



## Why Cultivating Young Talent can ensure the perfect Cultural Fit

Family Offices are caught in a constant battle between wanting the most experienced staff and ensuring they fit into the culture of their organisation.

Of course, you can certainly find exceptional professionals who can do both but how often do Family Offices, in the plight to find the perfect cultural fit, consider training junior talent with high competencies, an aligned culture and an appetite to learn?

I joined Agreus when I was just 19 years old. I wasn't quite the Recruiter at that stage and spent a great deal of time, learning, watching and listening. I actually met our Founders Paul and Tayyab by chance through an acquaintance and after a brief conversation and realising I was looking for my first role while Agreus was hiring, they offered me a position.

I had never worked in recruitment before, neither did I have an understanding of Private Wealth or Family Offices but I loved speaking to people, helping others and my own values of community, meritocracy and lifelong learning aligned with the values of Agreus.

Qualifications can be taught and an education can be given but you cannot teach nor buy cultural fit. While I would never perhaps 'fit in' with a corporate culture or competitive environment, my culture just happened to fit perfectly with the culture at Agreus and while I continue to learn I wanted to remind our Family Office network that the same rule applies to them.



### THE AUTHOR

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# 92%

of our network think Cultural Fit is more important than Qualifications in a potential hire

In a world as intimate as Family Offices, cultural fit has to be the most important factor.

I often use Ian Buchanan as a prime example of a successful cultural fit hire. Ian is the Director and Chief Investment Officer at Misland Capital, a Family Office that he joined aged just 25.

A free-spirited and newly qualified Accountant from Glasgow looking for an adventure before settling down behind a desk. He saw an advert printed in the Financial Times for an Accountant in Bermuda, jumped on a plane and took the job.

Four decades on and he remains with Misland Capital, only today he manages the Family Office Investment Portfolio as Chief Investment Officer and Director. He is thought-of as part of the family, working under five leaders of three generations with a team of 15 and a lifetime of memories from the adventures of the role.

From managing a sugar-cane operation in Brazil, coffee and corn in Honduras and cattle in Guatemala to tourism in Jamaica, an Island in Fiji and a farm in Portugal – the role has certainly offered career diversity.

“ the Family is very comfortable, when they have found someone, they think is good, putting them into environments where they have no experience. If you have common sense and you are smart you can largely do most things. ”



**IAN BUCHANAN**  
Chief Investment Officer  
Misland Capital

Ian took a chance but so did his first Principal who at the time was the Chairperson of the Conservative Party here in the UK. He could have sought a 30-something year old Partner at a Big Four with a decade of experience under his belt and exposure to Private Wealth but instead he chose Ian. With no farming experience, he was put to managing all of these properties in developing countries, often with high inflation rates, depreciating currencies and extensive economic and political problems.

Without context, it seems like a huge risk but when considering cultural fit, it was the best decision Ian or his Principal could have ever made and it is the very same reason why 40 years later, Ian treats Misland Capital as his own Family Office.

**We spoke to Ian and asked him why the cultural fit hire worked so well for him at Misland Capital.**

He said: “Family Offices are very different, as I say, they are unlike the corporate world. What tends to happen is that while there are lots of talented people out there that a family could hire tomorrow, the individuals need to fit in with the family and the family needs to like them. If you put yourself in the shoes of a wealthy individual, you want someone who is good at their job, but also a person that you like and trust.

“There are some unusual traits of the Family Office which may make it a difficult transition from a corporate environment but once a Family Office gets the right person, they want to keep them and the family will go out of their way to make that job secure, interesting, and financially attractive.

“The biggest risk we face is staff turnover. What the Family has done for me, what I continue to do with my own Investment Team and what every leader should do with their next generation; family, or non-family, is to try and make the role interesting.

“I was largely thrown into things I had no experience of and often had to learn on my feet, especially when I was running the properties in developing countries. That was a huge learning experience for me. I was an Accountant from Glasgow and they sent me to Guatemala to manage a farm, I had no idea what I was doing but they expected me to learn.

“When I started running investments, I don't think I'd ever properly read the FT prior to that. The point is, the Family is very comfortable, when they have found someone, they think is good, putting them into environments where they have no experience. If you have common sense and you are smart you can largely do most things.

“ If you are talented, families are willing to push you forward to represent them because they trust you to handle the project on their behalf.”

**Hiring based on Cultural Fit is a guaranteed way to ensure you can find the perfect cultural fit hire, it worked for Agreus and it worked for Misland Capital but could it work for you?**