

Top Ten Strategies for selecting the Best Job Candidate

1. Determine your top ten selection criteria before interviewing

Know exactly who you are looking for. Put your selection criteria in rank order--essential and preferred. Consider: work experience -- supervisory experience -- education -- knowledge -- skills -- abilities

2. Tailor your interview questions to your selection criteria

Make sure your questions will give you the information you need to make a decision. Link them to your top selection criteria. Keep the questions job-related.

3. #1 criteria: Positive energy (attitude)

Everything else being equal -- skills, education and experience -- go for the candidate who brings the most positive energy to the position. Are they solution focused or can they only see problems? Look for a spark plug. Interview questions:

--"How do you maintain positive energy?"

--Is your positive energy tank typically half full, 3/4 full or 100% full?" A: they run 150% full--at surplus.

4. #2 criteria: Integrity

This is about more than honesty -- this is about a person who fulfills their commitments -- and goes the extra mile. Who they are is fully aligned with what they do (and say). This person comes with two extra bonuses: they require little effort to supervise and you don't have to cover your back.

Interview questions:

--"Describe what integrity means to you."

--"Describe a situation in which your integrity was on the line."

--Ask references to talk about the candidate's integrity: listen for rock solid responses.

5. #3 criteria: Ability to learn and grow (flexibility)

Does this person continuously learn and grow from experience or are they rigid and stuck in a rut?

Interview questions:

--"Describe your most significant professional failure. What did you learn from it?"

--"What's the most recent step you've taken to grow professionally?"

6. Explore the candidate's past successes

Past success is the best predictor of future success. Interview questions:

--"What are two of your most recent accomplishments?"

--"What three things do you most need from a supervisor in order to be successful?"

7. Keep score

Make keyword notes to yourself during the interview while insights are fresh in your mind. Rate the candidate after the interview. Use a ten part scale (1 to 10 with 10 high), a five part scale (1-5 with 5 high) or arrows: up, down, horizontal = neutral.

8. Consider the quality of the questions they ask about the position

Have they done their homework? Are the questions insightful and penetrating? Have they researched the job and the company? Are they just looking for a job or do they really want this job?

9. Interview long enough

Conduct brief screening interviews over the phone to assess whether the candidates meet minimum criteria. Then interview management and professional candidates for at least 1.5 hours. It takes a hour to get the person relaxed enough to be who they really are. Do follow-up interviews with finalists.

10. Hold out for the best – they are worth it.

The best candidate is also the most cost effective – they save and make you: time, energy, and money.

Authored by Tim Pearson. (907) 562-1568, E-mail: tim@timpearson.net

Tim is a professional coach in Anchorage, Alaska who works with people who want to build great companies and meaningful careers. He has interviewed 495 candidates while conducting 51 executive and manager searches. For more information, call Tim at (907) 562-1568 or visit him at www.timpearson.net Copyright 2002. All rights reserved. May be freely transmitted and reproduced for noncommercial use, but only in its entirety and with these credit and copyright lines included. Please feel free to share this article with friends.