

The Big Picture

Consider a candidate's personality and expectations as well as his or her professional qualifications.

By **CHERI ZIEGLER**, Liberty Personnel/Executive Search

A position opens within your company. You go through a long tedious interview process. Along comes a candidate whom you perceive to be the right fit. An offer is made, and the person comes on board. Unfortunately, you soon realize that the person wasn't the right choice after all. Whatever your expectations were, they simply are not being met with this individual.

Unfortunately, "bad" hires happen. Or rather, the "wrong" hire happens. Let's face it: Finding your new team player can be challenging. This is your workplace family member. This person must not only do the job effectively but also have the personality and ethics that fit in with your company. It is proven that most folks are hired based on chemistry between the hiring authority and the candidate. The skills and ability to do the job quite often become a secondary factor. While likeability is indeed critical, it is important to investigate other details of the candidate's history and ability to the job you will be hiring him or her to do.

Unfortunately, the art of interviewing isn't always taught in a classroom. For most hiring authorities, learning how to ask the right questions and listen to the responses is something that is gained from experience. Time is indeed, the greatest teacher. However, when operating a business – and each property is an individual business – one can certainly benefit from tips and experience from others. The goal in this article is to provide you, the reader, some tips that might be useful when interviewing your next candidate.

GET TO KNOW THE CANDIDATE

Understand what he or she is looking for. Sometimes the person conducting the interview can become so wrapped up in explaining the job and selling the company that the candidate's desires are overlooked. What does this person know about your company, and why does he or she want to work with you?



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UNDERSTAND THE CANDIDATE'S CURRENT COMPENSATION

This includes base salary and bonus, including potential and actual amount received, as well as benefits such as vacation package, car allowance, etc.

COMMUTE IS A QUALITY-OF-LIFE ISSUE

As our cities grow, time on the road is becoming a big concern. If the commute to your organization is worse for the candidate than at his or her existing job, this needs to be discussed. If it is better, then obviously this is a benefit.

FIND OUT WHAT THE CANDIDATE IS SEEKING

Not in terms of compensation, but rather what is missing from the candidate's current position that he or she is looking to replace. The average person does not change jobs simply for the sake of changing jobs. There is a wound. Knowing what that wound is will help determine if the candidate's desires are reasonable, and even better, if your organization can overcome that discontent.

GATHER THE CANDIDATE'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

What does this person like most about his or her current position? What does she like least? If he could eliminate a function of his current responsibilities, what would that be? Have the candidate give actual examples in response.

ASSESS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Has the candidate actually done the duties that your position requires? Is certain software knowledge a requirement? And if required, what about the candidate's leadership capabilities?

IS THE CANDIDATE INTERVIEWING ELSEWHERE?

Should this person be a strong contender for your group, you need to know if there are other opportunities this person is considering. Assuming your organization is the only interview the candidate is scheduling could be dangerously cavalier on your part.

WILL THE CANDIDATE FIT IN WITH THE COMPANY CULTURE?

You may click with the person immediately, but remember, just because you are excited about this person doesn't mean others in your company will feel the same way. Have at least one other person in your company interview the candidate as well. If possible, have the candidate meet with the peers he or she will be interacting with. Harmony in the workplace is critical.

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW SUCCESSFULLY

Does the candidate have any questions? Have the person rate his or her interest level on a scale of 1-10. When is he or she available to start work?

Finally, test your questions. Ask yourself, "If I ask this question, will I gather information that can be used in making a hire/no hire decision?" And to ensure that you are in compliance with Equal opportunity Employment Commission, make sure that the question has a connection with the actual job the candidate will be performing.

The cost of employee turnover is a high price for companies, not to mention the emotional toll it can take on the team. Take adequate time to evaluate the decision, as well as the offer, before extending. In the long run, it will pay off. 📌

Cheri Ziegler, Liberty Personnel/Executive Search, is a long-time member of HAA. Established in 1977, the Liberty Group provides executive search, temporary staffing, contract placements and employment screening services. For more information, call 713-961-7666 or visit www.thelibertygroup.com.



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