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Improving Your Odds in Interviewing

by
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Have you ever hired someone who turned out to be a total disappointment? Hiring new employees is a gamble. However, you can increase your odds in hiring the right person for the job by creating an effective system of recruiting, interviewing, and selecting the right person for the right position.

Often, poorly performing new hires are the result of poor discipline in executing the interview process. The purpose of this article is to give you a few ideas in developing a system that will improve the consistency of hiring quality people who have both the ability and willingness to do the job.

The goal of the interview should not be to hire the job candidate but to make sure there is a job match. A job match includes not only a match in job skills, work history, and education but also a match between the supervisor and new employees. An article in Fast Company magazine said that one of the biggest mistakes companies make is hiring a job candidate with the right skill set and the wrong mind set on the belief that they can change him or her. A mind set includes such characteristics as work ethic, attitude toward authority, ability to handle conflict, assertiveness level and integrity.

Most people, especially sales managers, view job candidates through rose-colored glasses. They base their decision more on wishful thinking than on an objective set of criteria. Using an interviewing system allows you to not only ask consistent job-related questions but it also helps you continuously improve your company's interviewing process.

The following questions should be asked in the first or second interview and are effective in developing your interviewing skills. Learn to be a casual interrogator, not a professional visitor. Take notes. Talk ten percent and listen ninety percent. Lastly, know why you are asking the question? What is it you must know about the job seeker to insure they will be a good candidate? Identify the competencies required for that given position before interviewing the job candidate. The following are some general questions to help get you started in the interview:

(Note: Specific, competency related questions will follow in the next educational article)

1. How did your position contribute to your last company?
2. Tell me about the most difficult challenge and how you handled it.
3. What did/do you like the most about your employer?
4. Tell about a time you disagreed with your manager and how did you handle it?
5. What did/do you like the least about your employer? Why?
6. Tell me about your favorite boss and worst boss?
7. Why are you leaving or why did you leave?
8. What would you say are your strong points? Give an example of how you used your strengths to achieve a significant goal in the past.

9. What is one thing on which you think you could improve? What have you done to develop or manage that weakness? What would others say is a weakness of yours?
10. What are you looking for?
11. If you could create an ideal job, what would it be?
12. What was the most difficult ethical dilemma you have encountered in your employment?
13. If you were me looking at your work history, what would you think? (Will they sell themselves?)
14. If I were to call employer "A," what do you think he would say about you? "B"? "C"? (Shows relationship with employer. Watch for self-confidence.)
15. What did your last performance review say? The one before that?
16. If a position at _____ was no longer an option, with what company or industry would you seek employment and why?
17. Do you have any mentors?
18. What are the main things you learned from him/her that would help you in this job or career?
19. What would you consider your major problems in working with people? What have you done about it? (Do they have a handle on their strengths and weaknesses? Profiles show this information.)
20. This question relates to job performance. Do you presently use illegal drugs or have you used illegal drugs in the last two years? (Let them know at this point if a drug test will be required before employment.)
21. What was the first "job" you ever had?
22. What would you call a difficult day's work?
23. Do you feel that today you are about where you expected to be? (Do they relate to goals, dreams, objectives?)
24. Who in your life would you consider the most successful person? Why? (What kind of model do they relate to?)
25. Where do you want to go with your career? (Direction)
26. What part of this job do you think you would enjoy the most?

Remember to ask the question then question the answer. Be a casual interrogator, not a professional visitor. The cost of hiring mistakes in your business is too high. A very helpful tool called *Factors of Turnover Cost* is available at no cost by e-mailing your request to leroy.hamm@ihdcorp.com. It helps you identify the specific costs of hiring in the areas of Recruitment, Selection/Placement, Job Activities, and Separation. You must have that information in order to measure the actual costs and in order to manage your hiring process.

When the stakes are so high, you are wise to give yourself the best chance possible. Continually improving your hiring system will increase those odds.

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