

The Experts Teach: Recruitment and Selection

ManageTrainLearn



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The Experts Teach

Recruitment and Selection

The Experts Teach: Recruitment and Selection

1st edition

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Preface

Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Recruitment and Selection”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

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1 How to Hire Customer Service Stars by Jeff Mowatt

“What are some tips to ensure I’ll hire the best customer service people?” That was the question the golf course owner asked me when she was about to begin hiring for another season. I don’t profess to be an expert in running a golf course, but when I speak at conferences about customer service, I’ll occasionally also facilitate an exchange of best practices among industry leaders. Here’s a compilation of their top tips, which apply to any industry on how to hire customer service stars.

Hire attitude over aptitude

Technical tasks can be learned, but trying to change attitude is difficult. Look for these 3 key qualities found in strong customer service candidates:

Outgoing personality. By definition, it’s easier for an outgoing person than a shy person to engage with your customers. Choose the path of least resistance and hire people who aren’t afraid to talk to strangers.

Efficient worker. Customers are there to receive a product or service. That means hiring people who can get stuff done even when it isn’t fun.

Attention to detail. Satisfying basic customer needs is a bare minimum. The place where customers begin to perceive you as being exceptional is in the dozens of details. You want your employees to pay attention those details before your customer have to.

The challenge next becomes how to find candidates with those qualities. A great place to start is with your existing customer service stars.

Ask employees to help

Encourage your star employees to help you to recruit their friends or relatives. Good performers know what’s expected of the job and are in a position to know who might do an equally good job. Tell your employees that if you do hire their friend or relative, they can participate in training them. Offer a small bonus or gift to both your star employee and to the new recruit if the new hire works out well. The goal is to start a new employee out from day-one with positive peer pressure.

Schedule interviews for Sat – 6am

Yes, you read it right. That interview time will screen out a huge number of non-starters. Those who do show-up prove they have the ability to be efficient – even when it’s uncomfortable.

See if they’re dressed for work

Are they groomed and dressed appropriately? Appropriate refers to whether their attire seem suitable for a) a job interview and b) for your clientele. Trying to deal with dress code issues after someone is hired is an uphill battle. What they're wearing tells you something about their judgment. After the interview walk them out to their car. The cleanliness of the vehicle will give you more clues about their attitude and attention to detail.

Ask, "How are you?"

The response to that common question will tell you a lot about how they will interact with your customers. Do they complain about being tired? Do they tell long stories about themselves? Or do they simply say something positive and in turn ask how you are? All those answers will tell you if they are upbeat and focused on others.

Interview over lunch

Conduct a follow-up interview over lunch and observe how they interact with the server. Are they as nice and outgoing to a server as they are to you as a potential employer? How long does it take them to pick out something from the menu? If they're going to take a long time to decide about what they'll have for lunch, how efficient will they be with accomplishing unfamiliar tasks at work? Do they have any questions for you? The questions aren't that important, but they need to have the confidence to ask. Asking about wages is perfectly legitimate. But wait for them to ask you.

Customer service stars aren't necessarily the people with all the answers; they're people with positive attitudes, who are curious and confident enough to ask questions to surpass your customers' expectations.

About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

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2 Employee Recruitment – Top Ten Ways to Get the Best Result by Martin Haworth

Recruiting the best people into your organisation is the easiest way to get the best performance.

Starting off well, is by far the quickest and simplest method of having the right employees in the right places. So here are a ten steps to getting it right...

Be Clear on What You Want

Having a vision for what you want from your organisation, business or team is vital in the first instance. Then you can get really clear on who you are looking for, what they will bring to complement existing team members and how they will be a step (or two!) above the people you've already got.

View Existing Employees Objectively

Whilst you may have befriended some of your existing people (well, it's nice to be liked, isn't it!), built great rapport and made some progress in developing them, don't be tempted to go easy on candidates from your existing pool. If you want to make giant leaps, you have to do it firmly and very, very honestly. This is no time for getting soft. Internal promotion of the wrong people is the biggest reason for businesses underperforming – and the biggest reason for discord.

Be Clear on What's Not Happening

With the vision you have and the people you've already got – check with yourself – what's not working right and who am I looking for to make that happen? What experiences will they have? How will they behave? What key questions do I need to hear answers for? What will they bring that will be different and much, much better than I have already?

Dump Your Assumptions

When interacting, and even interviewing, keep objective. You have to be really strict here with yourself (in fact you are probably the biggest problem you have, but that's another piece altogether). Be factual and dump any prejudices you have. In fact you might not even realise you have preferences, but you have. Now is the time to recognise absolutely what the role needs, not you personally. Though you might also defer to 11 (yep, there's an 11!), below.

Concentrate on 'I'

Make sure that when you are hearing answers from your potential recruit, that they tell you all about them. Keeping them to 'I' answers is far more revealing than 'we' or 'they' or 'us'. It is in your interest to dig at this and ask them precisely how they were involved themselves. Then you start to find some of the real truth. This enables better judgements and consequent decisions.

Be Supportive at Interview

Yet you want to get the best from them. Take time to put them at their ease through a few general questions to get them talking. You are not there to catch them out – you want success for you in recruiting well and for them to show you truly what they've got to offer. This is your job, not theirs. So often interviewers get this the wrong way round.

Listen Hard & Question Deeper

At interview, most of your time will be listening closely to what they are saying. If, in an interview situation, you catch yourself saying more than them, you have the balance way wrong – it needs to be you 30% max and them at least 70%. And when you listen, listen out for the things they say and notice where there is a moment you would want to know more. This comes up several times in a response. All you need to do is note these and pick a few in relation to the role offered – and ask a little more! 'You mentioned x, tell me a little more about that...'

Pick for Difference

It's easiest to pick people like you. You gel better with people you like and you tend to like people, like yourself! Yet sometimes it is a wonderful asset to have someone who grates a bit! Someone who has a different philosophy. Someone who is not afraid of you or to challenge and question back. Sometimes, challenging for you though it may be, it is a risk worth taking. And a very valuable asset.

Keep on the Lookout

By developing great ways of building rapport with people, you create intelligence networks in your own workplace, that frequently serve to provide solutions close to home – often from unexpected sources. Sometimes, if your natural state is to relate well with others, you'll spot people outside your own business who will fit exactly what you need. Make the best of this – it is a huge asset and you will build your 'perfect team' quicker and more efficiently.

See Them in Action

Where you can, work out a way of assessing them in action if possible. Use your eyes and ears to absorb how they perform in an experiential situation. Get clear what you need to know and let them do their thing. In a work experience it's hard to fudge, so you get to see more.

(A freebie!) Go With Your Gut (a bit!)

Despite all the myriad of psychometrics, experiential based assessments, handwriting and facial analysis etc. that you employ, remember that sometimes you have an instinct worth listening to. Don't be frightened to go with it sometimes. It generally pays off more times than not and is a risk, through experience, which is worth taking.

It takes a lot of effort to get the right people. It takes a whole lot more energy (and focus and bitterness sometimes), to manage poor performers; square pegs recruited for round holes. Taking time, when you have the opportunity, to start from scratch is an opportunity not to be wasted.

About the author:

Copyright 2006 Martin Haworth is a Business and Management Coach. He works worldwide, mainly by phone, with small business owners, managers and corporate leaders. He has hundreds of hints, tips and ideas at his website, www.coaching-businesses-to-success.com.

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3 Retaining Top People by Jim Clemmer

“A leader will only command the level of loyalty he or she is willing to give to others.” – Winston Churchill

Attracting and retaining talented people is a growing challenge for many organizations. Demographic projections show that this issue will become ever more critical as the large group of people in the “baby boom” begins to retire. Competition for the best people will intensify. The most successful organizations will be those “magnet companies” that attract and hang on to good people. Their management reputation or “leadership brand” will become as critical to their success as the company brand they are selling in their marketplace. Internal-cultural and external-marketing brands will become ever more intertwined.

Many managers badly underestimate the high costs of turnover. However, reducing turnover boosts profits. One trucking company found that it could increase profits by 50 percent by cutting driver turnover in half. And one study entitled “Costly Turnovers,” published in The Globe & Mail estimated it costs a typical information technology company \$34,100 for each lost programmer, \$10,455 to replace a specialty store retail clerk, and \$6,926 for a call center representative.

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Other estimates of the cost of turnover range from 25 percent of salary to as much as a full year's pay. (This wide variation can be attributed to the difficulty of estimating the impact of customer dissatisfaction and retention and the lowered efficiencies for everyone who works with, trains, and supports the new replacement.) In high-turnover organizations, the problem is complicated and compounded by a vicious circle: On the one hand, they don't invest heavily in people because they might leave and take all that expensive training with them; on the other, if they don't invest in people, the chances increase that they won't stick around when a better offer comes along.

In *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay*, Beverly Kay and Sharon Jordan-Evans write about creating commitment cultures:

After 20 years of research and 60,000 exit interviews, the Saratoga Institute reports that 80 percent of turnover is related to unsatisfactory relationships with the boss. Talent retention and engagement will remain one of management's highest priorities over the coming years. Indeed, in the so-called new economy with its ever-increasing reliance on talent and technology, retention and engagement are critical to an organization's survival.

Organizations therefore need to focus on three areas to retain and engage their talented people:

Employee development – Support learning and growth.

Find ways to continuously develop and grow workers' talents. Enrich and enliven employees' work, making every effort to increase the time they spend on desirable and innovative work. Help workers identify opportunities for moving laterally and vertically. Link workers to mentors, coaches, leaders, or colleagues who can offer guidance and support.

Management style – Inspire loyalty.

Ask employees what they want from their work and what it takes to keep them. Provide constant feedback – clearly, truthfully, and respectfully – and, in return, listen closely and carefully. Look for creative, meaningful ways to recognize and reward workers. Create a culture of inclusion – valuing not only differences of race and gender, but thoughts, experiences, and attitudes as well. Hold managers accountable for retention and then give them the training and the tools to do it.

Work environment – Create one that people love.

Let fun happen. Share information freely and regularly. Give people space – providing the freedom to get the job done in ways that work best for them, from their schedule and attire to their approach and process.

There are many complex reasons why some organizations are more successful than others in attracting and retaining the best people. However, studies reveal some common patterns. The most significant of these clearly boil down to questions of leadership.

A WorkLife Design survey reviewed the characteristics that made organizations employers of choice. Only 34 percent named pay. About 56 percent said flexible benefits were a major factor. A whopping 80 percent of respondents said the work environment was the biggest factor. This was described as servant leadership, trust and cooperation, family friendly policies, work-life balance, and credible and fair management.

Curt Coffman, co-author of *First, Break all the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently and Follow this Path: How the World's Greatest Organizations Drive Growth by Unleashing Human Potential*, reflects on key findings from the Gallup organization's massive study of leadership practices in hundreds of companies: "So, how do we build loyalty among our most productive and talented people? It begins and ends with the manager. Gallup research shows that people join companies, but they leave managers and supervisors." He explains that great "world-class" companies create work environments that are "more profitable (44% higher), more productive (50% higher), and have higher degrees of customer loyalty (50% higher)." Based on a study of over one million employees in 330 organizations worldwide, Ernst & Young concluded that "ineffective managers are a major factor in the increasing departure rates... poor managers have a huge impact on employee turnover."

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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4 Don't Hire Squirrels to Be Your Top Dogs by Linda Henman

Bad hiring decisions cost organizations, both in dollars and lost opportunities. But getting the right people in the right places doing the right thing is not easy. It requires painstaking efforts and objective information. Mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, and growth all require an unprecedented need for information about how to hire top performers and a framework for assessing the competencies required to lead people during extraordinary times. Therefore, hiring the right people involves more than guesswork and subjectivity. The formula is simple but not easy: know what a squirrel is and set a trap to catch them.

“Russian Doll” management, the phenomenon by which managers repeatedly hire and promote miniature versions of themselves, will not take organizations where they need to go. Instead, diversity of thought and creativity will be required to offer the ingenious solutions to tomorrow’s complicated problems. Finding these superlative leaders of tomorrow requires hiring the best and brightest people now. However, many organizations continue to hire squirrels instead.

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What is a Squirrel?

Simply put, a squirrel is a creature that does not belong in your organization. It is a creature that, no matter how much you try, will for now and always be a squirrel. You can't fix squirrels. Trying to do so is a little like marrying a person and hoping you can change him or her. It just doesn't happen. Squirrels are uncooperative, aggressive, destructive creatures that will cost you company significant sums of money. In fact, some researchers estimate that a squirrely hire can cost your company up to four times that person's yearly salary. So, if you are hiring someone for a position that earns \$100,000 a year, you are quickly facing the loss of a million dollars of damage if that person doesn't work out. Clearly, organizations want to avoid hiring squirrels, but how can you tell a squirrel from a non-squirrel?

Set the Squirrel Trap

The first step in setting the squirrel trap is to put the person at ease. One of the things I do before an interview is the same thing that most interviewers do. I look at the resume. But in addition to looking for the usual things like experience and education, I search for something that we have in common. If the person has lived in a part of the world that I have, I make note of that; if we went to the same school, I remember that. I look for any shared experience that we might have. Whatever the hook, I use it to make the person feel more comfortable. Then, before starting the questions, I refer to the thing we have in common, often by making a joke about it.

Joking and using appropriate humor are ways to encourage others to lower their guard. For instance, I usually start by offering candidates something to drink: "Water? Do you want that on the rocks?" "Coffee? Leaded or unleaded?" "A coke? Want rum with that?" It's not hilarious stuff, but it does serve the purpose. It causes a smile or laugh, and the ice is broken.

The second phase of trap setting is to interview smarter. There are volumes of books written on the subject of good interviewing techniques, but here are a few that you may not have considered

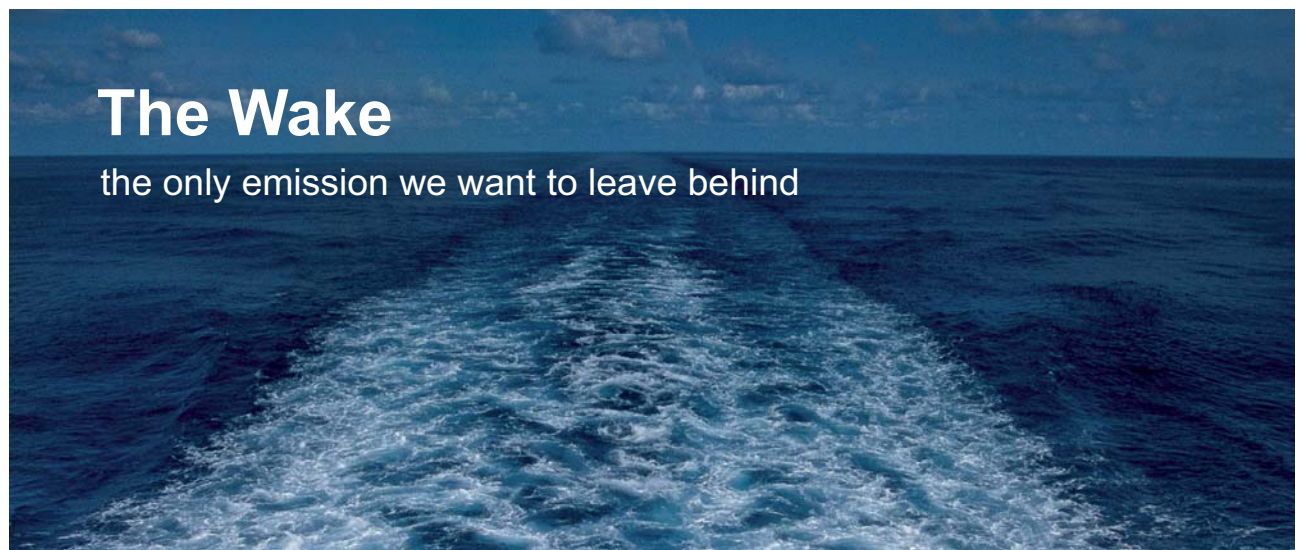
- Ask why they left their last job. This is not revolutionary. Most seasoned interviewers make this a part of their protocol. The words of the candidate's answer are not as critical as the nonverbal responses, however. The candidate will have rehearsed a good reason for leaving: The position was eliminated; opportunities for growth were minimized; a merger caused redundancy in positions. All of these are valid reasons for leaving, but you have to be sure the answer is true. Instead of looking at your notes or reading from a resume, look at the person's eyes when you ask this one. Is the person looking you in the eye? Did the eyes dart left or right? Any facial touching? Fidgeting? Touching other objects? All can be an indication that the person is not telling the truth.
- Ask why they want to work in your organization. This one will show whether they have done their homework. If they are just looking for a job, that will show too.
- Give hypothetical scenarios and ask what they would do in each. No one can prepare for these kinds of questions, so you will get a glimpse of the thinking patterns of the individual. Most interviewers already do this one, but examining your scenarios and asking yourself whether they really get to the heart of what you're trying to discover can help you improve the value of the questions.
- Finally, ask about their areas for improvement. Everyone asks this one, so applicants anticipate it and prepare the malarkey responses. But you can push back and catch them off guard when they answer, "I expect too much from myself." By saying, "Oh come on. Every applicant since the Pharaoh hired pyramid workers has used that one. What's a real one? What would your direct reports tell me? What would your boss tell me?" If, after some serious probing on your part, the person still can't come up with any areas for improvement, the person is either unconscious or seriously dedicated to impression management.

Finally, gathering more and better data can help avoid hiring squirrels. Most interviewers rely on a pre-determined process to gather data. They request a resume, conduct an interview, check with references, and have subsequent meetings with other members of the organization. However, all this is still not always enough.

The use of psychometrics, assessments that have been validated for hiring, is one way to improve your hiring practices. A well-chosen battery of tests, one that includes both intellectual measures and personality assessments, can increase the validity of your conclusions. This combination measures applicants' current intellectual resources and forecasts the kinds of decision making and problem solving they are likely to engage in. I advocate using at least two cognitive measures, one timed and one un-timed, to determine whether deadlines and pressure will affect performance. Numerical testing should be included if the position requires budget or financial decision making.

I use at least five instruments that measure different aspects of work-related personality traits. Personality assessments offer crucial information because they indicate the candidate's achievement drive, ethics, and reliability – essentials for every job in every company. They also provide information about other kinds of personality characteristics that may help or hinder the person's ability to fit in and do the job. For example, people skills are essential for individuals applying for a sales position or a job in human resources. They are not so important for solo performers like accountants and engineers who will not have direct report responsibilities. Similarly, flexibility and adaptability are important traits for someone who works in a field that changes quickly and unexpectedly. They are not so critical for routine jobs that tend to stay the same most of the time.

