

HR NOW



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Hiring Right!

Five Ways to Hire Employees Who Will Stay Longer, Complain Less, and Produce More

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“Yes ma’am. I have a great deal of experience using Microsoft Excel. In fact, I created my resume using that program.”

The interview was going well. She had the look, spoke well, and Bill thought she would get along with the other team members. He missed the part about Excel and hired her anyway. Her resume showed even more experience in his industry than he thought she needed. Six months later, with hours of training, coaching that went on for days, and a ream of documentation, her employment relationship was terminated.

So what went wrong?

Bill, like many managers, had conducted interviews for years and after an all day session of “back-to-backs,” he had missed a few key points of this employee’s interview. She had the background, had the way with words that so many do in an interview, but did she have the right attitude? She came up with an answer to all of his questions, but how would she perform and how could he possibly know? Simple.

Well, sort of. All interview candidates seem to go to “interview school.” They’ve been coached to have the answers to “What are your weaknesses?” and “Why did you leave your previous job?” down pat. You have to look deeper, and these techniques will help.

Hire for Attitude Instead of Skill

Paul owned a PR company and had been in the business for twenty years. He could teach almost anyone how to call a radio station. What he had also learned is that when hiring PR reps from other agencies, he had to spend hours un-training all their old habits. If you are hiring a sales person, hire a go-getter with a love of people and high self esteem, not necessarily someone who has sold for years. You can teach skills, but you cannot teach someone

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to overcome rejection and deal with surly customers nearly as easily. It is the attitude that will help a new-hire outlast problems and the attitude that will enable him to learn new skills.

Assign a Task in the Interview

Put your candidate on the spot. Avoid the same old questions; ask him to do the job, right then, right there. If your vacancy is an IT support person, role-play a difficult end user calling with a seemingly impossible problem that must be fixed

Ask for Passion

This one must be done delicately. After you have asked your standard questions and tested for skills that you need, find out the passion of the person you are about to entrust with this job. Whether you provide him with a profile to fill out or merely ask the question, the results are immediately revealing.

For example, Melissa was hiring a sales person. She thought she had found someone. All the questions had been answered with ease. The candidate's background suggested she had the attitude and making of a great sales person. Yet, when Melissa casually said, "What is it that absolutely lights your fire? What

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yesterday. See what the candidate says. If you are hiring for sales, then have him sell you your own product. See how many questions he asks about it before jumping into the six-step sales process.

Pay Attention to the Past... Differently

Your candidate has had ten years working with your competitor. She has won every award possible for this type of position. So, how much do you think she will question your direction when you tell her to do something different from what she has been rewarded for? How quickly do you think she will be loyal to the very company she has competed against for years? Or perhaps a different candidate who has not worked at all in your industry, but can demonstrate the right attitude toward hard work, learning, and customers -- would actually take less training?

Try Story Time

Asking closed questions in an interview limits creativity and gives candidates a 50/50 chance of getting the right answer. Do you only want a 50/50 chance that they'll stay and be productive? Try asking the candidate to tell you a story. "Tell me about a time when you completed a project and received recognition." Then listen to the story for hints on how he prefers praise, gets along with others, shares credit with co-workers, or bad-mouths his boss. Also, "listen" to body language and creative story telling. Much is revealed when a person tells you a story, because almost always, the story will be true. Most people can't make up that kind of detail on the fly.

is it that you absolutely *love* to do?" The candidate looked her straight in the eye and said "I absolutely love to type. I love to see if I can beat my own typing speed record and enter more information than anyone else can."

Now this candidate doesn't do sales with Melissa, but she is one of the best administrative data clerks she has ever seen, and both Melissa and the candidate are extremely happy. Many don't know who they really are, but most do know what they like to do. Make sure it is what you are hiring for.

Hiring is tricky, and putting the right person in the right job can be a downright complicated gamble. We make matters worse by using the same old formula that even the candidates know, and by looking at experience that may or may not matter. Try to keep in mind that finding the right person for the job is far more important than finding a person to fill the job. Want more problems and work? Keep filling jobs with those who think they know it all and tell you what you want to hear. Want more productivity and a long term team? Send more time learning about people rather than reading resumes. ▀



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