

HIRE QUICKLY- SUFFER SLOWLY

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[Assessments—Learn in minutes what could otherwise take you a year or so](#)

Early in “my pre-TAB life” in a HR management career, I interviewed Rey. He was perfect for a machine operator job but I noticed that Rey could not look me in the eye. My instincts said. “You can’t trust him”. Another voice in my head said. “Lack of eye contact may just be a cultural thing and this guy has all the skills I cannot find anywhere else.” I listened to the second voice, and wound up hiring a major worker’s comp con artist. After the resulting six-figures con job, I wondered if I should have trusted my gut.

I also wondered the same thing after I hired Hector. There is nothing like waking up to your coffee and seeing a picture of the guy you just hired on the front page of the paper...spread eagle with a cop’s gun to his head! And then there was Harry. He seemed to be a hothead, but who would have thought Harry would put six bullets in his wife? Maybe I was a little slow catching on, but gut instinct went on to work for me regularly after that.

On the other hand, some managers rely too much on instinct. The biggest mistake that I see with entrepreneurs is they rush the selection process. You find a candidate who seemingly has all the experience that you need, and because he is well-coached in interviewing, he demonstrates a mastery of every skill he claimed. Since he just looks perfect, you hire him and later learn that while his work skills were good, his attitude and behavior were not. Slowly, after suffering great pain, you fire him or make it easy for him to leave you. Could you have avoided this pain?

The problem always starts at the interview.

You needed a particular job filled, and you concentrated on finding the right skill level. You did not take enough time to learn about his personality, style, behavior, attitude, and values. There is an old saying that "you hire people for 'what they know' and fire them for 'who they are.'" Learning about the "who people are" part will save you a lot of pain and aggravation later. You just need to make a minimal investment in good assessment tools; check background, documents, and references; and change your interviewing approach a little.

Assessments- Learn in minutes what could otherwise take you a year or so

In December, in my role as a certified professional behavioral analyst for business owners/CEOs, I was concerned when looked at the DISC Profile of an existing employee

of a new client. I have seen many cases where severe health issues such as heart attacks resulted when charts suggested that people were adapting their natural styles dramatically to try to fit into their work environment. Therefore, without knowing anything about that client or his employee, I just said to the owner of this landscape firm, "According to your employee's DISC charts, he is a heart attack waiting to happen." The boss was floored with that comment, and responded that the employee just had a heart attack while on vacation in Maui and was scheduled for major surgery the following week! OK, my slogan is YOUR HIRE POWER, but we are not quite that good. However, DISC assessment tools do have a 90% validity rate in describing behavior styles and they provide very reliable predictors of success in terms of what motivates people. In addition, professionals utilizing the tools can also recognize potential stress-related issues even if they cannot predict the specific health manifestations all the time! If you could find out before you hire someone what could take you a year to learn about them otherwise, why would you not do it?

Check Backgrounds-

Back in the days when I was hiring, an employee candidate, Sam, told me he left his last job because of "philosophical differences" with his last boss. My background check revealed that the "differences in philosophy" meant Sam went to his boss's house and pulled him out to the front porch where he could start pounding on him. I could go on all day about how much money background checks have saved us.

Check Documents-

When you receive documents from candidates, verify them and utilize them. Let's look at DMVs as an example. I always looked for reckless operation of vehicle charges before putting people on forklifts. We once hired a guy who took out a several-hundred-thousand dollar piece of machinery and practically killed himself on our forklift. I wonder if the reckless operation citation on his DMV was telling us something?

Check References-

I once hired Joe, who said he had just what I was looking for- four years of sheet metal fabrication experience. Since I did not recognize the name of the shop, I called it. That is when I learned that he had been making license plates! Actually I was lucky in that case because Joe at least told part of the truth. I have heard researchers say that 90% of resumes contain stretches of the truth or outright lies.

Interviewing to learn about their work and life skills

During a twenty-year career at Robbins & Myers, I interviewed over a thousand people and developed a process that helped us build a staff that generated \$10-20 Million profit before-tax in 10 out of the 12 last years. Managers would regularly ask me how I could

find out so much more about candidates than they did in the same period of interviewing time. I would tell them to try listening first instead of talking, and then to ask the right questions. For example, I ask candidates to tell me about their favorites, one at a time, in four different categories, followed by their least favorites:

What was your favorite place to work as far as work content goes? Why?

Who was your favorite supervisor? Why?

Where was the best place for you as far as fellow workers go? Why?

Where were you happiest with the compensation package? Why?

What was your least favorite workplace as far as work content goes? Why?

Who was your least favorite supervisor? Why?

Where was the worse place for you as far as fellow workers go? Why?

Where were you least satisfied with the compensation package? Why?

As you explore responses to those eight inquiries, you will learn volumes about attitudes. I also pose questions and create scenarios that look for evidence of "skills of life."

Examples of skills of life- Does the candidate:

Have clear direction and focus? If they can't stay focused in the interview, how can you expect any better on the job?

Take responsibility for choices? If someone has always "had a lousy boss" or "lazy co-workers," what does that tell you about them?

Have a commitment to lifelong learning? People who keep abreast of changes and implement new ideas are worth their weight in gold.

Invest time wisely? Candidates good at setting personal priorities will probably have the same skill at work.

Manage emotions? Emotional IQ, known as EQ, counts more than intelligence.

Listen more than they talk? Written and verbal skills are important, but listening skills are twice as important in most jobs.

Enjoy productive relationships? This is an important indicator of a person's ability to work effectively with team members.

Have good thinking skills? You will tap into this skill every day.

How to pose the questions

Constructing questions that probe for life skills is easy. However, do not give away what you are looking for. I always try to find out if candidates have long-term relationships with past bosses, peers, teachers, etc. I also concentrate on whether they actually listen to my questions. If you do all this upfront work and better focus your interview, you will find it easier to get a fix on "who people are" before you've wasted thousands of dollars hiring and training them, only to have to let them go. Hire for attitude and for how people handle life. You can train for skills but you can't teach attitude and the basic skills of life.

[Learn how small businesses capture talent here.](#)