

The 7 Bases to Cover When Hiring New People

On our 'Tips for Hiring' website we ask subscribers "What is the most burning question you have When Hiring New Employees?"

In most cases the questions are very similar, however yesterday we got an interesting one that I would like to share with you.

Diane du Preez from South Africa asked: "What are the top ten obvious things I should I cover that will let me know the candidate is not right for me?"

When I bounced this question off Brent here in our office he said, "Tell her to make sure they are breathing!" He was just kidding, or was he?

So, to answer Diane's question, I think 7 "things" would be sufficient, and here they are.

1. Do they have the technical knowledge to perform this job?

In other words, what have they learnt to ensure they CAN do the job? This can usually be explained by specific requirements like trade certificates, degrees, special licences etc. Look for evidence that the knowledge claimed or gained has a verifiable source.

2. Have they applied this knowledge to the "real" world and developed a skills base?

It's all very well having new found knowledge, but unless they have put this into practice on a regular basis they will lack the practical experience to skilfully perform the specific job tasks.

3. How long have they been developing their skills? What is their experience?

It goes without saying that the more time a person does something the better they will get at it. Michael Gladwell, social psychologist, in his book "Outliers" states it take 10 years for a person to become an expert at a particular task or subject. You need to determine the level of skill you require.

4. Do they have the right personality/attitudes for this role?

This refers to the individual's innate abilities. If this person does not have the personality attributes to match the job, no amount of training/coaching will make a silk purse out of a sow's ear – in other words, if this is a sales role and the candidate has no resiliency, optimism, assertiveness, ego drive etc, they will never be good sales performers, or indeed, want to be!

5. Are they motivated? Will this job offer enough internal motivation for continued good performance?

What lights them up? This is closely aligned to 4. If the job allows them to use and exhibit their natural innate abilities they will enjoy the job more and perform better. So it important to understand these and do these align to your job role?

6. What is their level of mental ability? Does it match this role?

This is about basic intelligence, in other words, are they good problem solvers? If you show them something new, do they pick it up quickly or stand there looking at you like a deer in the headlights? What is their learning style – are they good at learning by themselves (say, from a manual, personal discovery), or are they more in-tune with “show and tell” learning?

7. What are their values? Do these values match that of the organisation?

Values drive attitudes and attitudes are reflected in one’s behaviour. Usually measures of attitude are more integrity based – will they show up for work on time, are they honest, will they be volcanic, what’s their attitude to drugs and alcohol etc? All of these can be measured and important to understand in any job applicant.

In summary

Points 1 to 3 can be sourced through an application form, structured interview and stringent reference checking. This will tell you if they **CAN** do the job?

Points 4 to 7 are innate and cannot be uncovered at interview. They tell us **WHY/HOW** this person will do the job. Many managers think they can understand this at interview, it’s called “gut feel”. None of use can “read” people accurately. So, these areas can only be assessed through a valid employee assessment (psychometric test).

To understand this area more you can download a copy of my eBook, “How to Avoid Putting Square Pegs into Round Holes!” Go to <http://www.tipsforhiring.com/profiling>

Most managers will base all their hiring decisions on point 1 to 3, but I guarantee their poor performers, or the ones they’ve had to let go, fall into points 4 to 7.

Hiring new employees is no “walk in the park”. My grandmother taught me to always invest in quality up front to save waste and agony down the line. “Gut feel” hiring, or taking the easy road and relying on third parties to do the job for you go against grandma’s wisdom.

Great talent rarely falls from the sky – you have to put in a lot of hard, diligent detective work to ensure the person you see during the interview is truly capable of performing your job role and fitting into your organisation's culture.

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