

Rose Consulting Group, Inc.

Client Newsletter

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Hiring people is one of your most important tasks – and one of the most difficult. The interview, in particular, is deceptively difficult.

Have you ever interviewed a person, thought they were great, hired them and six months later realized that you made a dreadful mistake?

Well, of course you have. It will happen to everyone at some point. But, you can minimize your hiring mistake if you follow some basic rules and keep some lessons in mind.

1. THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE NOT GOOD INTERVIEWERS

Paradoxically, almost every person thinks that he or she is a marvelous interviewer. Your confidence in your ability grows with every interview.

You may be a good interviewer: if so, you are rare indeed. The interview has been studied extensively. Most people's ability to predict future job behavior from an interview is only a bit better than reading tea leaves – seriously. And experience doesn't make you better it just means you do bad interviews more frequently.

2. MOST PEOPLE DO NOT CHECK REFERENCES OR RESUME DATA

It just seems like such a waste of time. You either get dates of service or superficial and useless information – if the organization supervisor is still there for you to check with.

3. MOST POOR PERFORMERS ARE NOT POOR FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

There is a 3-6 month period referred to as the 'honeymoon' in which people try to put on a game face and do a great job.

But the honeymoon comes to an end. And at that point if there are bad work habits they begin to re-appear. That person did not suddenly become a gloomy complainer – he has been that way for decades and he hid it for the first few months.

4. BIASES YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD WILL COME OUT DURING AN INTERVIEW

If intentions were the key very few people would let bias and prejudice affect them. But research shows that our biases do come out. If men interview a woman and a man with identical credentials they will rate the man more highly – and they could pass a lie detector that they have no gender bias. We like people like ourselves – a lot – and interviewers will tend to clone themselves without being even slightly conscious of so doing.

5. YOU PROBABLY WON'T TAKE ACTION WHEN YOU DISCOVER THE PROBLEM – NOT FOR A LONG TIME AFTER THE PROBLEM IS OBVIOUS

At many large organizations undergoing change, executive heads often roll, often unfairly. But in moderate-sized, privately owned companies often the opposite problem occurs. We find out that old Sam is simply lazy. But we talk to him and give him a chance. Then another chance. Then he gets better! But then he regresses, so we talk to him again and give him another chance and another chance and..... well three years later Sam is still working for us and still lazy.

Universal problems—but you can do better and have more success

1. YOU CAN IMPROVE INTERVIEW SKILLS

You can't duplicate years of training and experience but you can get better in a short time.

- Devote at least 30 minutes to the interview
- Have a minute or so of ice-breaking conversation
- Keep your talking to a minimum; you should be talking only 10%-25% of the time
- Make your goal to get the other person to talk a lot. Ask open-end questions, nod, say 'uh huh' or 'tell me more about that'
- Have some questions to ask that are relevant to the job
- Listen to how people talk. Do they give credit for successes to their team? Do they complain about past employers? Are their sentences well-formed and hook together to form a logical paragraph?
- Listen to your gut. 'Gut feel' has gotten a bad name and indeed it should not be your main tool. But listen to it. If you have a bad feeling about the person, that's a risky hire.
- Demand examples. 'Mary you say you're "creative" – that's great! Give me an example, of your creativity.

- Be courteous! You may ask anything related to the job but don't ask unnecessarily personal questions. A major and costly lawsuit was caused by an interviewer who asked why the applicant had divorced his famous wife.

2. DO CHECK REFERENCES AND VERIFY EDUCATION ETC.

In 9 out of 10 cases it will all be a complete waste of time. But the one out of ten is worth it. A surprising number of people make up degrees from colleges they attended but did not complete their work. One man listed 'Master's degree in progress' – his progress was one course two years ago. People who are Directors sometimes promote themselves to Vice Presidents. And most importantly tell the person you intend to check all the information as SOP for your organization. Some people count on the fact that no one will check and therefore feel free to be creative.

3. IF IT DOESN'T WORK OUT BE FAIR BUT DON'T DELAY NEEDLESSLY

If Bill's only work problem is occasionally running late to work, don't drop the axe without giving him a chance. But if he shows up late for six months you've let things go too long.

4. DON'T MAKE THE HIRING PROCESS ANY MORE ADVERSARIAL THAN NECESSARY

This newsletter sounds like people are trying to scam you into hiring them when you shouldn't. Some will, and it is important to guard yourself against those people. But the majority are simply good folks who want a good job

for themselves just as you want a good employee. You both want the same thing – a good fit.

At the risk of sounding corny start the hiring interview by pointing out that mutual candor is in everyone's best interest. It's true and it can change the tone of the interview process.

RCG has helped in the selection of thousands of people primarily at the executive level. Visit our website at: www.roseconsultinggroup.com for more information.

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