All testing is not helpful, however. In fact, no testing is better than bad testing. Using only one assessment, using instruments that were never intended for making hiring decisions, and using tests that don't measure what you need not only waste time and money, this practice can put you at risk legally. Finally, having someone who had been trained in interpreting psychometrics is essential. The ability to aggregate the data from all the assessments is both a science and an art that requires years of experience to master. The money spent to hire a qualified person to interpret the data is minimal when compared to the cost of a bad new hire. Once you have all the salient data, you are ready to ask yourself the important question. Is this person a squirrel?




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Ten Reasons Not to Hire Squirrels

- Not champions of innovation, squirrels are known as the “living fossils.” They haven’t changed in 5 million years. What are the chances they will be able to handle expected, much less unexpected change in your company? And respond to shifting priorities? Won’t happen.
- Squirrels resolve conflict by foot stomping, tail flagging, chattering, and chasing. Not many people like conflict and even fewer are good at resolving it, but squirrely responses to conflict will get you sued.
- Aggressive and uncooperative, 32% of adult males have torn ears. Do this just one time in corporate America, and you have huge problems.
- Not good team players, squirrels are asocial and solitary. If the job requires any kind of collaboration, teamwork, or coordination of effort, a squirrel is not your rodent of choice.
- When confronted with a threat, squirrels stand motionless, swallow hard, and chew fast—so much for overcoming obstacles. Most companies require more of a “can do” spirit that squirrels just don’t seem to be able to embody.
- The brains of squirrels are seldom engaged. The stomach rules. Some part of the brain has to work for success in most companies. The stomach should play a much lesser role.
- Because their sweat glands are in their paws, squirrels are lousy handshakers. Will this help build rapport with clients?
- There are 1600 different species of squirrels, but they are all seed-stealing thieves. Squirrels are sometimes tough to classify by the specific genus, but they all share the characteristic of being thieves. There’s no place for an employee who will have a paw in the till.
- Squirrels spend most of the day sleeping and are usually only active around lunch time.
- Although cute and furry, squirrels are gnawing beasts that destroy property and make not attempts at restitution.

Bringing the wrong people into the organization compromises the leadership pipeline that each organization needs to fuel. Often, however, a crisis causes a company to make a poor hiring decision that costs them dearly. An alternative is to hire temporary help until a high potential candidate becomes available. Hiring smart is the first step to making sure the organization has the right people coming into the organization, but it is only the first step. Developing talented individuals for progression and succession is critical for the growth and success of the company over the long term.

Conclusion

Identifying an individual’s strengths and approaches to work before making hiring decisions will help enhance reliability and build confidence that your company is hiring the most qualified candidate. Once this step is complete, the individual’s boss can map out a plan and timeline for developing skills and gaining experience that will enable the person to move forward in the organization.

Smart companies, ones that want to select and retain talent in industries that are characterized by pirating, know that they must pioneer new ways to hire smart, develop talent, and teach the non-technical aspects of leading. Remember, a squirrel is just a rat in a cuter outfit.

About the author

Linda holds a Bachelor of Science in communication, two Master of Arts degrees in both interpersonal communication and organization development, and a Ph.D. in organizational systems. By combining her experience as an organizational psychologist with her education in business, she offers her clients assessment, coaching, consulting, and training solutions that are pragmatic in their approach and sound in their foundation. Specializing in assessment for selection, promotion, and development, Linda helps organizations improve their succession and retention initiatives.

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The advertisement features a circular logo on the left with three stylized human figures in the center, surrounded by gears and four arrows pointing clockwise. To the right, the text 'UNLEASHING CHANGE MANAGEMENT' is written in large, bold, blue letters. Below this, the dates 'OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2018' and the location 'DE RODE HOED AMSTERDAM' are listed. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of an Amsterdam skyline including a windmill and several buildings. In the bottom left corner, the text 'Global Executive Events' is visible.

5 Why Thinking Like a Team is So Critical by Gregg Gregory

One of the biggest challenges managers face is hiring new team members. It's like placing a bet on red at the roulette table in Vegas: Sometimes you get lucky, sometimes you don't. Sometimes a new member picks up the job functions quickly but never acclimates to the team concept, and thus never becomes a good team player. I think we can all agree that in order to have a successful team, everyone must think like a team. Think of almost any sport: A group of average players can beat a team of superstars, as long as they think and function like a well-oiled machine and truly care about their teammates.

In Jim Collins's book *Good to Great*, he argues that good-to-great leaders understand three simple truths:

If you begin with "who" rather than "what," you can more easily adapt to a changing world.

If you have the right people, the problem of how to motivate and manage people largely goes away.

If you have the wrong people, it doesn't matter whether you discover the right direction. You still won't have a great company.

Southwest Airlines is one of the nation's most successful companies, in part because its leaders understand that while you can hire people who can be trained in a job's skills, it's much more difficult to teach the attitudes and behaviors that fit a company's culture. Certain basic job skills are essential, but the right personality, attitude, and values are equally essential to an organization's success.

Think about professional sports. Many professional sports teams have drafted top college players who went on to be lousy in the professional ranks. In other cases, teams have gotten lucky. But was it luck? In the Disney movie *Miracle*, Kurt Russell stars as Herb Brooks, head coach of the gold medal-winning 1980 US hockey team. When his assistant coach asks him why he didn't select some of the best college players at the time, Brooks tells him, "I'm not looking for the best players, Craig. I'm looking for the right players." Brooks recognized the importance of team chemistry.

Read more about RG3 and TeamsEvery leader should think this way. Take the Washington Redskins, for example. Several years ago, the Redskins signed free agent Albert Haynesworth, a well-respected defensive player and an outstanding athlete. However, he never acclimated to the team, and in many eyes he failed to live up to his potential; in fact, he's widely regarded as one of the worst free-agent signings in NFL history. Conversely, think about the Redskins' recent decision to draft Heisman Trophy-winner Robert Griffin III (aka RGIII). The Redskins may have drafted him for his Heisman-winning talent, but there's more to RGIII than athletic ability and a trophy.

During a recent appearance on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, RGIII showed a picture of and described the socks he wore at the Heisman Trophy presentation. They were Superman socks, complete with the cape and the iconic Superman logo. As he puts it, “I’m just the cape and everyone else on the team are the supermen.” Now that is super language from a super team player.

So, what if you lead an existing team? The challenge then becomes getting your team members to think like RGIII, a true team player, and not like a group of individuals that happen to work together. It begins with the right culture, and that begins with a definition of “team.” We define a team as a group of individuals that support and respect each other and:

Possesses harmonious or complimentary skills – when teammates work in harmony with each other, their various skills will actually compliment and advance the process or project forward with purpose.

Are committed to a unified mission – before members can function effectively together they must have a common frame of reference.

Pursues performance objectives on a mutually agreed upon course – it’s not enough to have a common frame of reference; teammates must also agree on the plan, course, and direction to accomplish the task or tasks at hand.

Where members hold each other accountable – to feel like a team, it’s not enough to simply want to help others; teammates must feel comfortable enough to provide feedback to their peers.

Once the definition is in place, ask yourself the all-important question: Do your team members buy into this definition? If you are fortunate enough to have the majority buy in, then you are well on your way. If the challenge is gaining buy-in, then you need to introduce the concept of true teamwork slowly and methodically. For example, you might want to begin by sharing success stories at team meetings.

Steve Wynn, the Las Vegas property developer and hotelier, says that all of the teams in his hotels have a brief daily meeting where they share and celebrate a recent success story. “Anything that increases someone’s self-esteem is much more powerful than money,” he said during a recent appearance on CNN’s Piers Morgan Tonight. When team members are committed to raising the self esteem of their peers, everyone begins to believe in themselves and the team. You cannot have a team until there is team belief.

Once members buy into the concept of a team, each member must begin to think like a team. To be successful, four specific traits are critical:

1. Members must be willing to put the team before their personal agendas or accomplishments. This means that while boasting about personal successes can stimulate some people to achieve further success, this behavior may have a reverse effect on others. When everyone sets aside their personal agendas, the team's energy and morale get a boost.
2. Members must be willing to volunteer for new assignments and tasks. This doesn't mean that everyone should volunteer for every new assignment, just that team members should volunteer for the assignments that make sense for them and the team.
3. Members must be willing to change their personal views to reach a team consensus. Some employees believe their ideas are always right and best for the team. But by taking the time to listen to others and change their views, they actually help the team as a whole become stronger.
4. Members must be open to new ideas for the ultimate benefit of the team. One of the biggest challenges teams (and organizations) face today is the idea that, "We've always done it this way." People are naturally resistant to change, and sometimes the biggest offenders are a team's leaders.

As these traits become more entrenched, teams naturally become stronger, more collaborative, and more successful.

Team thinking is truly a multipronged approach, and leaders need to recognize how employees think about what they are doing. Look at the following seven levels of team thinking and try to determine where you and each of your team members reside:

1. Wait to be told what to do: Like a teenager who has chores and always waits for her parents to tell her to do them, employees sometimes take no initiative and just wait for direction from the team leader before doing anything.
2. Make a recommendation and then wait to be told what to do: Employee might recognize that there is an issue that needs to be addressed, but they won't take action until they've been given specific instruction from the team leader.
3. Advise and act: As employees gain self-confidence, they will tell others they are going to take action and then actually take it.
4. Act and advise: Employees take action and let the team leader know what they've done. At this level, employees are seeking validation, which increases self-esteem. If this validation isn't received, employees tend to revert back to earlier stages.
5. Act: Team members simply take action, with no concern for validation. They are comfortable with their teammates and their leader, and, most importantly, in their ability to complete the task for the team.

6. Act and consult: While this may sound like level four, this level is not about increasing self-confidence. Rather, it's about pursuing a certain level of cross-collaboration between departments. When team members work at this level they are communicating and producing more effectively, from an organizational standpoint.
7. Acting for the benefit of the team: While frontline employees may not function at this particular level, it is the level where leaders need to be. One of the most difficult tasks for leaders is making decisions that are best for the team and organization, even when those decisions may have a negative impact on specific individuals. These decisions are vital to the team's success, however difficult they may be.

The challenge for most organizations is that many employees reside at levels two and three, while team success doesn't begin to occur until team members reach levels four through six. Leaders can help advance their team's progress through effective delegation, motivation, and recognition.

As team members level up, they become more invested in their team, their teammates, and the organization as a whole. This ultimately results in happier employees, greater productivity, and lower turnover.

In the movie *Miracle*, Herb Brooks focused on getting his players to think like a team with a unified mission. Since many of the players came from different collegiate teams and, in fact, saw each other as rivals, this was especially difficult. To accomplish his goal, Herb drilled his players mercilessly and made them almost hate him. Once they were united against him, he channeled that energy into learning a new way of playing the game and learning how to think like a team. The result? They beat the long undefeated Soviet team in what went down in sports history as the "Miracle on Ice."

Thinking like a team is the foundation of success. Only when that foundation is solid can a team focus on achieving its vision and mission.

About the author

Gregg Gregory helps organizations design cooperative teams that produce results and perform at peak levels. Through his interactive workshops and consulting, Gregg's clients achieve greater team focus, cooperation, productivity, and impact. His experience includes more than two decades of human resources, real estate, mortgage banking, as well as radio and television broadcasting. Please contact Gregg at 866-764-TEAM. <http://TeamsRock.com>

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6 How to Select the Right Person for the Job by Bob Selden

Have you ever recruited someone who looked good at interview only to find out when they started that they “Were not up to it” or, “They just didn’t seem to fit in”. Most of us have made these mistakes (if you haven’t, then you are probably new to management). Why is it so difficult to select the right person? Find out how to select the right person...

We often rely too much on the interview as the main selection process, or

We place too much emphasis on professional credentials at the expense of ability to do the job and values fit, or

We recruit too often “in our own likeness”.

What’s the best way of finding out whether someone can do the job? Try them out. Not all of us have the resources to be able to “give someone a go”, unless we are recruiting for a position such as “air traffic controller”. As a regular flyer, I know that I would be worried if the recruitment process for air traffic controllers relied principally on the interview! Having worked with a number of air traffic controllers, I now rest easy knowing that a major part of the selection process is simulations of actual flight control. So, if you have the resources, go for simulation.

Without simulations, we must still rely on the interview. Unfortunately, numerous studies suggest that the interview (by itself) is an ineffective selection method. Why? Let me pose the question – “How similar is an interview to the type of work the person is expected to do?” If interviewing is not a major part of the normal day to day activities of the position for which you are recruiting, then the selection interview is not replicating the work, but is merely a discussion on what the person has done or might be able to do. Take for example the following questions, often asked:

Tell me about your duties in your last position.

What did you like most about the job?

What did you like least about the job?

Why do you want this job?

Where do you want to be five years from now?

How do you feel about working for a demanding boss?

What is your management [or marketing etc] philosophy?

What would you do if you were working for a manager who refuses to set priorities for you?

Tell me what you would do in your first few weeks in this role.

Before you reach for your pen to jot down a “new one” you liked, let me make a point. Not one of these questions works! None of them helps predict future behaviour in the job for which you are recruiting.

So, how can you improve the interview? A technique known as “Behaviour Description (or Event) Interviewing (BDI)” has been shown to improve interview effectiveness by as much as four times. Mind you, you should still use more than the interview, but more of that later.

Read the following question asked of a candidate in relation to a job requirement of “managing poor performance” and see how it differs from the previous list of questions:

Tell me about the last time you faced the situation of an employee who wasn't performing.
What was the situation?
How did you deal with it?
What did you do?
What did you say?
What did he/she say?
How did you respond?
What was the outcome?

By comparison to our previous questions, BDI asks for examples of past behaviour that the candidate has experienced, that are likely to indicate how the candidate might perform in similar situations in the current position.

It specifically calls for the descriptions of events, not thoughts, feelings or hypotheses. Additionally, it prevents the candidate from lying or exaggerating as the following parts of the question will soon catch them out.

So, the BDI interviewing process becomes:

Describe an event.
Describe the behaviour (what happened).
Describe the outcomes.

In addition to the BDI interview, what do you need to add to your selection armoury? Depending on the position, there are of course the professional qualifications, but we all know that these merely get the candidate through the gate – it's what he or she can do with their qualifications that we are interested in. For some positions, you may also decide that IQ, EQ or personality tests are useful (these need to be shown to be reliable tests by correlation with previous successful candidates).

Then of course there's the reference. Written references are almost useless and phone references are generally ineffective for the same reasons as the standard employment interview. However, you can increase the effectiveness of references by using the BDI method over the phone with the candidate's referee.

In addition to finding out whether someone can do the job, there's also the very important aspect of "values fit". Will the person fit in with the people and the culture? There are numerous values questionnaires on the market that you may try, however I have two simple techniques that could save you money. Both of these are dependent on the fact that you already know what values you are looking for (that's for another article). The first is to ask the applicant to describe their "ideal organisation". In doing so, they will always describe the values they hold dear when looking for an employer. The second is to ask your team (the people the candidate will be working alongside) to also do a short interview – this can often be achieved in conjunction with a plant or office tour.

Finally, a word of warning. One of the most frequent mistakes I see is managers recruiting in their own likeness, i.e. people who are similar to themselves in many ways. This is a natural tendency of human nature, but can be avoided if you use the BDI method, together with your team members and perhaps peers assisting in the selection of the final candidate.

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling "What To Do When You Become The Boss" – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He's also coached at one of the world's premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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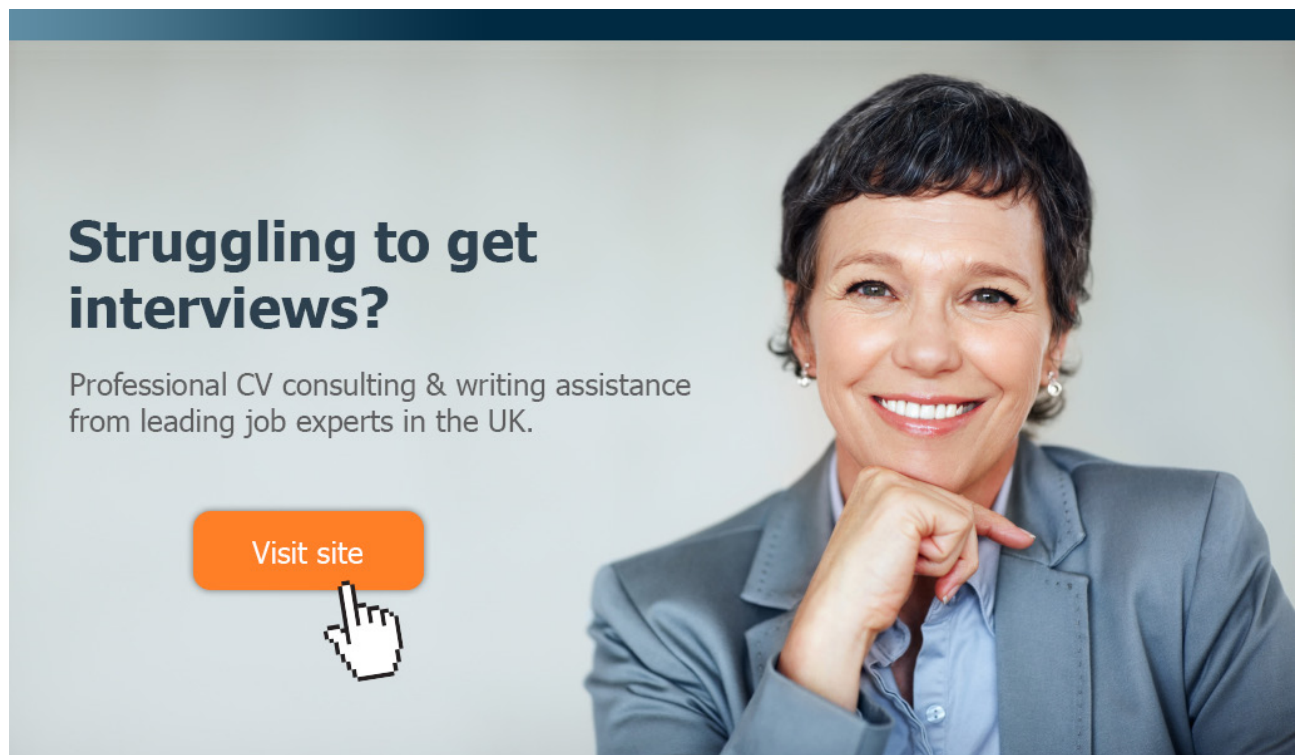
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7 13 Reasons Managers are “Unlucky” When Making Hiring Decisions by Nelson Scott

Shortly after Harold’s first day on the job, Shirley sensed something wasn’t right. This was not the person she had interviewed and hired. During the interview, Harold seemed to share Shirley’s views on customer service, teamwork, and the importance of time management and organization. However, his job performance told a different story.

