

Five Steps To Hiring Successful Employees

By
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It's Monday morning. The ad to fill the key sales position is running in the newspaper. You're in your office a few minutes early because you know when the switchboard opens, the calls will start coming in and the race to find the best person for the job is about to begin.

You know what you want; someone reliable, aggressive at picking up the telephone and ferreting out new prospects, yet friendly so your customers and prospects will be put at ease and listen to the sales presentation. The ideal person will be thorough and not miss any of the important details of the sales presentation, yet be persuasive to drive home the key benefits to each prospect. The question is: will the best sales person in the world call you today?



The answer is "yes" and "no". By the end of the day, you've spoken to 25 candidates, and if you believe each of their stories and read their resumes, you'd think EVERY one of them must be the best sales person that ever hit town! With the use of technology, almost every resume is polished and charts out a "success" story for several years. But you know better, most of them are not nearly as successful as they claim, or they would still be doing that at which they were so successful. Now the hard part begins: sorting through all those faxed resumes and trying to decide *whom* to invite for a personal interview.



STEP #1: Know What You're Looking For Before You Read the First Resume

You wouldn't set out on vacation without a plan on how you best arrive at your destination. You wouldn't enter into a business venture without knowing your expected outcome and our strategy for accomplishing it. So don't start interviewing without a CLEAR definition of what characteristics you want in an employee. Develop the criteria for what makes you're best people in that position successful, and what traits seem to be the mark of failure in the ones who never seem to work out. You can't afford to gamble on hiring the right person based on their resume and a few short interviews, then hope they'll work out.



If, as in the example we're using in this scenario, you're looking to fill a key sales position, first identify the criteria you use to determine why you consider someone a "top" sales person. Consider some of these points for example:

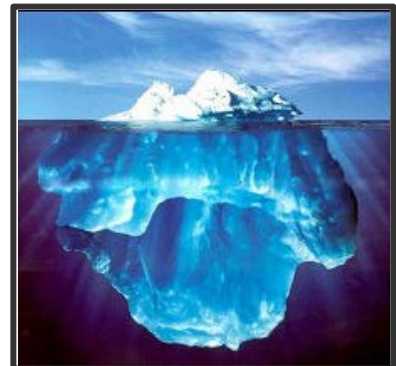
- ?? Meeting and exceeding sales goals consistently.
- ?? High degree of customer satisfaction and perhaps reorders.
- ?? Gets along with most people and has documented compliments from customers.
- ?? Seems to be "driven" for success; Goal Oriented, and meets and exceeds both short-term and long-term goals you establish, and he or she establishes for him or herself.
- ?? Takes a leadership position and makes sure things get done correctly and on time.
- ?? Makes sure all details are covered and complete; submits complete reports on time.
- ?? Constantly makes new prospecting phone calls as well as following up on leads.

Develop a list of key characteristics with the people you now have so you will at least have a "target" to shoot toward and even exceed.

STEP #2

Personality Traits are the "Missing Link" in Most Interviews

What you see on a resume or job application is only the "tip of the iceberg" of what you really need to know before making a hiring decision, yet statistics show that hiring decision often rely heavily on what is contained in the resume. Screening large numbers of job applicants is a job few people look forward to, and most small to medium size business people and business executives have little or no experience doing. As a result, screening criteria is often based on "Background", "Education" and "Experience". Let's start by examining each of these areas.



BACKGROUND

Surveys show that many, and even most, employers fail to do a background check on new job applicants. Even if your company does do background checks, call previous employers and check references, what you most often find is this:

- ?? Background checks turn up little or nothing of value. You may find a speeding ticket here and there, but even if you find a serious offense, such as drug or alcohol abuse many years ago, it may no longer affect the job performance. Perhaps some of your best employees had similar problems when they were younger, so you won't want to discriminate against a new applicant for something in their past that they may have in common with many others you've hired. In most cases, you won't discover anything that will cause you to completely stop the interview process with the applicant.
- ?? Speaking with previous employers doesn't normally offer much useful information, as most previous employers are afraid of possible law suits to volunteer much information, let alone negative information about a previous employee.
- ?? Checking references only proves the person has a few friends that will tell you how wonderful he or she is. It is very unlikely an applicant will ever give you a personal reference of someone who will speak negatively of them.

