

A U.S. federal agency was creating a groundbreaking team focused on counter-terrorism. It was an innovative approach without precedent but the agency was operating under time and budget constraints. Uiba's High Performing Teams solution learned the agency's requirements, understood the necessary roles, and identified the right people, accelerating team creation and productivity.

Challenges

After years of concerted effort with mixed results, a U.S. federal agency was pioneering a new approach to countering violent extremism in an effort to degrade terrorist recruiting. They were trying to build a team of people with a variety of backgrounds: psychologists, consultants, project managers, academics, and more. The agency was under a time limit due to a budget deadline and faced the additional scrutiny of Congress and the President's administration.

The team required psychologists who conceptually understood the human desire for identity and how it forms, as well as grievances and how they impact behavior. The goal was to shape engagement directed at at-risk youth that positively addressed identity development and potential motivations to turn to violence.

There was no one employed by the agency with the qualifications or experience for this team so the agency was unsure what someone with such experience 'looked like'.

Solution

Uiba's High Performing Teams solution was implemented to overcome these challenges and get the team properly calibrated and off to a strong start.

Uiba's algorithmically-driven solution learned the purpose of the team, its goals, its roles and their requirements. Once complete, it began to focus on the psychologist roles since these were proving the most difficult to identify. Using general psychological concepts that can play a role in explaining pathways to recruitment and radicalization to violence (e.g. identity development, narratives, trauma), Uiba's platform identified psychologists with experience and backgrounds well-suited for understanding human behavior and motivations as well as team-focused work with non-psychologists.

Results

Upon first glance, the individuals Uiba identified did not fit the profile of who the agency believed they needed. These individuals weren't working in industries where the agency had preconceived notions it might find such people (e.g. counselors, social workers, gang recruitment specialists.) Uiba did identify a few such candidates, but more interestingly it recommended individuals from seemingly unrelated fields like financial services and retail.

These recommendations confused the agency until some research was done and they realized financial institutions have psychologists on staff to help clients understand their self-defeating behavior that may lead to poor financial management and to help them change this behavior. On the retail side, retailers employ psychologists to help shape consumers' ideas on what products help emphasize the identity consumers want to project.

Both industries offered experts who could add valuable input to discussions on how to change behaviors and help develop positive identities that lead to constructive choices. Because of bias and preconceived notions concerning experience, the agency would have never known or even thought to look to these industries for help without Uiba connecting the dots for them.

The agency was able to bring a highly skilled, highly accomplished team of diverse talents together to focus on one of the most intractable problems facing governments today.

For more information or for an in-person demonstration of our services suite, contact us today.