Harold was often late and his work area was a disaster. Shirley had first hand evidence of his indifference and occasional rudeness towards customers. Co-workers seemed to go out of their way to avoid contact.


What had happened? How had a seemingly perfect hire gone so wrong? In conversation with other managers Shirley concluded that she “was just unlucky”. They understood. “You can’t be lucky every time you hire. You’ll have better luck next time,” they assured her.



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Shirley and her colleagues are typical of many managers who believe that successful hiring is a matter of luck. After thousands of interviews, hundreds of hires and more hiring mistakes than I care to admit, I have identified 13 reasons that managers are “unlucky” when hiring. Better luck comes to those who recognize these common mistakes and take action to avoid them.

Hasty hiring – Some managers believe that it is essential that vacancies be filled immediately. To avoid a few weeks of pain, these managers will risk months of anguish by rushing to hire someone with anything approaching suitable credentials. While filling a vacancy quickly is desirable, ensuring the right match is more important. This may take time.

Not understanding what makes employees successful – Who are the company’s best employees? What do they say or do that makes them successful? What attitudes do they bring to work? How do they handle common work situations? “Are you systematically trying to find people with similar characteristics to add to your staff?” asks Betty Saunders in *Fabled Service*. “As elementary as this may seem, it is seldom practiced.”

Limited recruitment efforts – Classified advertising may attract resumes, but this is not your only source for new employees. Post notices at employment agencies. Put up signs and leave application forms where customers will see them. Ask employees or customers for referrals. Exercise recruiting creativity.

Too little time reviewing resumes – Job seekers carefully craft attractive resumes. They choose just the right words to show themselves in the best light. Managers should take as much care in reviewing resumes before deciding who to interview. They need to look for evidence that the person behind the resume has the same attitudes and skills as their best employees. They must avoid being impressed by the latest buzz words. If something on the resume is unclear, they need to make a note to ask for clarification during the interview.

Decisions based on first impressions – First impressions often become lasting ones. Some managers decide early in the interview whether or not to hire. Effective interviewers delay judgment. They understand that shyness or nervousness may prevent a candidate from being at his or her best as the interview begins. As the interview progresses, interviewers may hear more of what is needed to make a quality hiring decision, if they are still listening.

Biases get in the way – Intentionally or not, some managers make hiring decisions based on factors unrelated to job performance. Ignoring for a moment the human rights laws that these decisions violate, managers need to think about how the talent pool shrinks when they eliminate candidates based on their age, gender, race, religion, family status or sexual orientation.

Talking too much – Interviews are a time for managers to get to know potential employees, not for them to learn what a great person the interviewer is. Successful interviewers ask brief, well-designed questions and then listen for the answers. Talkative interviewers often end up interviewing and hiring themselves. A well-prepared interviewee listens for opportunities to agree with everything the interviewer says, whether or not this reflects the candidate’s true beliefs.

Asking the wrong questions – Answers to many common questions yield two things: information the interviewer already has and information that is virtually useless. Why ask about schooling and work experience when this information is available from the resume? Why ask candidates to describe their strengths or goals for the next five years? Hundreds of books and seminars prepare candidates to describe their strengths, weaknesses and future plans. The answers to these questions provide little information that is useful to the interviewer.

Not asking the right questions – Managers want to know is whether or not the candidate can do the job. The best way to find out is to ask about previous work experiences. How a person dealt with a situation in another job likely shows how he or she will deal with similar situation in the future. Managers must compare the interviewee’s responses to what their best employees would do. If the interviewee is in line with them, make a job offer. If he or she isn’t, keep looking.

Well-rehearsed answers – Hiring guru Robert Half observed, “The greatest strength of some job candidates is their ability to impress the people who interview them.” An almost limitless number of books provide job seekers with scripts for answering frequently-asked questions. Memorizing these responses prepares the interviewee to dazzle interviewers. Effective interviewers don’t settle for these superficial responses. They probe for additional information.

No notes – Some managers think it unnecessary to take notes. Even though they have great memories, they will have difficulty remembering which candidate said what, especially if the interviews occur over an extended time. Because most people remember best what was heard most recently, the last person interviewed is the one hired more than half the time. Keep this Chinese proverb in mind: “The palest ink is better than the best memory.”

Wasted reference checks – No manager would invite a complete stranger to decide who to hire. This, however, is what many managers do when they ask references if they would hire this person again without knowing the criteria used to judge employee’s performance. What managers learn when they ask about the candidate’s strengths and work habits is not much better. For more useful information, managers must ask how the candidate dealt with specific situations in the past, or, they must seek confirmation about what they heard during the interview.

Gut feelings – When the interview ends, some managers make decisions based on how they feel about the candidate. A “good feeling” leads to a job offer. Effective interviewers follow their heads, not their hearts. They assess candidates based on how well they meet the job’s success criteria.

Canadian humorist Stephen Leacock wrote, “I am a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work the more I have of it.” Successful staff selection is not a matter of luck. Success comes from hard work to overcome the 13 reasons managers are unlucky when they make hiring decisions.

About the author

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A professional trainer, speaker, and consultant since 1995, Nelson Scott works with organizations that are committed to making the right hiring decisions, developing and retaining productive staff, and strengthening relationships with customers. Learn more by visiting www.seaconsultingonline.com or e-mailing nmscott@telus.net.

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8 How Do Your Job Candidates See You? by Eric Garner

Have you ever wondered how you come across to the candidates you interview? Here are 9 interviewer types. Work out which is most like you and you'll know just what your candidates go through at interview.

1. The Stickler.

The Stickler is someone who likes to plan the interview down to the last detail. He or she believes there is a right way to interview. Once they work it out, they'll stick to that format every time. Interviews with Sticklers tend to be highly structured, formal, polite, and business-like. They'll rarely run over their allotted time. Sticklers believe this approach will enable them to make accurate selections.

2. The Helper.

The Helper is a people-person. The tone of their interviews is invariably friendly, warm and sociable. They will offer coffee and biscuits, hang up people's coats for them, work out their best route home, and accompany them all the way from the interview room back out of the building. Because of this, interviews feel more like a nice chat than serious business.



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3. The Performer.

The Performer sees an interview as a major promotional opportunity. They will talk up the job, the organization, and themselves. They come over as attractive, charming, and seductive. They want you to like them. Performers like their candidates to be as attractive as they believe they are. They must look in fashion and be able to quote all the latest ideas and buzz-words about the job.

4. The Prober.

The Prober sees the interview as a chance to get to know a person at a deep meaningful level. Because of this, they may ignore a structured approach and take longer than they need to. They have a knack of spotting stars and uncovering the real qualities that a person has. They may get bored with dull candidates and are likely to be attracted to individualists who, like themselves, have a touch of something special.

5. The Observer.

The Observer sees the interview as essentially a one-way process in which they can gather information on the candidate while giving little away about themselves. Nothing escapes their attention. They can pick up on a little detail and also see the big picture. To encourage people to talk, the Observer comes over as interested, curious and charming.

6. The Questioner.

The Questioner approaches every interview in two minds: will this person be a safe bet or not? The way they find out is with lots of questions, checks, tests, and references. Only when they feel safe with a candidate will they support them. Then they will become the greatest advocate for giving them the job.

7. The Enthusiast.

The Enthusiast is someone who likes to get switched on by a candidate, especially if they share their own enthusiasms. They are often impatient people who may be so busy that they turn up half-way through the interview or leave before the end. Enthusiasts may do more talking than the candidates as they love nothing better than an audience.

8. The Boss.

The Boss likes to let candidates know that they're in charge. They think that the best way to find out about others is to put them on the spot, test them, or confront them. They are the most likely interviewers to use stress tactics. Boss interviewers warm to candidates who are strong and brash like them, or who are willing to be loyal followers in their team.

9. The Avoider.

The Avoider likes to melt into the background at interviews. In a panel, they will defer to others. Alone, they will defer to the candidate. Their philosophy is not to control the process but to simply sit back and let things happen. Curiously, this hands-off approach often allows the best candidate to come through naturally.

So there you go. Next time you interview, instead of focusing all your attention on your candidates, have a peek at your own style. You may learn a lot more about you than you do about them.

About the author

Eric Garner runs ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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9 Hannibal Lecter is Coming to the Company Picnic: Employee Selection by Gregory P Smith

“Let me tell you about this great guy I hired! He is a little older, but he passed the interview with flying colors and best yet . . . he loves to work with people. He is fascinating and has great ‘soft skills,’ just what we need around here. I have a gut feeling he is going to be the best sales person we’ve ever hired.”

Finding and placing the right person for the right job is critical to business success. Because of the labor shortage, many businesses feel like they need to lower their standards and hire the first living body that walks through the door – a bad strategy.

Job interviewing alone is unreliable in today’s market. Many people with hiring responsibilities are not aware how one bad choice can damage or in this case “kill” healthy organizations. Shortsighted decisions often lead to disastrous results.

One reason interviewing by itself is unreliable is because most of today’s job seekers are proficient at interviewing – they already know what to say. They can put on a good “presentation” and bluff their way through. Even the best interview doesn’t give an accurate clue on their reliability and how they interact with their co-workers. Furthermore, job resumes are often exaggerated and unreliable.

A better approach is needed. Many organizations are turning to behavior assessments and personality trait testing for both hourly workers and managers. Back in the late ’90s, only 5 percent of Fortune 500 companies used some type of assessment. Today, that figure is climbing to 65 percent. A year 2000 study by American Management Association showed nearly half of 1,085 employers polled use at least one assessment in their interviewing process.

Javier Lozano, SPHR, an organizational capability coordinator for Chevron USA recently told HR News that, “A validated pre-employment test can be a strong predictor of future performance and whether an applicant is a good fit for the job. If used correctly, a validated test can be one of the best retention tools available to the employer.”

For example, companies like The Plotkin Group created an integrity survey that measures an individual's honesty. It identifies applicants who may steal merchandise or money, misuse sick days, give unauthorized discounts and other counter-productive behaviors. QWIZ Inc. has several automated tests that help measure basic job skills such as word processing, computer skills and basic reading and mathematics. They also have a product that can help select better applicants to work in call centers.

One bank using assessments selected people who sold \$60,000 more services and products annually. A manufacturing company hired people who generated \$21,600 more per year than the company average and \$42,000 more than those who received failing scores with the assessment. By using behavioral interviewing process and assessments, Ritz-Carlton hotels was able to reduce their turnover from over 100% to less than 30%.

It is bad enough to hire Hannibal Lecter as an employee and much worse to have Hannibal Lecter as a boss. Soft skills or manager's Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a key factor in creating high retention. Many times people get promoted for the wrong reasons or good technically skilled people can't make the leap to become good supervisors.

To help develop soft skills hundreds of companies are using a special version of the DISC assessment. The reason this is far superior to other assessments is its simplicity, accuracy and availability on the Internet 24 hours a day. It takes only 10 minutes to complete, score and E-mailed to anyone in the world within minutes.

Individuals receive a personalized 26-page report that helps them see themselves as other people see them. Furthermore, this report helps facilitate a positive dialogue between the manager, the team and his or her boss. The personalized report includes beneficial information as to:

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About the author

Greg Smith's cutting-edge keynotes, consulting, and training programs have helped businesses reduce turnover, increase sales, hire better people and deliver better customer service. As President of Chart Your Course International he has implemented professional development programs for hundreds of organizations globally. He has authored nine informative books including *Fired Up! Leading Your Organization to Achieve Exceptional Results*. For more information, visit ChartCourse.com or call (770) 860-9464.

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10 The Costs of Bad Hiring Decisions & How to Avoid Them by Carol A. Hacker

The costs of bad hiring decisions can sneak up on an organization and ambush all of your good efforts as a manager to recruit and retain good people. It's no secret that costs increase when the same errors are made repeatedly. Although we hope to learn from our mistakes, unfortunately that's not always the case. When it comes to bad hiring decisions, the costs to replace a misfit can be astronomical!

For example, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the average cost of a bad choice has climbed to a whopping 30% of the first year's potential earnings. Other experts agree but add that's only the case if the bad decision is discovered and corrected during the first six months the new employee is on the job. If the mistake isn't recognized and addressed until later, it could cost considerably more. Where do these costs come from?

- Training a replacement
- Classified advertising
- The interviewer's salary and benefits
- Potential loss of customers
- Lower productivity
- Low morale
- Recruitment agency fees
- Possible unemployment compensation claim
- Potential lawsuit
- The aggravation and time associated with starting your job search over again

Given the expense, it makes sense to prevent the problems from happening. Bad choices are avoidable in every industry, but it takes some planning and practice to escape close encounters with the worst kind. Although this article doesn't cover all of the aspects of selecting winning employees, it discusses three very important steps you can take in avoiding a bad hiring decision.

1. Know what the interview can and cannot measure.

Interviews don't test job skills. They measure interpersonal skills. Performance is the real test. In the interview you can evaluate comprehension, determination, self-confidence, social skills, self-expression, sense of humor, and persuasiveness. If the candidates don't have the qualities you're looking for, chances are they're not the right people for the job.

Have you ever gotten stuck with someone who shined during the interview but quickly tarnished once employed? Avoiding a loser is possible but it takes planning and good interviewing skills which takes practice.

For example, if you could find out during the interview if a candidate can do what he or she claims they can do, would that information be helpful? It's one of the easiest things to find out about someone. This is how it's done.

Start the interview with small talk and help the candidate feel comfortable. Ask several questions to clarify what's on the resume or application. Ease into asking candidates to tell you, "A to Z; soup to nuts," (in as much detail as they can) what would they do in order to, for example: prepare for a performance evaluation of an employee, use a spreadsheet to enter data, complete a detailed document, etc. If the individual has actually done what is claimed, it can be explained in step-by-step detail. Anyone who cannot provide specifics to back up his or her claim has not done the work, does not have the experience, and should be considered questionable. If you have any doubts, with additional follow up questions you can satisfy any concerns you may have.

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2. Gather versus give information.

Talking too much is the number one mistake interviewers make. If you're excited about your business and the employment opportunity, you may say too much too early in the interview. There's a certain amount of information you must reveal, but don't make the mistake of giving a description of what you're looking for in a candidate. When you volunteer information, you run the risk of "influencing" what you get back. Start by asking questions from a list you've prepared in advance and stick to your list. When you're done and satisfied with the information you've gathered, you may ask if the candidate has any questions.

When you have answered all of the questions the candidate may have, you should be prepared to make your sales pitch to the best candidate. Then, sell the organization and job opportunity. Just don't oversell or make promises you can't keep. Convincing someone that your organization will meet his or her career and/or financial needs has actually been taking place to some degree throughout the interview process by the way you act and the things you say. Sharp candidates look at every job possibility with a critical eye and evaluate each situation as they observe the interviewer and learn more about the opportunity. Even part-timers and entry-level workers have a choice. If you want them to choose you, keep in mind you're selling your organization and an opportunity beginning with their first impression of you. Treat every candidate like your best customer.

3. Ask the right questions.

Start with open-ended questions, those which use the words "who?" "what?," "when?," "where?," "how?," or "why?" They'll help you decide whether candidates can do what they claim they can do. Listen to cue words in the answers; these words lead to more open-ended questions. Avoid close-ended questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."

Behavior-based questions are also important. They force the candidate to tell you what actually happened in the past, while hypothetical questions invite candidates to share only what they think sounds good to you. For example: "How would you handle a difficult co-worker?" In responding, a candidate would probably have an answer you'd like. However, if you asked the same question in the behavior-based format, it would be: "Tell me how you handled a difficult co-worker in the past." In the second example, you're asking the candidate to tell you what happened. You're more likely to get a realistic answer. The past is a reliable predictor of the future.

Bear in mind the more recent the past, the better the predictor. Several sample behavior-based questions are:

Tell me about a time when you were criticized by your supervisor.

Give me two examples of decisions you had to make on your last job.

Tell me how you kept your supervisor advised of the status on your work.

This job will require you to spend a lot of time interacting with others – When have you had to work in this kind of environment and how did you feel about that?

Share with me something you've done that shows initiative.

Tell me about a time when you were asked to do a job that was not part of your job description.

Each question asks for specific information. The answers will provide clues to how the candidate works, thinks, interacts, handles responsibility, accepts criticism, and reacts when asked to complete an assignment that's not a regular part of the job. Use these questions and others like them to get the information you need to make a sound decision.

The answers to each of these questions will provide additional information about the candidates. Even if they stumble or can't seem to come up with an answer, don't let them off the hook. You have the right to ask questions until you are satisfied with what they have to say. Just be sure that you don't ask questions that might get you in legal hot water.

In summary

We probably can all say that at least once in our careers we hired someone who should have never been hired in the first place. The responsibility of making hiring decisions isn't easy, but by being aware of what it costs when you make a bad decision and putting extra effort up front, you'll have an advantage.

Job candidates will in many cases, come well-prepared to meet the challenges that await them in the interview. Others will need your encouragement and understanding in order to feel comfortable enough with you to be honest. Good people are worth the effort it takes to find and compete for them. Take the necessary time to prepare for the interview and you can cut costs by avoiding unnecessary recruiting and regrettable choices

About the author

Carol Hacker is a human resource consultant, speaker, and trainer who ranks among the experts in the field of recruiting and retention issues. For more than two decades, she's been a significant voice in front-line and corporate human resource management to small businesses as well as Fortune500 companies. She's the author of the highly acclaimed books, *Hiring Top Performers-350 Great Interview Questions For People Who Need People*, *The Costs of Bad Hiring Decisions & How to Avoid Them*, *The High Cost of Low Morale...and what to do about it*, and *450 Low-Cost/No-Cost Strategies for recognizing, rewarding & retaining good people*, *Job Hunting in the 21st Century-Exploding the Myths*, *Exploring the Realities* and *366 Surefire Ways to Let Your Employees Know They Count*. Carol can be reached at 770-410-0517 or CarolAHacker@hotmail.com

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11 Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes by David Diamond

“Brown eyes, blue eyes” is the name often given to an anti-discrimination experiment that was carried out in America in 1968. It was conducted in a small school in Riceville, Iowa, amongst 8-year-old children on the day after the assassination of Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King. The experiment was devised by the children’s teacher, Jane Elliott, as a way of explaining why King had been murdered and what it felt like to be discriminated against. The experiment was turned into a film called “A Class Divided”. You can view this film from the website link at the bottom of the page. It is one of the most striking films ever made on the subject of discrimination and an important and invaluable resource in training staff to manage people fairly.

Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes: the Experiment

The month before Martin Luther King was murdered, Jane Elliott’s young class had completed a project on the leader and his Civil Rights movement. When news came through of his murder, Jane decided to use a direct way of bringing home to her class what it was like to be discriminated against. This is what she did.

On the morning of the experiment, Jane told her 8-year-olds that it was a proven fact that all children with blue eyes were more intelligent than those with brown eyes. Those with blue eyes would thus be accorded privileges such as second helpings at lunch, access to the new jungle gym, and 5 minutes extra at break times. The brown-eyed children were denied these privileges and made to sit at the back of the room. Almost at once, the brown-eyed children were bullied and treated as second-class pupils. In that day’s class tests, their performance in class noticeably declined. The blue-eyed children’s performance, however, improved. The following day, the teacher announced that she had been mistaken and that it was those with brown eyes who were more intelligent. Not surprisingly, the roles were reversed. This time, it was the brown-eyed children’s turn to bully and mistreat those who had previously been their tormentors although this time, with the experience of being on the receiving end behind them, the feelings towards the “inferior” pupils were less cruel and more understanding.

Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes and Diversity Training

At the end of the “Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes” experiment, and with the beginnings of understanding awakening in them, Jane Elliott’s children decided to write about their feelings of being discriminated against and being discriminators. When they were filmed years later, all of them remembered vividly how the experiment had made them feel and how it had changed their attitude towards race and discrimination. Since then, the experiment has been reproduced in many other settings and used as one of the mainstays of diversity training. Jane Elliott herself moved into wider work on race harmony to become known as the “foremother” of diversity training.

About the author

David Diamond is an article contributor to ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

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12 Recruiting 101 for CEOs by Thomas Cox

Of the CEO's four major responsibilities – Culture, Budget, Strategy, and building the senior Team – I believe the hardest and most important is building the team.

Jim Collins, the author of “Good to Great” and “Great by Choice” among others, agrees. To best prepare for an uncertain future, recruit the greatest team you can. “We have nearly 7,000 years of combined corporate history in our research database,” said Collins in a recent interview. “The single most important leadership skill, above all others, is the ability to make exceptional people decisions and put them in the right seats.”

Mark Horstman of www.manager-tools.com said, “the single most important thing great managers do is hire well.”

And as Steve Bell describes in the Shingo Prize-winning book “Lean IT: Enabling and Sustaining Your Lean Transformation” some business processes are best pursued in partnership with key specialty partners. One crucial process area where partnering makes a lot of sense is recruiting.

The CEO's four deliverables are deeply intertwined. Change your Strategy, and you'll need different skills on your senior team – so you would recruit different people. All top people have a disproportionately high impact on the Culture you are creating – so as you recruit, you are actually creating the culture as well as looking for people who fit the culture. And your top finance person needs to be able to support your capital allocation and budget plan – so for the CFO role in particular, the act of recruiting will impact all four areas.

I had the good fortune to pick the brain of master recruiter Wendy Kent of Kent Employment Solutions. Wendy has been recruiting in the same city for over 20 years, has built a vast network of contacts, and enjoys long term success based on deep relationships and trust with both firms and candidates.

How to Partner on Recruiting

First ask, how often do I perform this task? If you're hiring 20 baristas a day, then you should have a very robust internal barista-hiring process. By contrast, you shouldn't be sourcing, vetting, and recruiting senior managers very frequently – certainly not frequently enough to have it as an internal strength.

Recruiting is not an extension of HR. Recruiting is an extension of marketing. Recruiters are marketing your firm to the pool of potential employees, and also creating an impression on other people who are touched by the recruiting effort.

Good recruiters will:

- Help people feel a desire to work for you
- Match people with the right personality to the right role
- Understand who will be a good cultural fit

For example, New Seasons' recruiters work with the grocery chain's marketing department to get potential candidates excited about working there.

I did that the wrong way myself recently when helping a client recruit. I placed an ad for an entry level position, got 85 responses, and just assumed every one of them was excited about working for my client. I did no marketing – nothing to sell those candidates on the virtues of the hiring firm. I invited all 85 to take the next step in the recruiting process – and only 5 did so. (They were great candidates – but were there other, even better, candidates whom I lost? I'll never know.)

If you find lots of attrition between recruiting steps, you may lack good marketing during recruiting.

Finding the Right Recruiter

The quality of the recruiter can vary enormously – and if you want “A” talent you need an “A” recruiter. Be picky:

- Look for a successful track record through referrals from friends and people they have placed into jobs
- How many companies have they worked for?
- How long have they been with a company?
- Look for someone who has worked in your market – that makes a huge difference
- Research them through Linked-In and through their references

Good recruiters should have lists of people always looking for new jobs in their market with better compensation.

What and How to Pay

Recruiter compensation can vary widely. Common arrangements are commission and retainer.

When paying a recruiter on commission, be sure to:

- Base it on the success of the placement

- Be prepared to pay up front

- Sometimes you can negotiate to pay a portion up front, then the rest after they find a candidate

- Budget 20–30% of the annual salary of the new hire

How to Hire

Lots of folks are using the “Contract to hire” approach – offer someone a 90 day contract, and then let them go if they aren’t a good fit, and offer them a permanent position if they are a good fit.

However, the 90-day contracts are only good for recruiting the unemployed. Already-employed candidates are not going to leave a firm job for a 90-day contract.

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Jane, Chinese architect

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90-day contracts are appropriate for entry level positions, and for employers without a good vision of what their company needs.

Cultural Fit

Always meet with the recruiters pick to make sure they meet the cultural needs of the company. Ask them to describe their own culture to see that they understand it and are a good fit. Have the recruiter spend time with your firm so they can assess your culture.

Guarantee

After the hire, the recruiter should guarantee the hire or replace them for free if they do not work out.

Summary

There is a time and a place when a recruiter is needed. Not all companies will need a recruiter. It is based on the frequency and regularity with which you do your hiring.

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13 The Click-Down Technique

by Erica Rowntree

The Click-Down technique is a technique from Dave Logan for discovering a person's values at selection interview. Dave, who co-wrote the groundbreaking management book, "Tribal Leadership", says that most managers tend to concentrate their candidate searches on two things only: whether a person can do the job, competence, and whether a person will fit in, look and feel. But the reason why most people fail to succeed in their jobs isn't about competence and appearance; it's about whether their deepest values are a fit for the team and the organisation. That's why you need to discover your candidates' values at interview and why the Click-Down technique is such a valuable technique for helping you.

Why Values and Core Values are Important

A simple definition of a value is something that is really important to someone. A "core" value is what is really important about the important things and beyond which you cannot go further. It's as if the core value is the heart and soul of why people do something. It's the secret to their happiness and the purpose of their life. As such, it is the key to motivation and the one thing that someone will bring to the team even if they do nothing else. Core values are what someone is willing to fight for, maybe to die for, and certainly to give up a job for.

The Click-Down Technique in Hiring

So what is the Click-Down technique and how does it help you discover someone's core values in a recruitment interview? Here's how it works:

First, when you are dealing with a candidate's approach to work, ask an open-ended question about why they do what they do. An open-ended question often asks "why?" as compared to closed questions that often ask "What?". It's the difference between asking "what did you do?" and getting answers about skill and competence and "why was that important?" and getting answers about values.

Secondly, listen to the answer and find the words or phrase that indicate the area of interest or importance to the speaker.

Third, now "click down" on that word or phrase as if it were a web link, in other words, find out something more about this area of importance. Every time you get a reply, find the key area of importance and keep clicking down with your questions. You'll go from general values initially to specific values and ultimately core values until you can get no further.

An Example of the Click-Down Technique

Here is an example of the click-down technique in a hiring interview with the web-type links in bold:

You, the Hiring Manager: You said that the response you got made a big difference to you. Why was that?

Candidate: The integrity of the team was on the line.

You: Why was the team's integrity so important to you?

Candidate: Because I wanted to show that the team could take on more risks.

You: So is risk-taking something you would expect in your team?

Candidate: Yes, I really believe that a manager's role is to get teams to go beyond what they can do easily and challenge them with the difficult stuff.

You: Why is challenging so important?

Candidate: Because it brings out the best in people. And that's what I think work offers to others.

For Winning Teams, Match Individual and Team Values

If you are recruiting key people in your teams, at whatever level, you need to know that your new recruits can perform competently but you also need to know that their beliefs are a match for the team. That's why you don't employ risk-takers in bureaucracies or efficiency experts in cut-throat, do-or-die, seat-of-the-pants businesses. By all means, list the skills and competencies that your recruits need but also add and focus on the values that are important for success. That way you'll get the people you need and a successful match between individual and team.

About the author

Erica Rowntree is an article contributor to ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

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14 Out With the Old and In With the New by Gregg Gregory

With Newness come anticipation for both the new-hire and the organization

One of the great things I like about college sports is the true teamwork. What is interesting is that with more and more players turning professional earlier and not completing their four years of college, recruiting and keeping the team focused on the mission has become a real challenge for coaches and athletic directors.

It is a fact – team members change – sometimes they leave of their own accord and sometimes we offer what I like to call ‘career re-direction advice’. Regardless, team members change, and the trick becomes to integrate new members into an existing team successfully?

Let’s look at this from both the perspective of the new employee and how he or she can acclimate themselves into the team, and then how we can help acclimate the new employee into our team.

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First, if you have been traded to a new team (excuse the sports metaphor here) what should you do to feel like you are part of the team quickly? We have all been there – started a new job or position and not known anyone on the team. Here are a few tips and tricks you can employ if indeed you find yourself in this position.

Take the initiative to meet everyone on the team. Getting to know your new teammates can be fun and when you learn something about them, and get them to talk about themselves; you have made deposits into their emotional bank account. Everyone likes to talk about themselves and when you talk casually you can ask questions. Now, the true secret is to bank this information. Don't retain this so you can manipulate them at a later date – instead retain this information and use it to build trust and alliances.

Learn as much as you can about the organization as possible. If this is a new company for you, then you likely did some online research before the first interview. Take this several steps further. Know the big picture about the organization. Having knowledge about the organization is a critical tool in any employee's tool belt and when you take the time to know this information early on you are demonstrating your ability to work with everyone.

Take the time to get to know the team as a whole. Find out about previous successes they have had and yes – find out some of the failures. Learn what the goals and objectives are for the future. The more you know, the greater asset you can be to them.

Know the expectations up front. Many organizations are weak at sharing very specific expectations up front. This is critical for you as you want to make sure you are on track or ahead of schedule. This will show your new team mates that you are pulling your own weight and this also builds trust among your peers.

Now, as my company grows and we bring on new team members, what can we do to get the new members up to speed quickly and get them to feel more comfortable and avoid 'The Lone Ranger Syndrome'?

Make sure their work area, looks, feels, and is fresh. There is nothing like coming into a new place and feeling like it is a fresh start for you only to find a desk that has not been cleaned out, with condiment packages in the drawers and a phone that looks and smells horrible.

If possible, get the new teammate his/her computer password so he can at least get online the first day. Of course it can be changed later – this shows that you care about getting your new-hires up to speed.

Assign the new-hire a mentor to help acclimate them to the surroundings, people, and the way you do things. You may also want to provide them a mentor as it relates specifically to the job function they will be doing. Having two mentors accomplishes a couple of things – they meet more people more quickly, and it helps the existing staff assume some of the leader roles on the team and makes them feel better about working there.

If the position allows, you may want the new-hire to work with different people on the team to learn the different styles and methods of accomplishing work tasks.

Remember, it is about making sure that everyone knows, trusts, and respects each other. While you will not likely get everyone to 'LIKE' everyone else – it is critical that they trust each other in order to accomplish the mission, vision, and values of the team, division, and organization.

About the author

More than 25 years of real world experience has helped Gregg Gregory become the dynamic, well-versed Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) he is today. Gregg's captivating, high-energy keynotes, breakouts and training sessions help design collaborative teams that produce tangible, bottom-line results. With Gregg's concepts in place, organizations thrive with a stronger team culture, a more highly energized workforce, compatibility across team lines, and greater profitability. See more at <http://teamsrock.com/>.

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15 What Is Succession Planning and Who Needs It? by Linda Henman

In the past, leaders used the terms replacement planning and succession planning synonymously, but the two differ. Convincing decision makers to have a disaster replacement plan in the event that key individuals die or depart unexpectedly is not too difficult; persuading them to prepare people for advancement years ahead of their actual promotions presents more challenges. Therefore, replacement planning is a start, but only a start.

Replacement planning harkens back to the 1960s, when managers at General Electric identified four backup candidates for their positions. GE has progressed past this approach, but many organizations have not. Three fundamental problems limit an organization that chooses this path. First, most small companies don't have one, much less four, possible replacements for key positions. Second, attempting to designate a replacement for a job that may change, in an organization that may change, is fraught with problems. Third, focusing on replacement encourages decision makers to concentrate on immediate needs, not long-term requirements. Succession planning balances the short and long-term needs and promotes the simultaneous analysis of each.

Talent inventory advocates propose another approach for fueling the leadership pipeline. They recommend gathering a group of talented individuals to serve as backup to those departing key positions. While solid in fundamentals, this method has problems too. Equating potential with performance can be risky because not all high-potential individuals actually end up performing. Only by placing these people in ever-evolving leadership roles can you accurately observe how they perform. Successful succession planning requires a balanced evaluation of talent, potential, experience, and performance. A course of action for identifying talent throughout the organization, it involves the selection of talented employees to replace key managers who will leave the company because of personal preference, retirement, reassignment, or termination. Here is my own definition of succession planning:

Succession planning is a deliberate, systematic effort to guarantee leadership continuity, a process for ensuring a suitable supply of candidates for current and future key jobs so that the careers of individuals can be managed to optimize both the organization's needs and the individual's aspirations.

Done well, succession planning maintains a balance between implementing business strategy and the achievement of organizational goals with keeping the disruptions that often accompany personnel changes to a minimum. In contrast to an automatic promotion system within the chain of command, succession planning prepares people for present and future work responsibilities so that high-potential individuals are preparing for promotion at all levels. A powerful way to maximize human capital both now and in the future, it creates an ongoing, continuous plan to focus attention on talent.

A variety of reasons can lead senior leaders to establish a succession planning program in their organizations: To support the company strategy, identify replacement needs, increase the talent pool, provide increased opportunities for high potentials, and improve retention. But how do you really know if your current processes sufficiently address your succession planning issues? Ask yourself the following:

- Do managers complain that no one is ready when vacancies open up?
- Are expenses for external searches increasing?
- Will you compromise your strategy because you don't have the talent to support it?
- Are possible successors for key positions leaving because they perceive no room for advancement?

A “yes” answer to any one of these questions implies that your company has not adequately established or communicated its plans for the future of its people, both for replacing people in key roles and for developing high potentials for advancement.

Why should that matter? First, your company will have trouble holding on to the talent you have if those in key positions perceive that they have no hope of advancement. Also, the perception that no one is ready to fill vacancies fuels the insecurities of both employees and other stakeholders. Keeping talent in your organization depends on you having a deep pool of skilled candidates who have been part of a well-defined leadership initiative, stars who have been given every opportunity to realize their full potential.

Second, when organizations lack the culture or discipline to grow their own talent, they have no choice but to look to outsiders; however, companies are usually better off with internal contenders. One has only to look at the National Football League for examples of why companies gamble when they hire outsiders.

Harvard Business School professor Dr. Groysberg and his team of researchers studied trades of star NFL wide receivers and punters to determine what kinds of performance are portable, and what kinds are not. Not surprisingly, they determined that the more the new hire depends on teamwork, the longer he will take to acclimate to the new environment. The performance of wide receivers, who are governed by complex interactions among teammates, declined initially and did not stabilize for a year. Conversely, punters, who engage in the comparatively individualistic act of kicking a football, showed no significant differences in their performance when they changed teams. When considering outside talent, decision makers do well, therefore, to ask themselves how transferable the skills will be and how long people will need in order to produce in your organization as well as their résumés indicate they did in their last jobs.

Conclusion

In the long run, companies fare better when they grow their own talent. In organizations that stretch their abilities and expand the knowledge of their high potentials over a period of time, when replacement becomes necessary, decision makers can select from internal candidates that they have spent time observing, evaluating, and developing.

A word of caution: When companies do not have a well-defined succession plan, the reliance on internal candidates can backfire. Known quantities may sail through the promotion process when board directors and senior leaders fail to engage in the rigorous and sometimes arduous task of evaluation. Instead of engaging in due-diligence, decision makers can allow social and emotional ties to particular individuals to guide their choices. Outside candidates should always be an option, but they should not be your only option.

About the author

Linda holds a Bachelor of Science in communication, two Master of Arts degrees in both interpersonal communication and organization development, and a Ph.D. in organizational systems. By combining her experience as an organizational psychologist with her education in business, she offers her clients assessment, coaching, consulting, and training solutions that are pragmatic in their approach and sound in their foundation. Specializing in assessment for selection, promotion, and development, Linda helps organizations improve their succession and retention initiatives.

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16 Hiring Teams Take 5 Steps Together by Nelson Scott

Too often, taking a team approach to interviewing simply means that a few people show up in the same room just minutes before the first candidate arrives to decide who will ask each of several already prepared questions. When the interviews are over, the “team” hangs around long enough to share their feelings about each of the candidates.

There can be a more structured approach, as participant Linda Karlson explained during an Interview Right to Hire Right seminar hosted by the Peace River Human Resources Association in November 2002. The human resources administrator described how the recruitment teams are involved from start to finish whenever a position is to be filled at Daishowa-Marubeni International (DMI), a pulp mill near Peace River, Alberta with more than 350 employees.

Linda facilitates a process that involves three or four representatives of the department with a position to be filled. All members must commit to remaining involved until the position is filled and attending all meetings throughout the five-step process. The team makes all decisions through consensus.