Although background is certainly an area where employers like to at least do “due diligence”, the information obtained can be costly, time-consuming, and often relatively useless.

EDUCATION

Although having a proper education is obviously important, it can often be an artificial stumbling block that unfairly, and unwisely, screens out excellent candidates. Bill Gates, CEO of Microsoft, does not have a college degree. There are many examples of some of the highest paid CEOs in the country that have a high school education or only one or two years of college.



Although there are many types of jobs where the college education is essential for the job, there are also many where experience and personality may have much more to do with the employee’s success than education, providing the person is not illiterate. It is not uncommon for businesses to screen out people without a college degree based on the belief that better credentials will translate to better job performance or success on the job. If that were the case, Bill Gates would be totally unqualified to be in his position.

Many employers are using “performance-based” selection criteria, where in the example of our hypothetical sales position, someone with a track record of being a top sales person for 5 years with a previous employer in a similar industry would be considered much better than a person with a college degree in business and mediocre or minimal sales experience.

The *real* question employers must ask themselves, is “how well does ones education predict their ability to succeed in this job”? Look at the people who are doing poorly, and the ones that didn’t work out. Did they all have a college degree? If so, then education may not be an reasonable predictor of success and an applicant should not be disregarded or not interviewed based solely on education.

EXPERIENCE

Like education, experience is an important factor, but also like education, it may not be a reason to wholesale disregard an applicant, as many employers do. With the significantly increased use of computers and the Internet, some employers let their software screen potential applicants based on the answers the Applicant provided on a web-based form. If they check 2 years experience or less, when the criteria is 5 years or more, the computer doesn’t bother processing the application and sends a polite email to the applicant that they do not qualify.



Although automation can save a lot of time, employees having excellent potential may be overlooked, and my end up as your competitor. Again, a “performance-based” model may be the solution for your business. In our hypothetical sales position, would an applicant with 2 years of very successful sales experience be better than someone with a lack-luster sales career of 7 years? In many cases, someone with NO sales experience may be better than someone with the right number of years and a poor track record! At least with no experience, you can train them to be just what you need without bringing the baggage of pre-conceived ideas and techniques that haven’t worked well so far.

PERSONALITY TRAITS – THE “MISSING LINK”



Most employers have no formal methodology for determining an employee or job applicant’s personality. Again, in line with the “performance-based” model, ask yourself this question: “Would I want to hire a sales person with a good sales record, good references and a college degree that didn’t get along with co-workers or wasn’t detail oriented enough to properly fill out the sales orders and reports?” Too often, employers rely on the interview process to give them some insight into a person’s personality. The

big danger in this approach is the assumption that if the interviewer “likes” their personality, then they must be “ok”.

The problem in many companies is the employees have a similar or compatible personality with the manager or person who hired them, but the wrong personality to adequately or successfully do the job. Just because you “like” the person, that is your personality and theirs is compatible, has no correlation to their success on the job. In fact, there may be many examples of the people most likely to success could be the ones you like least! You may have found them too aggressive or abrasive, or some other characteristic that may actually help them succeed on the job.

Employment laws want you to be as “objective” as possible in the hiring process. Predetermining the criteria you will use for the selection process before you begin hiring (as in Step #1), helps keep your personal preferences out of the profile. Testing the most successful employees currently employed in that position, and using their statistical data to develop a “baseline”, not only adds objectivity, it helps you quickly and easily identify people who “have what it takes” to be successful in the position you are trying to fill. Combined with the right background, education and experience, you can more easily spot the next “superstar” while minimizing your chances, and the high cost, of employee turnover when an employee just doesn’t “work out”. You may also find that having the “right” Personality Profile may be more important than having a high level of education or considerable experience in the field.

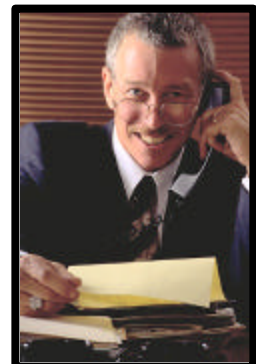
Complete information about developing “baselines” and administering fast, accurate and cost effective Personality Profiles to both employees and applicants, please visit Hire Success[?] on the Internet at: <http://www.HireSuccess.com>.

