

How To Discover a Candidates “True” Personality



In the past two articles we took a look at interview questions that can help go beyond the standard interview questions. This time we take a look at breaking through a candidate’s best behavior during the interview and “honeymoon” period of employment.

From early childhood we are taught to always act on our best behavior when meeting new people. As we get older we are taught to put our best foot forward whenever we are networking or interviewing. **How people act in an interview can be very artificial.**

The best-case scenario is that the interview is a well- rehearsed production with a candidate who has dressed in their best suit ready to give a prepared “pitch” on their attributes and abilities. This production generally continues through the “honeymoon” period of the first six to twelve months that the candidate is in the position.

The shiny veneer usually fades at the 18 -month mark, just when the candidate is fully trained and integrated into the team. How can this be avoided? Luckily the resume and interview can shed all the insight needed.

A candidate’s true colors can be seen in a candidate ‘s job history. If the candidate who has been in the workforce for 5 years or more has had five different jobs or more, there could be an issue. While this is not a tried and true means of weeding out potential issues in the future, it is definitely a talking point for the interview.

By asking the candidate about the chronic job changes, much more insight can be gained. What attracted them to the position and/or company? Why did they leave? Do they regret leaving? How did their manager rate their performance? What aspects of the job did they like and dislike?

Digging deep into the candidate's past will not only take them away from the well-rehearsed stock interview questions, but will also cause them to hopefully be candid about their job history. It could be revealed that they are a victim of layoffs, hence the frequent job changes. Perhaps they continually apply for and accept jobs that they are overqualified for, but feel that they can make the best of.

The most competent person may not possess good judgment. This is especially important in industries where confidentiality is important. Whether it is client/ patient information, trade secrets, or other sensitive information it is important to know that your staff is abiding by company policy and/ or the law.

Gauging a candidate's values can be achieved through interviewing. **Real life scenarios that take place in the specific workplace can expose how that candidate may react when placed in that situation.** Do they follow a manager's instructions about honesty with a customer when it comes to a product delivery date? If a manager leaves sensitive documents accidentally out in plain sight would they read them?

Once the interview process is complete- ideally with the candidate meeting with the hiring manager and another leader in the organization - it is time to check references. Candidates should be asked to provide contact information for direct managers of previous employers. These are the individuals who can shed the most insight on the candidate's past performance. Speaking to the direct supervisor's direct report can give even greater insight and unbiased information on the candidate. The BEST question to ask a prior manager is "What is the best way to manage and/ or motivate (name)?" While previous managers may hedge on not recommending they will often answer that question candidly.

Employee attitude, not skill is usually the largest factor in failure in the first 18 months of a position. Seeing through a candidate's best behavior during the interview process will help determine the long-term success of your new hire.

If you're losing exceptional candidates to your competition or finding that your

pool of qualified candidates is drying up, then I invite you to a complimentary consultation on how to attract great talent AND keep from losing them during your interview process. Simply reply to this email to schedule a call. I promise that you will leave our call with 2-3 ideas to greatly impact your ability to find, attract, and procure the top 10-15% of the candidate pool on a consistent basis.