During the first step, the group meets to clarify its purpose (“to hire the best available technician”) and to determine what they are looking for. They brainstorm what education, skills and personal characteristics they would like to see in the successful candidate. These objectives are divided into two groups: “Musts” (the non-negotiables, minimum educational levels, legislative requirements) and “Wants” (the ideals, preferred educational levels, technical skills, personal characteristics). Each of the Wants is assigned a value, with “10” reflecting the most important.

The second step begins by using newspaper advertising, postings and in some cases, search companies to identify candidates. A matrix that focuses on the readily measurable Musts is used to screen applicants and identify four or five to be interviewed.

Interview questions are written based on the Wants. The candidates’ answers provide data that can be used to compare the alternatives to the Wants. For each of the Wants, the team selects one candidate who best matches the ideal. This person receives a rating of 10. Each of other candidates is assigned a rating in comparison to the best for that Want. These ratings are multiplied by the weighting assigned to the Wants areas earlier in the process. The scores are tallied to produce a final total for each candidate.

As part of the third step the team takes a closer look at the top candidate. If the two top candidates achieved similar scores, both will be looked at. “How do I feel about this person?” “What can go wrong if we hire him?” If serious concerns are identified, which seldom happens, these are taken into consideration when reaching a final decision. If the concerns are minor, a plan may be developed to remedy the problem.

Once these “gut feeling” issues are considered, the team decides who will be hired (step 4). Before their work is done, the team must prepare to provide feedback (step 5) to unsuccessful candidates, particularly internal ones. At the end of the process, all members of the committee are able to give the same message if asked for feedback.

About the author

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A professional trainer, speaker, and consultant since 1995, Nelson Scott works with organizations that are committed to making the right hiring decisions, developing and retaining productive staff, and strengthening relationships with customers. Learn more by visiting www.seaconsultingonline.com or e-mailing nmscott@telus.net.

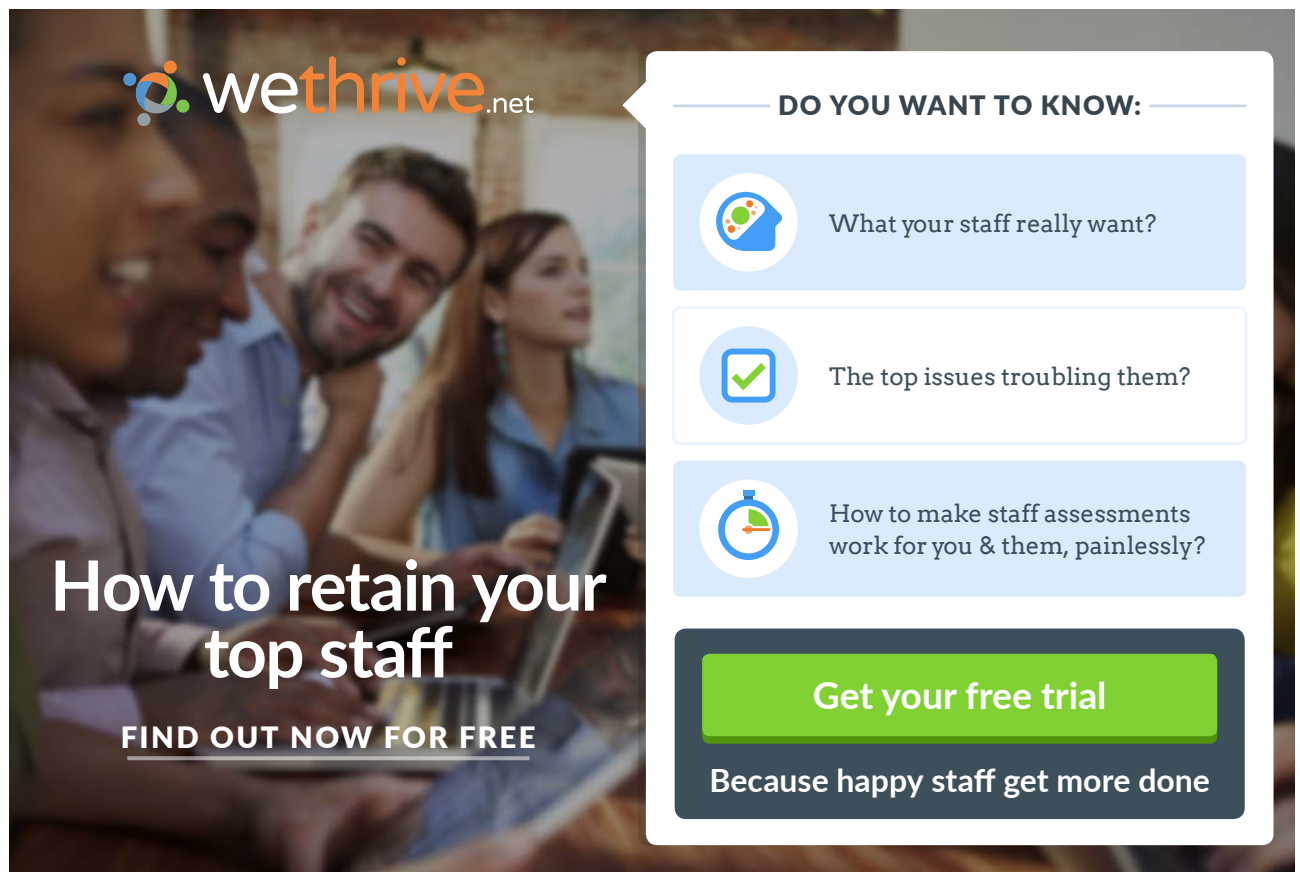
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17 Do First Impressions Count? by Bob Selden

It takes less than 3 seconds to evaluate the other person based on their appearance, body language, demeanor, mannerisms and dress. What's your impression?

I once worked with a young bloke named Neil. Neil was bright, energetic and well presented. There was only one detracting feature about Neil when you first met him – his handshake. Shaking hands with Neil was like holding a wet fish – limp and squashy. My boss at the time, Kendall Smith, was a very perceptive person.

Realising that in our business one had to make a good first impression, Kendall took Neil aside very soon after Neil started in the department for a chat. I'm told the conversation went something along these lines...

"Neil, I can see that you have a lot of potential and you present yourself very well. There's only one detracting feature and that's your handshake. People make judgments about others when they first meet and one of the factors that influences their judgment is the handshake. I'd like to see you develop a much firmer handshake. Here's what I propose. Every morning when you come into my office to say 'Good Morning boss', I'd like us to shake hands. I want you to keep doing this every day until I tell you that you have got it right."

Many years later, well after I had moved on from that department, I met Neil in the street. And as old colleagues do, we shook hands. Well, he practically ripped my bloody arm off! Either Neil had kept practising all these years or Kendall forgot to tell him to stop, I'm not sure which, but the difference was amazing.

During our discussion, I discovered that Neil was now manager of the department. Can you put that meteoric rise down to first impressions? Obviously not. But, and I need to stress this, one's image or persona does have a major impact on how others evaluate you, both immediately and over the longer term.

There has been a tremendous amount of research done over the years on first impressions. This research consistently shows that:

It takes less than 3 seconds to evaluate the other person based on their appearance, body language, demeanor, mannerisms and dress. And we do.

These first impressions are extremely difficult to change or undo.

Once people have made a judgment about the other person, they instinctively look for other clues (as the relationship progresses) to support their initial judgment. This is often referred to as the “halo effect”.

In a recent Canadian study, researchers found that it takes less than a 20th of a second for someone to make up their mind about the quality of a web page. So it seems, whether it's people or things, we make judgments almost as quickly as the eye can take in information.

What's your image? What do you want it to be in the eyes of others?

As a boy spending time on my uncle's farm, I learnt very early in life the value of image. Whenever there was a new salesman calling at the farm, my uncle would give me a running commentary on what to expect as the car came up the long drive. If the car was too new, then my uncle would say “Flashy, doesn't understand his customers, probably a young upstart from the city”. If it was old and seen better days, he would say “Probably not very successful, maybe another farmer down on his luck and changing careers”. After the salesmen had gone, he would ask me what I thought of them – the way they looked, dressed, mannerisms, did they speak to me? Invariably, his initial impressions seemed to me to be spot on.

You can make the image that you want

I once worked in a financial services organisation where there was a highly respected and successful internal auditor by the name of Charlie. Charlie was an unusual dresser for an auditor. To start with he was very tall and thin – this could have been overpowering, but he had an uncanny knack of smiling at the right time. I also got the impression that with his piercing eyes, he could see right through you – he could certainly tell if you were lying. There was another unusual feature about Charlie. He wore the most outrageous shirts, and sticking out of the top of his shirt pocket you could see a green, red and purple pen – these were the colours of auditors.

Think about Charlie's persona for a moment (even his name – I'm sure it was “Charles”, but he had deliberately made it “Charlie”). What was he trying to say? What are some of the requirements of an internal auditor? An internal auditor needs to be a cross between a policeman and a counselor – to be able to detect any improprieties as well as counsel staff on legal, accounting, ethical and if need be, personal matters. Charlie had deliberately set out to create an image that said; “I am an expert auditor, I see things that need to be seen. I'm also a warm and understanding person, I can handle emotional people”.

In your business, what is the image that you need to create? Take a look around the organisation – who are the three or four most admired and successful people? Now, you want to emulate these people (not copy). How do you do this?

Take four plain post-it note size cards.

Write the four people's names, one per card.

Place the cards, name down, shuffle and draw two at random.

On a sheet of paper, list the things about these two people that are similar.

Repeat the drawing of two cards and listing their likenesses until all combinations for the four people have been exhausted.

You now have a list of traits, characteristics, behaviours, mannerisms etc. that characterise these successful people. In fact, you have just defined the key aspects of your successful role model's images. Let me repeat. You should not copy these people, but you can adapt your presentation, style, communication and ultimately your image, to match that of the most successful people in your organisation. After all, they've learnt what works, why not use their experience?

Now that you have an idea of what your image should look like, here are some practical tips for displaying that image.

Dress to suit the organisation or the situation. People do make judgments on what you wear, so make sure it is appropriate for the environment. Even when there are recognised casual days (or your organisation dresses casually) make sure your dress is smart and looks professional. As Lord Chamberlain said to his son "Dress is a very foolish thing; and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well-dressed."

Learn and use people's names quickly. One of the greatest compliments one can receive, is to be called by name. It's also very impressive when you can remember other people's names. Write them down as soon as you can, or if you don't have that immediate opportunity, repeat the person's name two or three times in the first few minutes of the conversation.

Ask lots of questions and ask for help. Asking questions shows a genuine interest in people. Asking for their help shows that you respect them – it also shows that you are human and ready to learn.

Listen more than talk. Although people will want to hear your opinion, there's a fine line between giving your opinion and being over bearing. Err on the side of caution. Listen, it's amazing how much you will learn.

Give praise and recognition. Show your appreciation for the things people do for you. Compliment them on their good work.

You can learn to make a positive and lasting first impression, modify it to suit any situation, and come out a winner. It means that you need to think about what image you wish to portray and most importantly, “How will I present myself in this situation?”

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling “What To Do When You Become The Boss” – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He’s also coached at one of the world’s premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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The advertisement features a black header with the CMO Inspired Conference logo on the left, which consists of a green speech bubble containing the letters 'CMO'. To the right of the logo, the text 'INSPIRED CONFERENCE' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, in smaller white capital letters, is the date and location: '25 OCTOBER | DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE | OLD WINDSOR UK'. The main body of the ad is a collage of three images: the top image shows a large, white, classical-style building with a fountain in the foreground; the bottom-left image shows a woman speaking at a podium on a stage; the bottom-right image shows a man presenting to an audience. At the bottom of the ad, a black banner contains the text 'Join Over 100 Chief Marketing Officers & Digital Innovators' in green.



18 Employment Ads Should Generate Excitement About Your Organization by Nelson Scott

I feel that most employment advertisements appearing in weekend newspapers fail to generate the number and type of applicants that they could. Why? They are boring. There is nothing in the ads that attracts the attention of potential applicants.

Typically, the first thing that those who scan the career section see are generic job titles that say little about what the successful applicant will really do: Engineer. Site Supervisor. Purchasing Agent. Business Manager. Executive Director. Vice President. Assistant Manager.

Not much here to get potential applicants excited about working for these companies. Organizations that have job vacancies to fill should approach writing ads in the same way as editors who are responsible for the articles that appear elsewhere in the newspaper. Editors know that most subscribers just read headlines. When a headline catches the readers' interest, they may pause to read at least the first paragraphs of the article.

The most successful ads, whether selling new cars or attracting job applicants, are those that appeal to the readers emotionally. The headline says, this is the type of organization that you want to join. What we do is important, and you will help us do it better. Ours is an organization where we care about people – both customers and staff.

One of my favourite employment ads appeared in British newspapers in the 1960s, inviting teachers to come to northern Alberta. In part it read, "No Weaklings Need Apply". For years afterwards, British, Welsh, Scottish and Irish accents were commonly heard in the schools of the Northland School Division.

My most successful ad in terms of the number of responses read as follows: "We plan to hire the ten best teachers in Alberta who are not already working for Fort McMurray Public Schools."

Here are a few examples of employment headlines that appeared in the career sections of two newspapers in July. They speak to the interests and passions of potential job applicants:

"Opportunities to Make a Difference"

– Epcor

"Experienced? Independent? Ambitious? So are we."

– Penn West Energy Trust

“No Limits to Your Career”

– Lakeland College

“Together we can make health happen”

– Palliser Health Region

“Our Environment of Exceptional Solutions
Starts with Our Exceptional People!”

– Jacques Whitford

“Making a Difference – Every Day”

– Region of Waterloo

Effective employment advertising does not just appeal to those who are searching for a job. It should also appeal to casual readers who may not even know they are looking to change employers, but who may be just the right persons for your organization.

About the author

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A professional trainer, speaker, and consultant since 1995, Nelson Scott works with organizations that are committed to making the right hiring decisions, developing and retaining productive staff, and strengthening relationships with customers. Learn more by visiting www.seaconsultingonline.com or e-mailing nmscott@telus.net.

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19 Interview Questions by John Simmonds

With the interview at the heart of the selection process, it is the questions you ask that determine how successful the interview is likely to be. Poor questions, asked carelessly – the no-go questions – are likely to lead to poor answers and hence poor information about the candidate. They may also create mistrust and even be illegal. However, when questions are fair, carefully thought out and sensibly put – the go questions – they can provide you with all the information you need to make well-judged decisions about people. Here are 5 kinds of questions you should always ask.

1. Starters

Starter questions are questions you use to start off discussion about each requirement of the person specification. For example, if a job needs someone who can write good reports, a starter question might be:

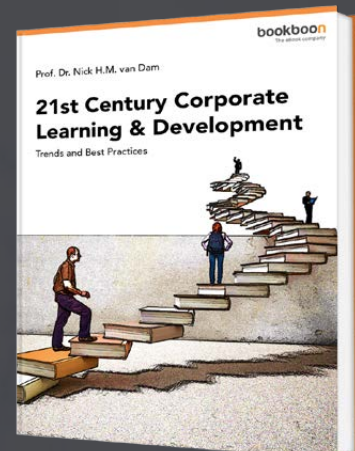
“How would you go about writing a report on a case of shoplifting?”

Starter questions mean that you treat everyone equally, since everyone should get the same questions on each of the job criteria. They also mean that you cover each key aspect of the job.

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2. Probers

A standard sequence of questions in recruitment interviews is the probing sequence, consisting of a closed or open question, followed by a probing question and ending with a summarising question. Here's an example:

- “You were in the Navy until last year?” (closed)
- “What did you think of your apprenticeship there?” (open)
- “Exactly how was it harder than a civilian apprenticeship?” (probing)
- “So, on the whole you think you were better trained in the Navy?” (summarising)

3. Linkers

Linkers are linking questions aimed at keeping the flow of the interview going and avoiding too many interrogative questions.

Three examples of “linkers” are:

- reflective questions, which echo what someone has just said:
“I decided to join the Navy.”
“The Navy?”
- explainers in which you explain the reason for your question:
“I’m really interested in what you thought about college. What was maths like?”
- job linkers which link your question to the job:
“The job has a lot of nights away. How much do you like working on the move?”

4. Behavioural Questions

Behavioural questions – which are also known as “patterned behaviour descriptions” – are based on the premise that the best indicator of future performance is past performance.

Behavioural questions make three types of enquiry:

- key incidents from the past:
“What was your most successful project?”
“What was the least successful?”
- examples of behaviour from the past:
“Tell me about a time when you had a really tight deadline. What did you do?”
- hypothetical situations:
“What would you do if you had a tight deadline that you knew you couldn’t meet?”

5. Fact and Feeling

Fact and feeling questions used in sequence are not only a good combination of contrasts; they also double the amount of information you get from an interviewee.

“What did you do at XYZ company?” (Fact question). “How do you feel about the time you spent there?” (Feeling question).

Fact questions are limiting in the amount of information you get; since you only get facts. Feeling questions, on the other hand, produce more revealing insights into a person’s motivations and attitudes:

“I was deputy manager for two years and manager for three.” It was a very valuable experience but I didn’t feel their culture was right for me. It was very bureaucratic and backward-looking. I like to get things done.”

The aim of a selection interview isn’t to test candidates (you can do that using a test), or to browbeat them, or to frighten them (heaven forbid). The aim is to get the information you need to compare their competencies against your job requirements. The right kind of questions, asked courteously and appropriately, will do that for you.

About the author

John Simmonds is an article contributor to ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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20 Three Common Recruiting Mistakes to Avoid by Michael Beck

At a time when so many people are looking for opportunities, one would think that it should be relatively easy to find great sales agents. But it's not as easy as it seems. In fact, there are three mistakes many of us are prone to make in selecting new agents which can cause a cascade of problems – for the team, for the company, for your business, and for the new agent. The three mistakes are

- Choosing someone because they are “hungry” for an opportunity
- Choosing someone because you “like” them, and
- Choosing someone who’s “running from” something rather than “running towards” something.

Let me explain these mistakes in more detail.



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1. Choosing Someone Because They're "Hungry"

It's tempting to select someone who's "hungry". It would seem logical that a candidate who is anxious for an opportunity would be the perfect person. They'd work hard, be conscientious, and push through any adversity they might face.

But it doesn't work that way. You see, often the person who's eager for an opportunity is really just desperate for cash flow, and will jump at any means to generate income. That is... until the job they really want comes along. Just because they're willing to latch onto a way to make money doesn't mean that it's the opportunity they really want.