STEP #3

Don’t Ask The Same Questions They Heard on the Last 12 Interviews

It is unlikely that you’re the first person to interview this applicant since they started looking for a job. Chances are, they’ve sent resumes out to dozens, and sometimes hundreds, of companies hoping to setup as many interviews as possible.

Often, an applicant has been on so many interviews recently, and heard all the variations of pretty much the same questions; they’re better prepared with answers than you are for them! For a variety of reasons, studies show that most interviewers generally ask the same questions. Here are a few examples:



“Tell me about yourself.”
“Why do you want to work for us?”
“Why are you leaving your present job?”
“What job did you like best?”
“What job did you like least, and why?”
“What do you feel are your strong/weak points?”

Perhaps you’ve asked these same questions. To make matter even worse, there are many prominent web sites, like Monster.com that offer Tips to applicants telling them how to best answer some of the most common questions they may encounter in an interview and what to say to make a favorable impression.

The problem of their prepared responses is even compounded with the multi-tiered interview process. For example, let’s continue with the example we started with in this document where a person has applied for the Sales Position you advertised in the newspaper. First, they will often call, or if they mailed their resume, someone in your organization will contact them to do a pre-screening interview. Generally, at this time, the screener tells them about what your company is looking for, your company history, and asks some of the standard ‘canned’ questions.

If the resume looks good, and the applicant isn’t so bad that the pre-screener lets them come in for the first face-to-face interview, the person who conducts the first interview will review the details of the job, what you’re looking for and ask questions of the applicant to how they may see themselves fitting in that position. The applicant generally fails the I.Q. test if they answer such questions with answers like “I’d never be able to do that”, “I’m not really qualified for that, but I’d sure like to learn.” So, these types of answers are not normally heard.



Perhaps the person is introduced and interviewed by Human Resources, supervisors, managers, and eventually the V.P. or even C.E.O. of the company. By that time, the applicant knows all of the details of the job, exactly what the company wants, and it should be no surprise that they say just the “right” things and get better and better at the interviews the higher up they go in the organization.

After making the hiring decision, companies are often bewildered as to why the person sounded so “good”, but didn’t live up to their expectations. Essentially, you may have “trained” them on how to interview with your company, even though the questions at each level were just about the same.

Unless any of these questions are indeed pertinent to the job for which the person has applied, it would be wise to develop other questions they’ve never heard before in order to help you gain a better insight into how they respond in such a situation. Instead, develop unique questions that apply specifically to the job for which they are applying. Coordinate with others who may be conducting different levels of the interview process as to what questions they will ask and the areas of the job and company they will cover, and see to it that each interviewer stays within their pre-determined parameters so you will learn as much as possible about the applicant, without teaching them what the next person will want to hear.

Tailor the questions to real-life situations they may encounter on the job. Ask managers, or even others currently in that position to describe some of their most challenging issues they face on a day-to-day basis, and formulate questions around some of these. For example, let's look at a few examples of what we might ask of the person applying for our outside sales position.

- * "When do you feel uncomfortable in a cold-call situation?"
- * "How many times will you leave a voice message for someone you're cold-calling before you stop trying to contact them?"
- * "What do you say to a person's secretary who won't let you speak with them until he or she has thoroughly screened what you want to talk to them about before they will put you through?"
- * "What does it mean to you when a prospect says 'send me a brochure and your card and I'll get back to you if I'm interested', and how would you follow-up later?"

Seeing how the applicant responds to these types of questions may tell you far more about what you may expect if you were to hire the person. Chances are, they've never been asked questions like these before and you'll get to see how they think through the situation and how well they respond. It is also a good idea to have some general parameters pre-established as to how you would like to have them answer your questions so your selection process does not become arbitrary.



When you use the Hire Success⁷ Personality Profile, you'll often receive several pages of Sample Interview Questions, complete with the reasons why you may wish to ask the questions. Hire Success⁷ develops the questions based on *how* the applicant responded to the test and are the type of questions they've probably never heard before. All of the questions on the Sample Interview Questions Report relate to business-oriented aspects of their personality and can help bring more insight into the person's individual strengths and weaknesses, and make it easier for managers to conduct a more in-depth interview.

STEP #4

Time is of the Essence – Top People May Not Wait

In an attempt to be "careful" and "thorough", some companies have a very structured, and often rigid, interview process. No one will be considered without a resume, nicely printed and mailed. Many companies won't put their phone number, fax or email in an ad and will only accept resumes sent to a particular P.O. Box.



