



people  
make the  
difference

## People Make The Difference whitepaper

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### **What I've learnt: hiring friends and family.**

Hiring friends and family is a contentious issue, and everyone seems to have an opinion. After years of experience, I've seen organisations and leaders flourish and fall because of their decisions regarding this issue. A few things I've learnt along the way:

*Why do leaders hire their friends and family?*

There are a multitude of reasons why leaders decide to hire their friends and family, but there are three fairly common ones:

- Leaders need someone to temporarily or permanently fill a position that has been deserted by someone else
- They need financial help or a step forward in their career, so leaders agree to help them out
- You have worked together before in another organisation and you know they have the best skills or experience for the job

None of these reasons are wrong and all of them could have great results for both the individual and the organisation.

*What are the positives?*

The great thing about hiring family and friends is that you have known them for a decent amount of time and you choose to spend time in their company – which usually means you trust them. They are also less likely to cut ties at the drop of a hat, meaning that loyalty comes part and parcel with hiring friends and family.

### *What are the dangers for your team?*

The biggest dangers for your team or organisation are the results of a family or friend not performing to the team's standards. Not only do your team's productivity and performance levels suffer, confrontations and difficult conversations become tricky to have when you're dealing with the people from your personal life. These conversations either never happen at all (leaving your other team members feeling inferior) or, if they do, the family member or friend ends up being offended and doubts the strength of your relationship. All round, people can be left feeling cheated, neglected or offended – not a great state for your team to be in.

### *What are the dangers for your leadership?*

As soon as you choose to hire family or friends on your team, your existing employees will be watching closely to see how you manage them. Your reputation as a reliable and consistent leader could suffer if your team sees you favouring your family and friends for tasks or never properly managing their performance.

Adding family or friends into your team also makes it more difficult to keep personal and professional lives separate – this might not be an issue for everyone but some leaders may find that the blurred lines have a significantly negative impact on the way they lead.

So, the questions stands: how can you include your family and friends in your team, without compromising your existing team members *or* your leadership? Perhaps, for you and your team, it might be best to create a blanket rule to avoid hiring and family or friends at all. Some might prefer to stick to hiring loved ones only in special circumstances, like filling in for employees when they're on maternity or sick leave, so there's a definitive end to their stint in your team. For others, it would be beneficial to write up a contract or a short term assignment when you hire your loved ones to see how they perform – if it doesn't work out, the contract gives you a way out, without compromising your relationship.

*If you need some guidance when it comes to managing your family and friends in your leadership role, contact People Make the Difference for training workshops, one-on-one coaching and Coach On Call services. To find out more, call us on 0412 333 415 or visit [peoplesmakethedifference.com.au](http://peoplesmakethedifference.com.au).*