Nor does it mean they're even qualified to get the job done. It's enough of a challenge succeeding when an agent has the skills and abilities necessary for their profession, but putting someone in that position who lacks those skills is unfair to them, to your team, and to you.

Don't get me wrong. If you find someone with the skills needed for success AND they're hungry for that success, you may very well have a superstar in the making. It's just that simply being eager for an opportunity is insufficient cause to bring someone onto your team.

A good way to stay objective in this process is to make a list of the traits necessary for success in your opportunity. Then, as you interview someone, have this list of required traits in front of you so you can literally or mentally check them off. It will keep you from choosing someone for the wrong reasons.

2. Choosing Someone Because You "Like" Them

We all have a tendency to be drawn to people we like, which is a good thing. The problem arises when we allow our feelings about a person to override our better judgment. Please understand, I'm not talking about ignoring your "gut" feeling about someone (or some "thing" for that matter). No. I'm speaking about making a decision to bring someone onto your team because there is something about them you "like".

It might be the way they dress or their manner of speaking. It may be that they remind you of someone else or that you find them attractive. The point is that none of those factors will affect their ability to succeed. None of those things will serve them well without additionally having the traits and skills you know they need to succeed. The challenge is to keep the feeling of "liking them" from clouding your judgment.

Many of the traits or qualities they possess may very well help them in their profession, but those qualities by themselves are an insufficient reason to recruit them. By referring back to that list of required traits you developed, you can stay objective in your decision-making.

3. Choosing Someone Who's "Running From" Something

This recruiting mistake is a bit more subtle than the other two, but making it yields the same results – a failed sales agent. First, let's define what we're talking about and then we'll discuss how to determine whether the issue exists. A definite distinction exists between someone who's "running from" something and one who's "running toward" something.

Someone who's running from something often has had a bad experience where they are or were. Maybe they had a run in with their boss, or they're tired of traveling, or they got laid off... yet again. Maybe they simply feel unappreciated where they are. The point is that none of these reasons has anything to do with your opportunity. They're all about what they DON'T want as opposed to what they DO want.

Here's some advice about how to uncover whether they are running from or running towards something. If you ask them what they're looking for in an opportunity and their answers are what they don't want, then they're running from instead of running to. Let me give you some examples. If they answer, "I want to be appreciated for my work," and being unappreciated was a past issue for them, then they're running from. If they answer that they don't want to answer to a boss, then they're running from. If they answer that they want an opportunity where they don't have to travel, then they're running from.

Basically, they're telling you what they don't want. Often the reality is that they really don't know what they want as much as they know what they don't want. They're most often suffering from "the grass is always greener" syndrome, and don't have an appreciation for the realities of your opportunity.

Obviously it's critical to discern whether you're dealing with someone who's looking for the right opportunity or someone who's simply dissatisfied with their latest situation. The way to accomplish that is to become a good listener, learn to ask good questions, and practice discovering a person's motivations. As you improve your listening and question-asking abilities, you'll learn to quickly uncover what's really going on with a candidate.

Once you avoid these three common mistakes, you'll improve both the quality of your team and the level of their production.

About the author

Michael Beck, Executive Strategist, is president of Michael Beck International, Inc. – a firm specializing in executive development, leadership effectiveness, and executive strategy. Connect on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/mjbeck and visit www.michaeljbeck.com to learn more. Permission to reprint with full attribution. © 2012 Michael Beck International, Inc.

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21 Becoming the Employer of Choice: How to Boost Staff Loyalty – Without Buying it by Jeff Mowatt

If you think you have staffing shortages, you ain't seen nothing! Come to my town, Calgary, Alberta and we'll talk. The economy of this boom town is so overheated that managers and business owners are scrambling to hang-on to even mediocre employees. Far too many managers figure the only way to gain staff loyalty is to buy it. That's a myth – and it's an excuse that you shouldn't accept of yourself or other managers. Of course money is important – but there is another way to gain employee loyalty that doesn't cost a thing.

I'm referring to employee recognition. Just how important is this to employees? According to the landmark studies in employee motivation spearheaded by Dr. Kenneth Kovach at George Mason University, the second biggest motivator for employees is recognition. Number one is interesting work – which requires an investment in staff training. Since I want to focus on zero cost ways to increase staff retention, let's talk about recognition. The question you need to ask yourself is, "Do you recognize the performance of your employees as much as you know you should?" For most managers and business owner the answer is a cold, hard no. I think the simple explanation is managers get so busy they tend to forget to express appreciation to the people who deserve it. Although, this is generally an oversight, it is an expensive oversight.

Employee recognition is relatively cheap, yet it has a tremendously high payoff in terms of morale, reduction in staff turnover, and most importantly customer satisfaction. I believe part of the problem is that when you work with employees for a long time, it's hard to find creative ways to recognize them. Plus, managers tend to view employee recognition as being a scattering of random events rather than an ongoing process. Fortunately, there is a systematic on-going process for recognizing your employees that goes far beyond an isolated slap on the back.

Recognition in CAST Meetings©

I'm referring to recognition that happens in a CAST Meeting. CAST stands for Customer Service Team Meeting. CAST is a monthly, 90 minute in-house forum where managers and front line employees discuss how to enhance the customer experience. Of five elements that are covered in a CAST Meeting, one of the most motivating is the agenda item I call Service Legends. At this point in the meeting, managers point out specific incidents where certain employees have provided exceptional service. The employee is asked by the manager to share the details of the incident with everyone and why they did what they did. Then the whole group joins in a round of applause for the person.

When you see employees literally cheering each other on for providing exceptional service, you know that the customer-focused culture is growing roots. That was certainly the case with one of our clients, a government-run vehicle-registration department...

During the Service Legends portion of a CAST Meeting, a manager asked 'Richard,' a vehicle-registration clerk, to share with the group what happened when a customer phoned and asked for a refund cheque. Richard explained to the group the dire circumstances that the person was in. He realized that 'standard practice' was to mail the cheque and the customer would receive it in a couple of weeks. However, it didn't sit well with him, so he drove the check over himself that same day. He introduced himself and said that he figured she could use the refund right away. "You could see that tears were welling in her eyes as she thanked me. I was really glad I did it." At that point in the CAST Meeting the group erupted in heartfelt applause for Richard. Richard's co-workers and supervisors were doing more than expressing their support for what he had done; they were also demonstrating their pride in the way people in their department respond to the individual needs of customers. That story, and the fact that the manager brought it to everyone's attention, provided a lot of lessons about customer service that no policy will ever be able to convey.

That's recognition based not on seniority, but service. And the approval doesn't just come from the employees' supervisors, but from their peers. Most importantly the stories that emerge become your own in-house parables that serve as wonderful learning examples for everyone. In other words, the CAST Meeting's Service Legends piece transforms recognition into part of your ongoing education process that people learn from.

We all want to do well – and be recognized for doing so. Of course people need to be paid market value for their services. But hard cash is cold. You'll warm the hearts and the loyalty of your team members when you take the time – and have a process – to recognize actions that merit talking about. It doesn't cost a thing and in this marketplace – and with the impending staffing shortages that all the experts are forecasting – it just may make you the employer of choice.

About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

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22 How to Compete in the War for Talent by Carol A. Hacker

War isn't usually rational. It can't always be won by applying time-honored principles and familiar practices. A current war shouldn't be fought using the last war's order of battle. However, there are a number of strategies for engaging in military conflict that can be applied to all manner of business including the Federal government.

There's a direct correlation between war and the challenges businesses face today in fighting for good people. It's hard to win a war without sufficient numbers of competent soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen. Nor can nations "effectively posture" with their adversaries without a firm base of solid, well-trained troops. And so it is in business.

Also consider this: Most militaries in the world operate without conscription. Modern militaries are on equal footing with organizations of all kinds in recruiting men and women. Not surprisingly, labor market demographics have done the same thing for business that loss of conscription has done for the world's militaries. No one is compelled to work for you. It's your job to make the work experience interesting and career-enhancing.

In a military operation, careful planning is always essential to success. In business, recruiting in competitive (and sometimes downright hostile) environments takes careful planning and flexibility in executing a mission plan. If your organization is experiencing a recruiting problem, plan your mission, rally your troops (or what's left of them) and execute with vigor. You're preparing for your version of Operation Talent Scout. To succeed it must be an all-out team effort. If you fail to do this, you may find your organization in a weakened position. You may ultimately be captured (i.e., re-organized, purchased, merged or bankrupted) by a competitor.

The economic expansion of the last two decades is the longest peacetime expansion of the twentieth century. The nation's extraordinary financial performance has raised the question of whether the U.S. economy has entered a new age. A new age promises unprecedented increases in wealth and productivity. Yet it's a time hobbled with labor shortages, especially in the technical arena.

Long after the demand for Y2K with its drain on skills and resources has reached its peak, other "hot" skills will be needed by most all organizations. Making the perfect hiring decision poses challenges like never before.

Are you tired of fighting for good people? Is your team's performance a casualty of high turnover? Is it possible you're not experiencing a shortage of personnel but a shortage of skills? If you're open to improving your recruiting skills, read on...

Review the job function

A job vacancy provides an excellent opportunity to review the job function. Ask yourself if a redesign is in order. For many organizations a sudden growth surge leads to the creation of new positions. Some of the positions will be needed indefinitely; others won't. Take time to identify long-range needs instead of hiring to "put out fires." It will help you contain costs. It's important to remember that most modern militaries expend tremendous effort in strategic planning. You owe it to yourself and your organization to take sufficient time to plan, develop and execute a recruiting strategy.

For example, you may decide to hire some people for the long term but hire temporary or seasonal help for the short term. Contract employees are also in great demand, difficult to find and retain even for short-term projects. Regardless of what you're looking for, you'll need to plan your recruiting mission.

There are many methods for locating and recruiting your future staff. From working with agencies, to advertising in the newspaper, to referrals from current employees, the ideas are numerous and varied. Don't limit yourself to a handful of strategies unless you want to restrict your search. The militaries of the world assign people to recruiter duty for a period of two to four years. Before recruiters start, they receive extensive training in recruitment techniques.

Take the time to carefully review résumés and applications

It will save you valuable time in the long run. Despite the fact that some applicants use professional services to prepare their résumés, many do not. Résumés, cover letters and applications offer valuable insight into an applicant's qualifications providing you know how to interpret the data.

"Don't judge a book by its cover" is a cliché, yet it holds true with applications and résumés. There may be good reason for what appears to be discrepancies in documents. It's your job to find out more through a series of questions during the telephone interview. Decide then whether to invest additional time in the candidate with a face-to-face meeting.

The strength of the U.S. economy provides a remarkable opportunity for most organizations to focus on a bright future. The key to the long-term financial health of your enterprise is being able to identify and hire successive generations of people who share your commitment for high achievement. Résumés and applications are an essential part of the recruiting process. Learn how to use the information they provide to your best advantage.

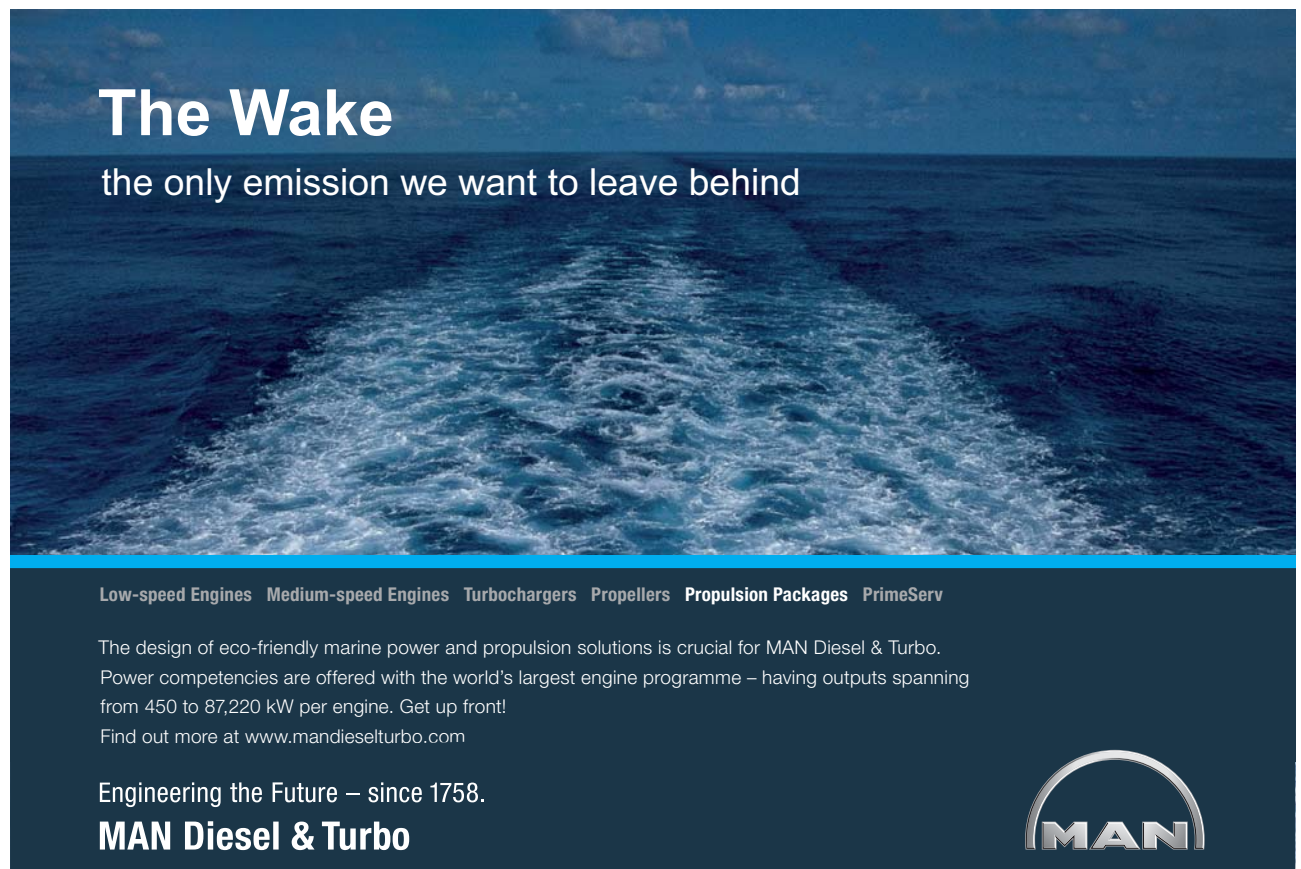
Fine-tune interviewing skills

Organizations that don't teach their managers how to interview often see them hire for the wrong reasons and wind up with employees that are a bad fit for the job and the department. Many people hire only those people they think are like them. However, to do so can be a mistake because a diverse workforce can add tremendous value to the agency as well as the military.

Asking the right questions helps to insure legally compliant interviews. Good questions will keep you focused and help you maintain control of the interview. The best questions are probing and require that the candidate explain the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” of their skills and work experience. Candidates can easily answer the “what” questions. But the “how” questions require candidates to explain in detail how they did something. If they haven’t done it, they won’t be able to fake it. It’s nearly impossible to answer the “how” question and show depth and knowledge without having performed the task.

Some managers hire purely on “gut feelings” or intuition. That can also lead to disastrous results. They both play a role in the hiring process, but should be used as a confirmation after a series of pre-planned questions are asked during the interview. Beyond the questioning, hire for attitude, everything else is secondary, and then if necessary, train for required skills. There’s a prophetic axiom that applies here: “People are hired for aptitude and fired for attitude.”

Because of the keen competition for talent, recruiting and hiring people who are eager to learn may be your best strategy. It’s important to note that most militaries grow their own talent through training. Not surprisingly, most business will have to do the same.




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Check references

Research indicates that almost 25% of all résumés include misleading information or outright lies. Just as militaries may engage in deception during warfare, an applicant may do the same. The most common form of deception involves overstating education followed by inflation of job responsibilities. Checking references can sometimes reveal these deceptions. You may be thinking, “Why bother to check references? Employers won’t tell me anything because they’re afraid of being sued.” That’s not necessarily the case if you ask only job-related questions. Use a direct approach. Keep the questions strictly focused on learning more about performance, skill level and specific job training. Once the reference feels comfortable with you, information will be easier to attain.

You’ll do two things when you check references^{3/4} verify the facts and solicit opinions. The most effective way to validate background information is to use preprinted forms with fill-in-the-blank statements for verifying education, former place of employment, etc. Include a section that authorizes the release of information and have the applicant sign it. You may want to check with your legal department for wording. Then follow up with each reference by telephone if you don’t get your answers within a reasonable amount of time. Many employers skip the fill-in-the-blank form and go straight to the phone. Use a list of questions to guide your phone discussion. Take appropriate notes, particularly if you have references to check on many applicants. Modern militaries have a variety of methods for gathering intelligence. One source is old-fashioned human intelligence. Businesses do it everyday in gathering marketing data as well as checking references on job applicants.

Ideally, you’ll want to check references yourself. You may have someone in the human resources department do the work for you, but you run the risk that the reference checker won’t be as familiar with the job requirements as you are. This can lead to a less than satisfactory outcome. Some businesses hire a reference checking service. If you decide to hire such a service, be sure you feel totally comfortable with the quality of their work. You may have to check their references to get this information.

Finally, you can’t ask the references anything that the law doesn’t permit you to ask the applicant. That includes questions regarding age, religion, race, marital status, children or child care arrangements, parents, residence, health status, psychological well-being, financial obligations, previous arrests, memberships in social organizations, or visible characteristics.

In summary

We are in a time of labor shortages that aren’t predicted to abate in the near future. Today, business demands require employers to do one of two things: Either continue to recruit job hoppers, pay higher and higher salaries and create an environment of more, more, more, or selectively recruit to hire top talent and foster a work environment where people are committed to stay for the long haul. It all starts with finding and attracting the people who most closely meet your job requirements.

About the author

Greg Smith's cutting-edge keynotes, consulting, and training programs have helped businesses reduce turnover, increase sales, hire better people and deliver better customer service. As President of Chart Your Course International he has implemented professional development programs for hundreds of organizations globally. He has authored nine informative books including *Fired Up! Leading Your Organization to Achieve Exceptional Results*. For more information, visit ChartCourse.com or call (770) 860-9464.

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The advertisement features a circular logo on the left with three stylized human figures in the center, surrounded by gears and four arrows pointing clockwise. To the right, the text reads: **UNLEASHING CHANGE MANAGEMENT**, **OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2018**, and **DE RODE HOED AMSTERDAM**. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of an Amsterdam skyline including a windmill and a bridge. In the bottom left corner, it says 'Global Executive Events'.