After all of the resumes are received, they are sorted and reviewed to see who appears to have the best "qualifications" for the job. In some cases, it can be several days, even a week or more before the applicants who pass this first test are contacted for the first level screening interview. If the job is local, and there may be no significant travel issues, and a series of interviews often begins.

The initial face-to-face interview is often a screening by a Human Resource manager, or even an Office Manager. All of the potential candidates may be scheduled for an interview over a period of 2 or 3 days. The candidates, who pass this level, will be referred on to the next level. The manager or supervisor reviews the resumes and comments from the initial round and calls the candidates back for the next round of interviews. By this time, a week, often two, has gone by since the applicant first responded to the ad. Perhaps a few have already taken other positions. The manager sets up interviews with those who are still available.

The manager at this level may, after this round of interviews, be able to make a decision, or perhaps will meet with others and discuss the interviews and make a decision. In many cases, one final interview is conducted by an executive of the top two or three candidates before the final decision is made.



In many cases, the “*thoroughbreds*” you’re hoping to hire have received other job offers, and have either taken other positions, or leave you in a position where you must then compete with other employers if you really want this individual. You’re faced with either paying more and offering more benefits, or choosing from the “second tier” of applicants... the ones who nobody else has offered a job over the last week or two (or three or more) while your company was following the hiring procedures established in hopes of minimizing the risk of getting second-rate employees. The multi-tiered approach is not all bad, unless it takes so long that your competitors end up hiring the best employees because they expedited the process and quickly identified the best candidates and hired them right away. It would be practically impossible to estimate the cost of losing the best candidate to a competitor.

The key to hiring the “Tier One” thoroughbreds is streamlining the hiring process so you can quickly, easily and accurately identify people who have the best chances of success and put them on a “fast track” to a hiring decision. Some of the procedures you may want to include, if you’re not already doing this, are:

- * Let them apply online and email the resume. You’ll have it in minutes instead of days.
- * Put your Personality Test on your web site so you can match up the “missing link” with the background, education and experience on the resume and have the facts minutes after they apply.
- * Have your Personality Profile “Baselines” already established so the first level-screener can instantly identify people who have both the qualifications AND the right personality for the job.
- * Invite those people in for an immediate interview. Even if the interviews must be with several people, schedule them consecutively on the same day so the best can be interviewed immediately.

Using this process, and combining all 4 of the steps revealed here, you may be able to quickly and easily find your next “superstar” and be able to make the job offer within a day or two instead of a week or two.



Let Hire Success? Work For You Every Step of the Way

The monetary benefit to your company's bottom line is affected significantly, either positively or negatively, depending on the quality and effectiveness of each employee hired. Outstanding employees help company morale, encourage and keep customers coming back, help solve many problems and move your company forward in a very positive direction.



The cost of a "bad hire" can also take its toll. One bad hire, if allowed to continue, can often cause excellent employees to seek other employment so they won't have to deal with the problem employee. Most employers report the most common reasons why employees don't work out has much more to do with their Personality, than their background, education or experience.

Hire Success[?] can provide your company with our Free Personality Testing Software! Test people in your office or online; have immediate results. Be sure and ask your Hire Success[?] Representative how you might be able to test ALL of your current employees FREE! Use the data to develop "baselines" for each job or position within your company. This will help you quickly, easily and cost-effectively identify employees who have the best chance of success in each of your key positions.

Each Personality Profile Report includes a full report of *Sample Interview Questions* to assist you in conducting a more in-depth interview and avoiding the "same old" questions they've heard interview after interview. Data is graphically laid out on a one-page Summary so you can compare applicants and baselines at a glance.



The next time you hire, don't make the search for the best employees a "fishing expedition". Let Hire Success[?] help you zero in on the people who can help make your company more productive and profitable. For complete information about the Hire Success[?] system, please visit our web site at

www.HireSuccess.com.au

STEP 5

Call Hire Success[?] For A Free Evaluation

Take the next step and contact Hire Success[?] for a Free evaluation of our Personality Testing System. If you are a business owner or manager, you will receive a Free online Personality Profile – no obligation! See for yourself why thousands of companies world-wide have chosen Hire Success[?] to streamline their hiring process.

CALL TOLL-FREE:

1-300-850-028