



## BIOTECH BULLETIN



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

[By Monica Wofford]

"Yes sir, 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 certainly showed even more experience in his industry than he really thought she needed. Six months later, with hours of training, coaching that went on for days, and a ream of documentation, he was letting her go.

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 have the answers to "What are your weaknesses?" and "Why did you leave your previous job?" down pat. You have to look deeper, and the following 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 a high self-

esteem, not necessarily someone who has sold for years. You can teach skills, but you cannot teach someone to overcome rejection and surly customers nearly as easily. It is attitude that will outlast problems, and attitude that will readily learn new skills.

### Assign a Task in the Interview

Put your candidate on the spot. Avoid the same old questions; ask them 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 yesterday. See what interviewees say. If you are hiring for sales, have them sell you your own product. See how many questions they ask about it before just 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 for this type of position possible. So, how much do you think she will question your direction when you ask her to do something differently than the way she has been rewarded for? How quickly do you think she will be loyal to the very company she has competed against for years? Perhaps the candidate who has worked in a completely different industry but can demonstrate to you 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 him or her to tell you a story. "Tell me about a time when you and co-worker completed a project and received recognition." Then listen to the story for hints on how they prefer praise, get along with others, share credit with co-workers, or bad mouth their boss. Also, "listen" to their body language and for creative storytelling. Much is revealed when a person tells you a story, and almost always, the story will be true, as most can't make up that kind of detail on the fly.



### 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 them with a profile or merely ask the question, the results are immediately

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revealing. For example, Melissa was hiring a salesperson. She thought she had found someone for the job. All the questions had been answered with ease. The candidate's background suggested she had the attitude and makings of a great salesperson. Yet, when Melissa casually said, "What is it that absolutely lights your fire? What 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." Consequently, this candidate doesn't do sales for Melissa, but she is one of the best admin data clerks Melissa has ever seen, and both Melissa and the candidate are extremely happy. Many people don't know who they really are, but most do know what they like to do. Make sure it jibes with what you are hiring for.

Hiring is tricky and getting 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 work? Keep filling jobs with those who think they know it all and tell you what you want to hear, but know very little about themselves. Want more productivity and a long-term team? Spend more time learning about the person rather than reading his or her resume.

### About the Author

Monica Wofford, President of Monica Wofford International, Inc., is a certified CORE coach and trainer. She and the 12 coaches she

leads help hundreds to determine who they are, how to work with others, and what their own true gifts are. Wofford brings more than 17 years of leadership experience to the companies she serves and provides training in Leadership, Service, and Confidence that impacts her clients' bottom lines and provides long lasting results. She is the author of *The Type A Myth*, *Contagious Leadership*, *Contagious Confidence*, and *Contagious Customer Service* and can be reached at [www.monicawofford.com](http://www.monicawofford.com) or 1-(866) 382-0121

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