

Topgrading



HOW TO HIRE, COACH AND KEEP A PLAYERS

Brad & Geoff Smart

Introduction by Price Pritchett

“Topgrading is a proven strategy for hiring

A players and building dream teams.

Companies and individuals who Topgrade gain a talent advantage—they consistently outperform the competition and reap the rewards of excellence.”

—Robert H. Bohannon,
Chairman, President, and CEO, Viad Corp

“Topgrading will become a continuous process of raising the bar in the identification of top and bottom players to enhance overall organizational vitality.”

—Bill Conaty, Senior Vice President, Human Resources,
General Electric

“Brad’s pursuit of excellence in selection and development is critical in a global business where individual success is significantly leveraged in a team of A players.”

—Lewis N. Sears, former Vice President,
Organizational Effectiveness, Citibank

“Topgrading the American Heart Association will help save lives.”

—Cass Wheeler, CEO,
American Heart Association

“I’ve had firsthand experience with Brad and his approach to finding talent, and fitting the talent to the job’s requirements works. Brad’s book demystifies the concept of Topgrading, and as he draws from thousands of real experiences, he provides a roadmap for building successful management teams. I wish he’d put this on paper a long time ago.”

—Joseph C. Lawler, President and CEO, CMGI

What's the most *powerful leadership* skill you can have?

Hands down, it's the ability to produce high talent teams. Nothing else even comes close.

EVERYTHING ABOUT LEADERSHIP —yes, every-

thing—starts with people. You, and the people you gather about you, have to come up with all the rest of what it takes to build and run an organization. Like a strategy...your products or services...the money required to keep the place running...the ideas, energy, and ambition that are needed. Every bit of this is born in the hearts, minds, and day-to-day behavior of human beings. The more talented your people are, the better this “everything else” will be.

And it cuts the other way, too. Surround yourself with weaker people, and you're bound to end up with a weaker everything else.

So you'd think we'd all be determined to get mighty good at picking and choosing people. If this is *the* cornerstone for success as a leader, then why shouldn't we find the very best methodology and work relentlessly to master it?

Well, we should. And the approach you're looking for is laid out in this handbook. It's based on the master work in the field—the *Topgrading* hardback that's sold over 100,000 copies—together with the 40+ years of combined experience Brad and Geoff Smart bring to the table.

Brad's been a dear friend since the beginning of my professional career when we worked at the same firm. I've known Geoff since the day he was born. The extreme talent, high drive, and finely tuned expertise of these two professionals epitomize what it means to be an *A player*. They're the best in the business. Unquestionably.

They'll both tell you, "Recruiting and selecting the kind of talent that can assure your success has never been a cakewalk, and never will be." It takes know-how. Practice. Discipline. *Topgrading* gives you the technique. It's the proven, premier methodology for producing high talent teams. Now the rest is up to you.

Just keep this in mind: *Topgrading is a career-maker*. Pick the right people, and your success is practically guaranteed.

— Price Pritchett, Ph.D.