23 Hiring “A” Players by Thomas Cox

Several clients are hiring and it’s time to share some guidance on how to hire “A” players.

First, how are we doing right now?

Not well. The typical business, when they rate how well their people perform their job functions, finds that they have perhaps 10% “A” players – people who are exceeding expectations and doing excellent work. The typical distribution of employees (as ranked by their peers) is:

A – 10%

B – 15%

C – 50%

D – 25%

The “D” players have often been in this role for 10 years or more.

Since we also know that the top 20% are typically delivering 80% of the results, we see a great opportunity for improvement – if we know how to proceed.

Unfortunately, there seems to be zero correlation between sincerity and results – plenty of people are very sincere about hiring the best, and few of them can figure out which applicants really are going to be top performers in their organizations.

For guidance, consider the advice of Lynn Taylor, creator of the Taylor Protocols. Lynn ran a turnaround practice and was the CEO of 8 to 12 companies at a time, working closely with a partner who was CFO of those companies. Lynn became extremely interested in our topic, Hiring “A” Players, because he needed to do that in order to better execute his turnarounds.

And Lynn approached this problem with a unique skill set – he’d previously created sophisticated algorithms for performing the first non-invasive cardiac monitoring and then some of the first speech-recognition software – both of which required him to tease out signals from amidst noise, while handling lots of data.

Mr. Taylor then spent over a decade defining and refining his system for finding the best folks. In his turnarounds, he really couldn't afford even one bad hire – a bad hire will cost your firm the equivalent of one year's salary, due to the disruption, the demoralization of the rest of the team, and the distraction of managers who have to deal with this low performer when you'd be better off focusing on optimizing your best performers.

Lynn studied the writings of Maslow, and learned that the secret was to find out the "inner, unchanging nature" of each person – what it is that taps into and releases the energy of a person – and use that information to direct each person to the best role for that person.

The result is the "Core Values Index" first created in 1991, and used in multiple Fortune 500 firms as well as smaller companies, testing and proving the effectiveness of that tool.

Studying the 14,000 brokers of a large financial services firm, he found the bell curve there was even worse – 2–3% were "A" players, 5–6% were "B"s and 70% or more were "D" level non-performers. That experience helped really prove that the Core Value Index can identify the innate nature of a person and can predict their fit to a particular role at a particular firm.

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After five years of proving the system, and a further 5 years of longitudinal studies with small teams of 20 to 200 people, Lynn now says he can double or triple the number of “A” players in a given role within a year’s time. This capability went on sale to the broader public in 2006 as The Taylor Protocols.

How can someone take advantage of this system?

One way is with the Human Capital Audit – this assesses the fit of each member of the senior staff to their current role – most firms are operating at less than 33% efficiency of fit between the nature of the person and the nature of the work.

Most resumes are written to cover Responsibilities, Assignments, Functions, Experience, and Skills. That’s good as far as it goes. However none of that speaks to each person’s innate drives, passions, interests, and preferences – none of it taps each person’s drive to be themselves, or taps their life energy.

Compare the methodical accountant who loves making things be orderly and in conformance with a set of known rules, and another accountant who is highly creative. The creative one would be perfect for a startup that didn’t yet have a Chart of Accounts designed for them and that needed systems created, and the more methodical one would be perfect for that same firm 5 or 10 years later when it was more established and the main need was for someone to run the established accounting systems.

These two accountants could have identical looking resumes, yet would have wildly different levels of success in those two roles.

This means it’s vital to understand the nature of the role you’re hiring for.

The CVI is unique, Lynn says, because it has a 94% “Repeat Score Reliability” – a measure of how good an assessment test is at producing the same result for the same person, when taken twice on two different days. Most assessments are in the low 70s over a 90 day period, and the CVI is 94% consistent across decades.

The difference comes from what’s being measured – where personality tests measure personality, behavior, and emotional tone, the CVI measures the “innate unchanging nature of a person” – and it’s that innate nature that really correlates best with what it is in you that tells you that a job is worth doing. This drills all the way down to the task level – either your core value energy flows through those tasks, or it does not.

If it does not, you try to stop doing that task as soon as possible. If it does, you love doing it and you’ll do it all day, it’s an expression of your self so you’re proud of it and you’ll naturally want to do an excellent job, and so you won’t need much management.

When you connect the innate nature of the person and connect it to the innate nature of the tasks, you end up with an “A” Player.

Today, according to Gallup, about 24% of the work force is “engaged” at work – their innate nature is well aligned with the nature of their job and its tasks.

How do I harness the CVI for my firm?

 Spend an hour (in a structured, facilitated process) profiling the nature of the job into which you want to hire.

 Profile the applicants, screening out 90%.

 Create a short list of the people who have the closest fit between their innate nature and the nature of the job

Do this, says Lynn, and you’re guaranteed to get “A” and “B” players. This achieves a 98% hit rate on “A” players and a miss gives you a “B” – not bad.

In over 300 hires over the past two years, there were two misses – and in both cases the business owner wrote to say “you gave me exactly what I asked for, and I just didn’t realize what I needed.”

In a case like that, Lynn will redo the profile at no additional charge.

An alternate approach is, rather than profile the job, is to profile all the people in that job today. Then the client defines the criteria that makes a person a top performer in that job. Finally, Lynn uses his medical diagnostic algorithms to distinguish what aspects of a person’s innate nature that correlate with being a high performer.

The CVI distinguishes between three axes of preferences:

 Creative -vs- Practical

 Intuitive -vs- Cognitive

 Community -vs- Independent

Underlying these are four core values that define basic human energies.

The big promise here is that, for any human being, there exists somewhere a job that is the perfect fit – in essence, just about anybody can be an “A” player somewhere. This process of matching people and roles leads to increases in productivity “beyond what most people believe is possible,” says Lynn, “and we have over 200 turnarounds to prove it.”

About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

<http://tomonleadership.com/>

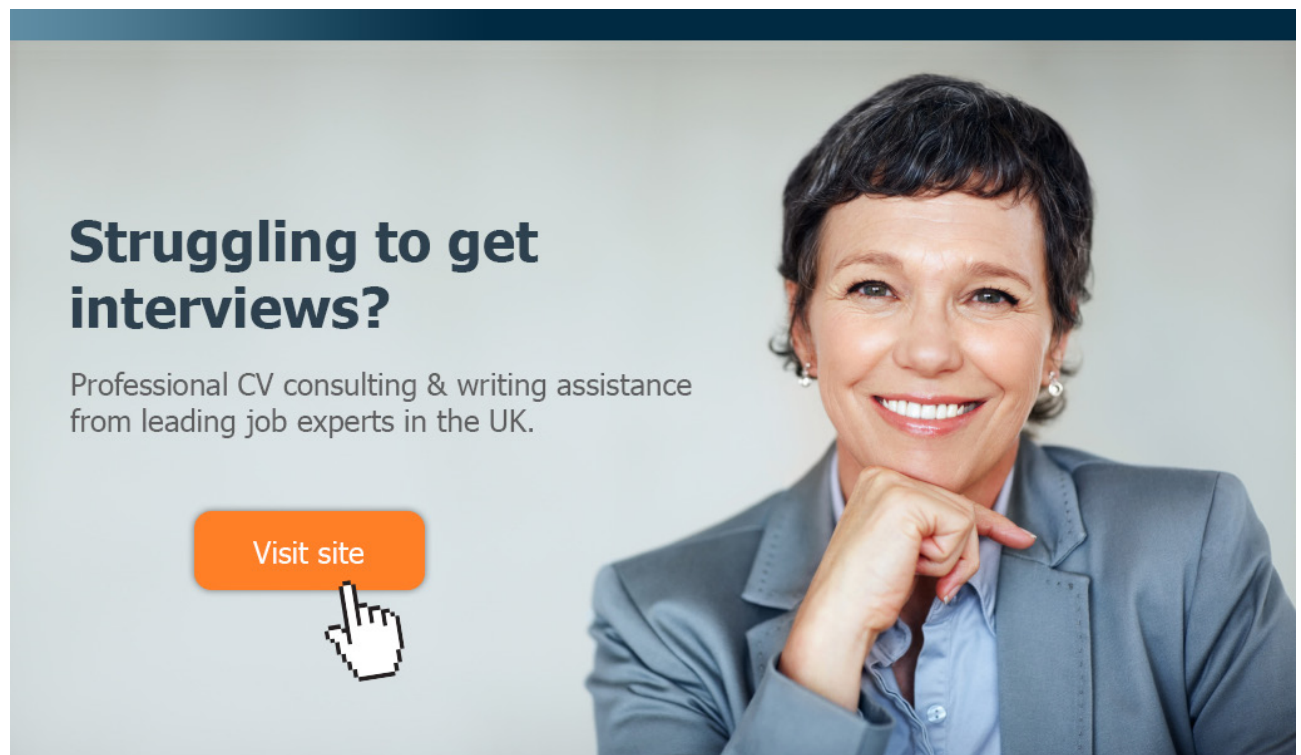
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24 Approaches to Selection by Colin Crouch

Approaches to Selection: Personalised Recruitment Methods

The recruitment process is a personalised one. We like to get to know candidates; we like to find out about their life and work histories; we want to know what sort of employees they will make; we want to be as sure as we can that this will be a relationship that will benefit both of us. Personal selection has long been a basis for choosing workers. It is indeed still pursued in many organisations, one favourite method being to let the chief executive make a final decision using the “school team captain” approach where he or she is allowed to pick who they want from those available.

Approaches to Selection: Systematic Recruitment Methods

The systems approach aims to reduce the amount of personal bias in the selection process to a minimum. To do this, a series of laid-down procedures is needed, all interlocking with one another and all leading to the rational selection of the best candidates. There are twelve sub-systems in a normal recruitment drive. They are: the manpower plan (vacancy; numbers; timescale); the job analysis; the job description; the person specification; the marketing; handling the response; shortlisting; assessing candidates; selecting; obtaining references; making an offer; starting new employees.

Approaches to Selection: The Peacock & the Magpie

Aesop tells the following fable which illustrates the dangers of the two different recruitment methods.

The birds of the forest convened to choose a new king. A number of candidates stepped forward to promote their cause but the favoured contender was undoubtedly the peacock. He strode in front of the judges displaying his long tail of brightly-coloured feathers. The judges were dazzled and so were the throng of onlookers.

Just as the birds were about to crown him king, the magpie spoke up. “Just one moment,” he said. “If you were to become our king, how would you defend us against the birds of the mountains such as the eagle and the kite?”

There was a long silence. The peacock didn’t know how to answer. The judges put their heads together once more and decided not to choose him for their king.

Approaches to Selection: Both...and

It is not necessary to make a choice between the highly-personalised approach to recruitment of some organisations and the systems approach of others. You can have both. A personalised approach that is based purely on personal liking will run into problems at some stage because of its disregard for legal, social and ethical requirements. A purely systematic approach that believes in mechanical answers to recruitment ignores gut feeling at its peril. Organisations are more than just logic; they are dynamic systems based on how people feel about each other. The challenge for recruiters is to find a course that incorporates both systematic, fair approaches and gut feeling.

About the author

Colin Crouch is an article contributor to ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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25 Now That Someone Has Been Hired, the Real Recruiting Begins by Nelson Scott

Most of us remember our first day on the job. Everything was new. We didn't know what to expect. What did the future hold? How long would we work there before moving on to another employer? How would this experience look on our resume? We quickly formed impressions of our new employer, our new co-workers and most importantly, our new boss. What happens during employees' first few hours on the job influences their feelings about the organization. Before Day One ends, the newcomers are contemplating their futures. Some will commit to their new employer, while others will commit to a new job search.

Consider what happened to this young man on his first day of what he anticipated would be his dream job – working in the ski and snowboard department of a local sporting goods store. It was a job he really wanted. While living in another city, he had spent several months working in a ski shop. He enjoyed helping customers, advising them on equipment and putting together packages. There were also the fringe benefits of learning about the latest equipment and being able to test it on the nearby mountain slopes.

The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. This central image is framed by a large, stylized orange and yellow graphic that resembles a speech bubble or a flame. To the right, there are two smaller circular inset images: one showing three children looking at a book together, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. In the top left corner of the graphic, there is a logo for 'e-learning for kids' consisting of a grid of colorful squares. In the bottom right corner, there is a green oval containing a list of three bullet points. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a paragraph of text about the organization.

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About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.



Returning to his hometown, he submitted an application to work in a local sporting goods store that sold skis. Getting no response to his first application, he applied again. Still, no job offer. Finally, after his third application, he was interviewed and offered a job. He was delighted. He could hardly wait for his first day on the job to come. Unfortunately, his joy was short-lived.

When he came home after his first day he admitted to his father, “It wasn’t what I had expected.” Pressed for more information, he described his first day on the job:

No one explained what he was expected to do.

He had been given simple tasks that were quickly completed, leaving him standing around, unsure of what to do next. Rather than suggesting what needed to be done, managers appeared disgusted that he was idle.

He was told specifically that he was to operate within strict guidelines from which he was unable to deviate without permission from a manager. That left him unable to empower himself to act in the best interest of the customer as he had done so often in his previous job.

He received no feedback, either positive or negative, on what he did.

“The job is OK for now,” he concluded, “until I find something else.” It was his first day, but already he was preparing to search for a new job.

This is not how managers and supervisors want new employees to feel. They want them to leave at the end of that first day feeling an enhanced sense of excitement about their work, where they work, and the people with whom they work. New staff should feel committed to the organization, believe they have already made a contribution to it and will continue to add to the organization’s success. When their family or friends ask about their first day, they should respond positively:

“It is a great place to work. I really like the people I work with. They seem to care about each other and they already care about me. They asked me to do things that were important. It was only my first day, but I feel that I am contributing. I am looking forward to going to work tomorrow.”

What went wrong in the ski store example? How was the excitement of the new job replaced with disillusionment in one short day? As a supervisor, what can you do to ensure this is not how new staff think about your organization following their first day on the job?

Day One: The Most Important Day of an Employee's Career

The sporting goods store manager failed to understand the importance of an employee's first day. Like many others, he felt that once someone is hired, the recruitment process is over when in fact, it has just begun. To retain staff, to keep them focused and motivated, and to minimize turnover, managers and supervisors must continually re-recruit staff, beginning on Day One. Make Day One a rewarding experience and by the end of the shift a newcomer will be looking forward to the next morning. Failure to make a newcomer's first day special – along with all those that follow – results in a work environment characterized by low morale, little commitment and a higher-than-necessary turnover rate.

On Day One, and on the days leading up to and following Day One, organizations plant the seeds of employee retention or resignation. The manager's job in dealing with a new employee is similar to the relationship between an effective salesperson and his customers. The sale (hiring) doesn't end when the customer pays and accepts delivery. Effective salespeople follow up with after-sales service, to ensure the customer is happy with her purchase and is taking advantage of all that the new product can do. He reinforces the customer's buying decision. There is no opportunity to become disillusioned with the purchase (or the decision to accept the job offer).

The process of continual re-recruitment works in the same fashion. The focus of the recruiting process shifts from attracting applicants to retaining those who are hired. Effective supervisors reinforce the newcomer's decision to accept the job offer. They let the newcomers know that what they do is important, and that they and their contributions are valued. Retaining quality hires is a process of re-recruiting applicants who are now employees.

Few employees come to a new company planning to stay for life. Among many of the people with whom I once worked, it was common to hear, "When I came I only planned to stay two years for the experience. Then I intended to move on to something else." Some did leave within two years, but others stayed on long after those first two years were over. In many organizations, the highest turnover rates occur within the first few months.

Knowing the value of positive first impressions, it is important that the process of welcoming new staff be taken seriously and be well-planned. Everything that the newcomer experiences during the orientation process should confirm the wisdom of his decision to accept your job offer. Your organization is where he was meant to be. He has discovered compelling reasons to remain.

The orientation period is a time to build comfort and rapport. The orientation is also a time to acquaint the newcomer with the organization and its culture. There is no better place to begin than by explaining and promoting the beliefs and values that drive the organization. A well-planned and – delivered orientation is a powerful retention tool. Orientation activities serve to educate and inspire new employees. It is a time to define expectations, ensuring employees begin their new jobs with a clear understanding of their roles within the organization.

Understanding what is expected of them creates employees who are more likely to act in ways that contribute to both their own successes and the organization's success.

Effective orientations for new employees are not a one-day event, but a process that will continue over days and weeks. Some aspects of the orientation may begin before the employee's first day on the job while others may not be completed until well into the first year on the job. The process of welcoming new staff can begin as soon as the person accepts the formal employment offer. Let the newly-hired employees know that the organization is looking forward to their arrival.

When it comes to welcoming new staff, small businesses have an advantage over their larger counterparts. Small businesses don't have big human resources departments. The direct supervisor is responsible for the new employee's orientation.

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In larger organizations, human resources professionals often take the lead role in planning and conducting orientations. But the orientation of new staff is much too important to be left to just one group. Others, from senior executives to front line co-workers have a role to play. Whether or not they are formally involved, all will contribute to the newcomer's first impressions.

The role played by the supervisor is most important. She is key to the effectiveness of the newcomer's welcome. The new employee will relate to his supervisor on a day-to-day basis. How the supervisor treats employees on their first day can have a powerful and lasting effect, setting the tone for what may be a long-term work relationship. When employees are made to feel ignored, unappreciated or a bother on their first day, they will begin to think about finding their next job, rather than committing to their current job. They sense that they are not valued as individuals, but are seen as just additional cogs in the corporate machine.

Supervisors who schedule time with new employees on their first day and during their first weeks convey a message of respect. Time that supervisors spend with newcomers is time well spent.

Key Day One Messages

The key purpose of the orientation is to educate new hires about the expectations of the job, the purpose and values of the organization, and how and where the new staff fits. Doing so lays the foundation for making recognition relevant. Here are some messages that new employees should hear on Day One, or certainly within the first week:

Here are our expectations of you. Review the job description. Clarify anything that is vague. Talk about what is relevant to doing the job well. Explain that staff recognition focuses on actions that contribute to on-the-job success.

Recognition is part of our culture. Employees should expect to be recognized frequently by their supervisor and co-workers. In turn, they will be expected to thank those with whom they work when it is deserved. Suggest reasons they may wish to acknowledge others and ways to express this recognition. Make them aware of recognition programs and their criteria.

