



Assess Advantage

HIRE TOUGH • MANAGE EASY

Three Common Traps to Avoid When Hiring

I have spent the last 20 years studying what science tells us is the best way to hire (or the things we should not do). This has been supported with practical 'real life' experience working with hundreds of clients. I have witnessed three common traps that surface time and time again. Here they are:

1. Managers tend to hire their own image.
2. Decision to hire is based on how well a candidate 'performs' at interview.
3. Hiring Managers Place too much weight on past experience

Let's look at each of these pitfalls - the first is hiring in our own image.

We tend to immediately like and trust people who are like us. Maybe enjoy the same hobby, went to same school, dress in a similar style etc. If I was coaching a candidate on how to get a job, I would tell them to research the interviewer(s). Then at the start of the interview try and match your likes to theirs. This strategy will kick in one of nature's strongest bonds – we like people who are like us.

So, when hiring, be careful, don't fall into the trap of making an immediate hiring decision based on likability. Yes, this is important, but not before you have firmly established the candidate's knowledge, skill, experience (can they do the job?) coupled with their innate capabilities (how will they do the job?). That is why I always recommend the main interview be done at the back of the selection process, after you have confirmed the candidate *can* do the job, and have determined *how* they will do it via a valid job-fit assessment like Prevue.

This brings us to the second trap, the decision to hire based on interview performance. This is rampant and once again the reason I recommend not to dive into the interview process right up front. When I am giving verbal feedback to hiring managers on a candidate's assessment results, I can't tell you how many times I hear, "But we never saw that (or they didn't come across that way) during the interview". Of course they didn't, the candidate is on show and on their best behaviour. You are seeing them at their best, they are never going to look or perform this good again!

Coupled with this, most interviews are one-on-one chit-chats that encourages interviewers to talk too much and not listen enough. Use the 80/20 rule – talk for 20% of the time. Interviewers who talk nonstop put the candidate in the box seat because it encourages hiring based on our first pitfall, hiring people we like.

Most interviews are totally unplanned and have no structure. Questions are not behaviourally based. This allows candidates to reel off answers that are opinions and

anybody can give you an opinion! Think about that popular question, “So tell me, what are your strengths and weaknesses?” Boy, does that beg an opinion!

Now to the third trap, placing too much weight on past experience. The legal and accounting fraternity are classic professions for this trap. In this pitfall, candidates are judged mainly on university grades and past places of employment. Let me tell you, past experience and education does not always predict future job behaviour. Just because you ‘can’ do the job does not mean you will do it well, or be a good job fit in your job position.

This pitfall can be prevented by using pre-employment assessments. This is the *only way* to understand the ‘real person’ before you hire. We cannot ‘read’ people and it is impossible to accurately judge a candidate’s innate abilities from an interview. A [psychometric assessment](#) (Employee Profile, Job Fit Survey etc) will explain ‘how’ the hired person will behave in the future :-

Will they be cooperative or tough minded?

Persuasive or submissive?

Prone to lose their temper?

Have the ability to remain calm under stress?

Pre-employment assessments will help you understand a candidate’s problem solving ability, their motivations and interests and their personality. In short, it will explain the ‘why and how’ your candidate will do YOUR job based on a customised job benchmark.

On entry level positions pre-employment assessments can also identify Counterproductive behaviours like honesty, dependability, conscientiousness and attitudes to drug and alcohol, sexual harassment etc. Other hiring assessment tools can also be used to evaluate hard skills (like computer literacy) via online surveys or via work sample tests.

Remember, the most expensive employee you’ll ever hire is the one you have to eventually fire, and with today’s employment laws that’s a tough outcome to achieve without considerable cost or litigation.

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