations in Personality" (1938) and associated with a range of actions. These include: "intense, prolonged and repeated efforts to accomplish something difficult. To work with singleness of purpose towards a high and distant goal. To have the determination to win" (p164). The concept of N-Ach was subsequently popularized by the psychologist [David McClelland](#).

Need for Achievement is related to the difficulty of tasks people choose to undertake. Those with low N-Ach may choose very easy tasks, in order to minimize risk of failure, or highly difficult tasks, such that a failure would not be embarrassing.

People high in N-Ach are characterized by a tendency to seek challenges and a high degree of independence. Their most satisfying reward is the recognition of their achievements. Sources of high N-Ach include:

1. Parents who encouraged independence in childhood
2. Praise and rewards for success
3. Association of achievement with positive feelings
4. Association of achievement with one's own competence and effort, not luck
5. A desire to be effective or challenged
6. Intrapersonal Strength

**3. Humble.** Recent writing suggests a new view of Humility in business, humility without weakness and transformed to fit the business world. It includes characteristics such as self-awareness, valuing others' opinions, being willing to learn and change, sharing power, having the ability to hear the truth and admit mistakes, and working to create a culture of openness where dissent is encouraged in an environment of mutual trust and respect.

[Kant](#) is among the first philosophers to view the concept of humility as "that meta-attitude that constitutes the moral agent's proper perspective on himself as a dependent and corrupt but capable and dignified rational agent". Kant's notion of humility is that humility is a virtue, and indeed a

central virtue. [Mahatma Gandhi](#) is attributed as suggesting that attempting to sustain [truth](#) without humility is doomed to cause it to become instead an "arrogant caricature" of truth.

We see humility as required to be an active listener for us to both our clients and candidates and therefore critical to our being able to bring people together for winning results. Our clients see this as a critical part of their culture, key to teamwork and effective leadership. Our candidates are looking for companies that understand the value of this kind of humility in the workplace, where everyone is trying to help others get the job done.

**4. Happy.** The first part of this H for Happy is being **Self-Confident** in who you are. The socio-psychological concept of **self-confidence** relates to self-assuredness in one's personal judgment, ability, power, etc. Another definition is the belief of believing in you; to believe that one is able to accomplish what one sets out to do, to overcome obstacles and challenges (Peixe, 2009).

Professor [Raj Persaud](#) posits that true self confidence comes from an attitude where you:

"Promise yourself, no matter how difficult the problem life throws at you, that you will try as hard as you can to help yourself. You acknowledge that sometimes your efforts to help yourself may not result in success, as often being properly rewarded is not in your control."

Recent studies (Peixe, 2009) show that self-confidence is something you *act* on, not something you learn. There are a number of practical exercises that can help anyone achieve the level of belief that allows them to take action and pursue their objectives.

The **second part of this H for Happy is the Enthusiasm** that a candidate has for our client's opportunity and the client's enthusiasm for working with our candidate. Our promise to our clients and candidates is to make sure that both candidates or consultants and our clients are excited about working together.

**5. Honesty.** The first part of H for Honest relates to a candidate's **Personal Integrity** and to the client's need for high integrity in all of its operations, especially in how it treats its employees, customers and shareholders. We look for personal integrity in our interview process and we promise our professional integrity to our clients and candidates.

The second part of this H for Honest is **Intellectual Integrity**, a commitment by the candidates, the company and us to a culture of open and honest communication. Telling it like it is with an understanding that this characteristic is critical to success for all parties.

Companies and candidates with this H have a consciousness of the need to face and fairly address ideas, beliefs or viewpoints toward which we have strong negative emotions and to which we have not given a serious hearing. This courage is connected with the recognition that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) and that conclusions and beliefs inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading. To determine for ourselves, which is which, we must not passively and uncritically "accept" what we have "learned." Intellectual courage comes into play here, because inevitably we will come to see some truth in some ideas considered dangerous and absurd, and distortion or falsity in some ideas strongly held in our social group. We need courage to be true to our own thinking in such circumstances.



Over the last 20 years we have come to see that candidates and clients who exhibit these characteristics and who are driving to achieve them are the most effective in building successful careers and organizations.