Feedback will be timely. Let new employees know that you will be monitoring their work because you want to let people know when they have done well...or not so well. Whether positive or negative, they will receive feedback frequently and as soon after the behaviour is observed as possible. You won't save up to dump a pile of out-of-context feedback on them every few months.

Contributions of individuals are valued. Let new employees know that new ideas are welcome and that you value innovation. Create myths and legends around people. Tell stories about current and past employees. Recall how individuals made a difference. Describe how individual employees or groups have contributed to the success of the organization. Show through your words that their contributions were appreciated by you and others in the organization. While these descriptions may include significant achievements, it may be discouraging if you limit your descriptions to these big things (leaving the newcomer feeling, “I could never do something like that!”). Include the small things staff have achieved or contributed that are relevant to the success of the organization.

The big picture. Describe where the company has been, where it is today, and where it is going. Explain where the company fits in the marketplace. Identify its customers. Name the competition. Explain how the newcomer’s work will contribute to the organization meeting its goals and fulfilling its mission. Allow staff to feel part of something larger than themselves and their department.

The whole truth. Be honest with the newcomer. Identify challenges that the company is facing. List some of the difficulties that the newcomer will face on the job. Newcomers who have been given factual information won’t discover later that all was not as rosy as they had been led to believe.

Answer This Question Before it is Asked

Most of us who make hiring decisions have been asked at one time or another by an unsuccessful candidate, “Why didn’t I get the job?” A much less common question is the one asked by the person who had just been hired: “Why did I get the job?”

Don’t wait to be asked this second question! Most new employees don’t know for sure why they were hired. On Day One, or even sooner, meet with the new employee. Explain why she was hired. What did you like in her resume or in what you heard during her interview? What special skills, knowledge or attitudes did you identify during the selection process that caused you to choose her over other applicants? What skills do you feel she can bring to her new position?

This dose of positives will get the newcomer off to a good start. You have let her know that she is valued for the knowledge and skills she can contribute to the organization. Show your ongoing commitment to her development by discussing her career goals and how your organization may be able to help her reach these goals.

The process of recognizing staff and letting them know they are valued should begin on Day One and continue as long as they work there. Because we always identify positives about candidates before we hire them, feedback based on the interview is a great place to begin.

Some Things are Best Left Until Tomorrow

What makes the first few days in a new job memorable should not be a feeling of being overwhelmed by information and paperwork. Before sitting a new employee down on Day One to study procedure manuals, memorize policies and guidelines, and complete a mountain of forms, ask: Does all of this need to be done on Day One? Could – and should – some of this be spread out over several days, or longer?

New employees feel they are hired due to their skills and knowledge. They are eager to get started. They want to contribute, to demonstrate what they can do. Too much time spent completing forms, studying procedure manuals, and memorizing policies and guidelines will soon diminish the enthusiasm of even the most energetic newcomer.

Information about the organization's history and culture, job expectations, procedures, and safety practices are all important, but trying to cram everything into one information-filled day is unlikely to be productive use of time for either the new employee or the staff providing the orientation. There is a limit to how much information can be absorbed during one sitting.



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Many things that newcomers must learn are not things they must learn right away. Some companies have discovered how to avoid doing too much on Day One. They examine what information that a new hire will need, then differentiate between that which is needed immediately and which information can be provided later.

Some procedures, if explained on Day One, will be forgotten by the time the newcomer requires the information (which may be weeks, even months, into the job). Delay training that prepares new staff to deal with tasks that may only come up a few times during the year (such as quarterly updates and year-end reports) until it is needed. Schedule future orientation sessions in different locations so the newcomers will see the different aspects of the organization and how they complement each other.

On Day One, train new hires so they're at the point where they can be productive as quickly as possible. A quick start and an early sense of making a contribution are good for the employee's self-esteem. The morale of other staff improves as well when they see that new hires have begun to carry their own weight. Their contributions will be welcomed by others, some of whom have been taking up the slack while waiting for the position to be filled. (A recognition hint: remember to thank those who did extra while the position was vacant.)

It may also be possible to wait to collect required personal information. While it is important to add the newcomer to the payroll and sign her up for benefits, it may be possible to delay completing this paperwork until later in the employee's first week. Perhaps some of these forms could be part of a pre-employment package sent to the newcomer.

Some Tasks Should Never be Delegated

Today, a quarter-century after the event, I still remember meeting with my supervisor on my first day in a new job. After explaining what was expected of me, he made an offer that demonstrated his commitment to my success:

"If you have any questions about the job, please come and see me. I have told my secretary that if you want to see me anytime during the next few weeks, she is to find a way to work you into my schedule."

As I was getting to know my new job, there were several times when I took him up on his offer. And true to his word, there was always time in his day for us to meet.

I tell this story to illustrate how important the supervisor is in making a new employee feel like a valued member of the organization. As a supervisor, you are key to the integration of new employees. There are two tasks related to welcoming new staff that should not be assigned to others: making the job offer and greeting the new employee.

The most important call a future employee will receive is that in which he receives a job offer. The offer should come from someone the new staff member will see as significant, having authority and importance in the organization such as you, his soon-to-be direct supervisor. The newcomer should feel that he is important enough to warrant a call from the boss.

You should also be available on the employee's first day. By scheduling time to greet the new employee, introduce him to others and talk about the company, the supervisor sends a message to both the new person and to existing staff. The newcomer is valued enough that the supervisor has set aside time to be with him. This gives the newcomer instant credibility in the eyes of co-workers.

As important as it is that you are there to greet the new employee at the beginning of the day, it is equally important that you spend time with her near the end of Day One. Discuss the day. Ask questions:

- How are things going? Is anything worrying you?
- Have you felt welcomed here?
- What have you learned about our organization or your work?
- How were you able to contribute?
- What questions do you have about our company?"

This is also a good time for you to provide specific, positive feedback on something you saw the newcomer do well.

This Day One discussion should be the first of a series of conversations over the first several weeks that you will have with the newcomer as she settles into her job. Schedule time weekly to discuss the past week and the next week with her:

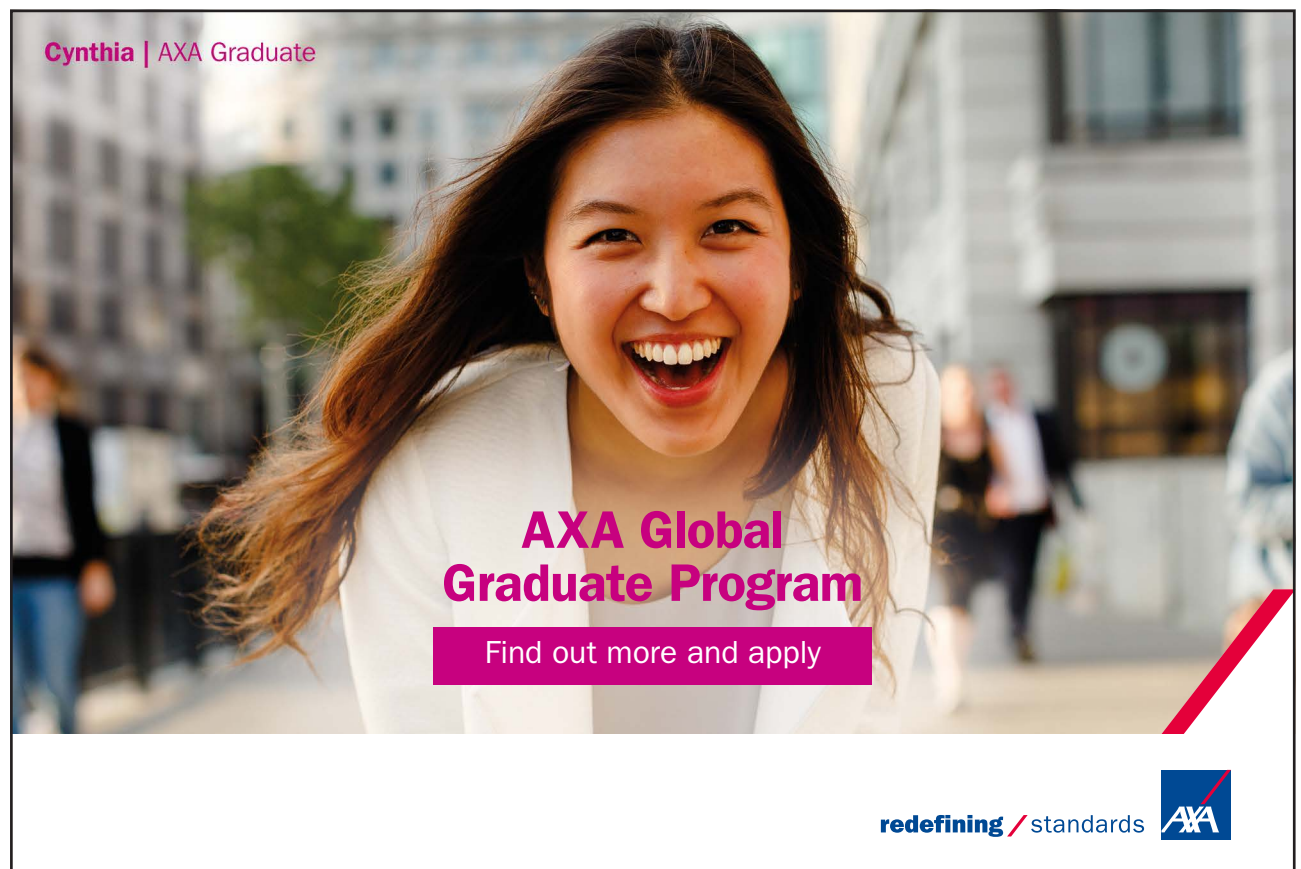
- What have you accomplished in the past week? What have been your greatest challenges? What has gone well for you this week?
- Is this job meeting your expectations?
- Did anything happen this week that confused you about our policies and practices?
- What processes/procedures do you feel could be changed or improved?
- Who has been of assistance to you this week?
- What are your goals for the next week?
- Do you have the tools you need to do your job?
- How could I assist you to reach these goals?

Listen to what the newcomer says. She may offer some suggestions or ideas that point to how things could be done better. These meetings are also times to assess the newcomer's progress and provide feedback. Everything should be discussed as it occurs. There should be no surprises during the performance appraisal at the end of her probationary period.

Let the Recognition Begin

Does your organization have a culture of recognition? Have you told the new employee that recognition is important? If so, you had better back up your words with action and as soon as possible – preferably before Day One ends and certainly during the first week. Find a reason to recognize a newcomer for a contribution or achievement. This message will be appreciated during those first few hours and days of uncertainty and stress.

To recognize a new employee for the first time, don't wait for her to make a major contribution. Find some small thing she has done well and recognize her for that. If the novice been successful in learning her job, recognize her for this success.



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Day One would be a good time to introduce the concept of peer recognition. When you meet with her near the end of the day, ask whether any co-worker has been particularly helpful. What did he do? Give the newcomer a blank thank-you card and encourage her to take a moment to write a brief note of appreciation to this co-worker.

The first time you recognize a new employee for doing something well, keep it low-key. Avoid the fanfare of public recognition. Meet with the newcomer in private to give the positive feedback. Watch how she reacts. Talk about how she would like to be recognized.

The first time you praise new staff members in writing, give them an empty file folder. “This is the first of many notes and letters I am sure you will receive thanking you for your contributions to our organization. I suggest you keep these in this folder, along with notes of appreciation from customers and co-workers. Reread them often, particularly on those days when nothing seems to be going right.”

Involve Others in the New Employee’s Orientation

While you as the supervisor have an important role in welcoming new staff, it is not essential that you do everything. Involve others, from planning to implementation and eventually, to evaluating your orientation efforts.

Gather information from current employees, especially recent hires, when planning to welcome a newcomer. What did they like and dislike about their orientation? What do they wish had happened? What messages do they feel that a newcomer should hear? What information do they wish they had received during their first few days? How could they have been made to feel more welcome? What you hear will help you identify what information is most relevant to someone who is new to the organization. Incorporate this information into your plans. By involving existing staff in this way you show that they (and their opinions) are valued.

Even before Day One, others can be involved in welcoming the new hire. Imagine the message the organization sends when a new hire receives a brief telephone call from the CEO or another senior executive:

“Hello, this is Jack Jones, the CEO of XYZ Corporation. I just heard that you will be joining our staff next week. I want to personally welcome you on board and look forward to meeting you in person soon after you start. At XYZ Corporation we are committed to providing our customers with high-quality products when they need them. From what I have learned about you, I understand you have a strong background in customer service which is just what we need to meet this goal. I hope you enjoy working with us and will remain part of our team for a long time.”

Having received a phone call like this, the newcomer begins to believe that he is truly joining the right organization – one that cares about him and one which he will want to remain part of for a long time.

Another powerful contact can be made by a future co-worker, who works at a similar job or level as will the newcomer. The person making this call should be someone who has already shown a commitment to the organization. The caller could also be a recent hire who is approximately the same age as the newcomer, and who may serve as the newcomer's informal mentor when he joins the organization.

“Hi. This is Steve. I work in the call centre of Acme Corporation. I understand you will be joining us soon. I am calling to welcome you to our group. I have worked here for about five months. It's a pretty good place to work. The work is interesting and we are able to decide for ourselves how best to solve the problems that customers call us about. There are, of course, times when it gets busy and that can be a little stressful. Do you have any questions about the job or Acme Corporation? Is there anything that I can tell you about working here? If you think of any questions later, you can call me anytime. My phone number is...”

This future co-worker may be able to answer the newcomer's questions. If he doesn't have an answer, he should offer to get an answer and call back.

The newcomer can also have a role in shaping the orientation process for future staff. A few weeks after her first day, seek feedback from the newcomer on how she was welcomed to the organization:

What is your assessment of your orientation?

What was the most important aspect of the orientation? The most important information you received?

What other guidance or feedback would have made your first few weeks here easier?

What do you wish we had told you or done during the orientation?

What should we do to make it easier for others to join our organization in the future? How could we make them feel more welcome?

Consider this input as you plan to welcome the next new employee.

A Peer Mentor Can Help a Newcomer in Ways That No Supervisor Could

Let's face it. Even the wisest supervisor doesn't know everything about how the organization operates on a daily basis. Some of what a newcomer needs to know is best learned from a co-worker. A wise supervisor plans to take advantage of staff wisdom when preparing for a newcomer's orientation.

This supervisor invites a staff member to serve as the new employee's mentor, showing him the ropes as only a co-worker can. A peer mentor is able to explain things in a way that a supervisor never could. She understands how things get done on a day-to-day basis and knows the unwritten rules. A peer mentor can advise the newcomer how to use the phone system, the process for sending internal and external mail, when to arrive for staff meetings, how the staff social and coffee funds work, where to park, where and how to obtain office supplies, when to leave at the end of the work day, the unofficial dress code, and which chairs in the coffee room have been "assigned" to particular staff members ("That's where George always sits.")

A key criterion for selecting a peer mentor is that this employee will welcome the role. He should not see mentoring as an extra burden, added to an already heavy workload. Let the mentor know that you chose him because you feel he has a great understanding of the business and will serve as a great role model for the new employee. The mentor does not have to be someone who has been around for years. A more recent arrival may better understand things from the perspective of a newcomer. She will have insight into what a new person needs to know.

Being a mentor may have some perks associated with the role. She may be invited to accompany the newcomer to part of the formal orientation. She, perhaps along with a few other staff members, can take the newcomer to lunch on her first day.

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Be Prepared for the Employee's First Day

Earlier, I listed several fears that employees may bring with them to their new jobs. Let me add one more to the list:

When I arrive, will anyone know that I am coming?

No one wants to be greeted with questions such as: "Who are you? Why are you here?"

There are several ways in which you can prepare for a newcomer before her first day that will make her feel welcome:

Send a pre-employment package to the soon-to-start employee. Include information that will respond to first-day fears: where to go, where to park, who to ask for, dress code, etc. Provide forms that the new person can complete prior to Day One, to reduce the amount of paperwork she will face on that first day.

Ensure everything is ready when the newcomer arrives. On Day One, he will have the tools he needs to do the job and feel part of the organization, such as:

- his business cards are printed and waiting for his arrival
- he has been assigned a parking space
- he has access to the equipment and supplies he needs to do his job
- he has been given a password so he can access his computer

Prepare the newcomer's name badge and name plate for his door or desk. Make sure her name is spelled correctly. Ask by which name he prefers to be known – it may be different than his given name (Robert may want to be called Bob or Rob or maybe even Skippy). The Gallup Organization suggests that 15 per cent of people would prefer to be known by names other than those by which others call them.

Let existing staff know that someone will be joining the organization or department. Provide them with a name, a start date, specifics related to his duties (if the job is new or responsibilities have changed), a few positives about the newcomer, his qualifications and a little background information. Existing staff should not be surprised when a new colleague arrives, nor should the newest person be greeted by, "Who are you?"

Let customers know they will be dealing with someone new. Provide a name, some background information and specifics about his duties.

Update staff lists and internal directories every time someone joins the staff. Having his name included gives the newcomer a sense of belonging and having been accepted. He is part of the team.

If some special event (training, planning day, etc.) is scheduled prior to the new employee's first day, invite her to attend if possible. Pay her for the day. Reimburse any expenses.

An Employee's First Day... a Time for Fun and Celebration

The orientation of new staff should be taken seriously...but it doesn't have to take on a serious tone. Celebrate the newcomer's arrival. Welcome her into your fun work environment:

Make the arrival of a new person an event. Greet him on the first morning with coffee and muffins. Schedule a special lunch. Hold an after-work social.

Send the newcomer on a scavenger hunt, looking for materials such as:

1. Signatures of all his new co-workers
2. Five examples of jargon that appear to be unique to the organization
3. Samples of print material about the organization (annual report, brochure)
4. The name of a co-worker who has been particularly helpful
5. Provide a small reward when the newcomer has completed all these tasks.

During their first few weeks, have new employees wear a distinctive name badge that identifies them as new to the organization. After a prescribed number of weeks, and with a little ceremony, replace the temporary name badge with a permanent one.

Mark a milestone in the new employee's career with your organization (end of the first month, after three months or 100 days on the job) with a congratulatory card signed by everyone in the department.

About the author

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A professional trainer, speaker, and consultant since 1995, Nelson Scott works with organizations that are committed to making the right hiring decisions, developing and retaining productive staff, and strengthening relationships with customers. Learn more by visiting www.seaconsultingonline.com or e-mailing nmscott@telus.net.

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