



'Hiring is more than just who can do the job.'

Personality plus

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Hiring the right person for a job can make all the difference in the world to a company, whereas hiring the wrong person may mean lost productivity and lost revenue. But figuring out which candidate is right for a given job is still a problem for many business owners and others in charge of hiring.

"Typically, human resources [departments] work from a job description, but most are so badly written and out-of-date that [it's] nearly impossible, so they often match the résumés and not so much the people," said Steve Waterhouse, president of Predictive Results, which uses the Predictive Index, a behavioral and personality assessment tool. Many companies use tools such as this to better match candidates with jobs.

The index predicts how someone will react to various work environments, motivations and more. "We can also look at a particular job and figure out what the ideal behavioral pattern for that job is," he said. "We can look at a sales organization for instance, analyze all their sales people and the results those people have and, based on our analysis, tell them what patterns to use to hire in the future to maximize sales."

That's not to say there's only one type of personality for each job. The idea is to find the best. Kim White, managing director of **The LBA Group**, requires candidates to complete an online index survey before they come back for another interview.

"I have used it a couple of ways," White said. "One is that I like to have all of our potential new hires take it because it helps me direct questions about certain things that come out in their [predictive index]. It shows me if they are under stress in their current environment, so I can ask about that. It helps me to see if their personality is commensurate with the work, for example if they're a social butterfly, but we need them sitting in a chair all day."

White estimates the cost of the assessment is one-half to one-third what she would pay for recruiting fees for one person for one year. "It's worth it to me," she said. "We don't have much turnover. We pride ourselves on that. We want people to be long-term players. I also use it with my executive team to help them appreciate the diversity of how they all come at things differently and why that [balance] is important. So, we have risk-takers and the folks I call the protectors of the firm."

To find the best candidate, business owners not only need to ask the right questions, but listen to the answers. "The No. 1 problem with interviewers is they spend too much time selling the job rather than learning about the candidate," Waterhouse said. "They talk too much. They seem to believe they are obligated to sell the candidate on why he should work for the company. What they need is a clear understanding of who they're trying to hire."

Start by compiling data from managers and star employees to develop a list of exactly what qualities potential hires need to possess to be successful in the company. Have a written list of questions ready that deal with the various aspects of the job in order to get the candidate talking.

"For instance, 'Tell me a situation where there was dramatic change in the needs of your customer and how you dealt with it, or a time when the system failed and you had to operate in another mode, manually or some other way,' " Waterhouse said. "You want them to tell you a story. Don't ask if they can do [the job]. They will say, 'Yes, of course.' "

Shawn McGuire, owner/broker of **Dwellings, A Real Estate Co.** and partner with baker Jeff Wright in **Three Layers, A Coffee House**, uses a similar get-to-know-you strategy when hiring. "It's more than just making a dollar," he said. "We want to create an environment that attracts people. We're passionate about it so we want to breed that excitement. We're looking to see if it's a good fit. Is she a saleswoman or someone who's just looking for a job? Would she be passionate about working there? If she meets that, we fill out an application and do a background check."