Interviewing and Hiring

By L. Douglas Mault

This is the first of three articles dealing with the interviewing and hiring process. In this article we will take a broad overview of the three key questions, and their subset questions, that must be answered in order to make a reasonable hiring judgment. We will also examine some general guidelines for hiring the “best.”

In the next article, we’ll look at some positive and informative prompting questions, and in the final article we’ll review some of the common interviewing errors we’ve probably made and want to avoid in the future.

The pre-employment interview process must answer these three key questions: Can the applicant do the job? Will he? How will he fit in?

Can the applicant do the job?
- In what ways will the applicant’s knowledge, skills and abilities enable him to successfully fill the position?
- To what extent is the applicant’s education and experience relevant and sufficient?

Will the applicant do the job?
- How well motivated to do the job is this applicant?
- Is the applicant willing to do more than the minimum?
- What seems to motivate the applicant?
- What is the applicant looking for in this job?
- How realistic are the applicant’s expectations?

How well will the applicant get along with people?
- How compatible does the applicant seem with current team members?
- Does the applicant appear to be self-disciplined?
- How self-confident does the applicant seem to be?

Now let’s review six guidelines for hiring the “best.”

Sell your company
- Sell but don’t oversell.
  - The mission: We do worthwhile work
- Incentives: Training, education, pay, benefits
- Work environment: Clean, contemporary, safe
- Management style: Open, flexible, team oriented; results oriented
- Culture: Respectful, honest, creative, innovative

Define the job. Understand the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the job.
- Review the job description.
- Get input from others.
- Know how others do the job.
- Know what leads to success and failure in the job.
- Develop target objectives for the job.
  - Can do: Thinking, technical skills, experience.
  - Will do: Initiative, self-motivated, goal oriented.
  - Fit: Will work well with the team.

Interview the best. Read and screen resumes and applications and eliminate those who are clearly not qualified

Prepare for the interview. Develop appropriate questions to get at key aspects: performance orientation, past performance, focus on objectives, behavioral characteristics.

Conduct the interview.
- Introduction/welcome: Put the applicant at ease.
- Outline the process: Preview what’s coming.
- Get the info: Find out what you need to know.
- Give info: Tell applicant what he/she needs to know.
- Answer questions: Honestly and candidly.
- Close: Tell applicant what will happen and when.

Make the selection decision. Pick the best.

About the Author
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