

Interviewing Job Applicants Can Be Hazardous to Your Wealth

1st Fact: Interviewing applicants is the most common way companies decide whom to hire.

2nd Fact: Research proves most interviewers do lousy at predicting if an applicant will succeed or flop if hired.

3rd Fact: Research shows that customized pre-employment tests do great at predicting if an applicant may succeed or fail on-the-job.

4th Fact: Since you must interview applicants, even if you use tests, you need to make better predictions based on interviews.

If you do not learn how to do this, it will prove hazardous to your wealth! When you hire the wrong person, you will pay a huge price. Your business financially suffers, and you can destroy your management career.

WHY MANAGERS DO ROTTEN INTERVIEWS

Unfortunately, most managers base hiring decisions on interviewing job applicants. But, most managers do not know what they are doing. They often do not know

1. talents the applicant needs to succeed on-the-job
2. questions to ask
3. how to take useful notes
4. ways to stop applicants from lying about work experience or skills

CUSTOMIZE INTERVIEWS FOR EACH JOB

Since you still must interview applicants, let's pinpoint how you can conduct useful interviews. Start by listing key talents a productive employee needs in the job. I use a 35-item checklist to help managers identify crucial talents.

For example, one company desired to hire better salespeople. Using my checklist, the sales executives chose crucial seven talents their salespeople need to succeed:

1. Mental Abilities
2. Friendliness
3. Persuasiveness
4. Flexible about Following Rules & Procedures
5. Optimism
6. Desire to Make Lots of Money
7. Desire to Control Sales Situations

INTERVIEWING MADE VASTLY EASIER

With the job talents list, make a customized interview guide form. This helps you conduct an insightful interview. It includes these parts, as shown in the accompanying example:

1. Job-related talents, such as Friendliness and Desire to Make Lots of Money
2. Place to insert test scores, e.g., scores on the Forecaster's Money Motivation scale
3. Actions to look for in the interview. Example: Craves pay linked to his/her productivity
4. Questions to ask. Example: "What inspires you to do a good job?"
5. Note-taking space
6. Ratings:
Up arrow = positive rating
Sideways arrow = moderate rating
Downward arrow = negative rating

The accompanying example shows how the interview guides form section for one of the seven job talents: Desire To Make Lots of Money.

Example: Section of Interview Guide Form

DESIRE TO MAKE LOTS OF MONEY

___ Score on Forecaster's test's Money Motivation scale = _____

Note: Benchmark scores on Forecaster's test: 7 - 11 = Up Arrow

___ Enthusiastic about earning commissions or incentive pay

___ Craves pay linked to his/her productivity

"When you work each day, what ingredient of your job that you feel most enthusiastic about?"

"What inspires you to do a good job?"

Rating:

Up arrow = positive rating

Sideways arrow = moderate rating

Downward arrow = negative rating

OPEN PANDORA'S BOX

Your goal is to ask questions that force the applicant to reveal how he or she would perform on-the-job.

But, most interviewers ask questions that elicit little worthwhile information. Why? Most interviewers ask closed-ended questions, like "Did you like your last job?" or "Can you do creative problem-solving?" Any applicant with an IQ above room temperature knows the "correct" answer to closed-ended questions. For example, if you ask, "Can you do creative problem-solving?" applicants will answer "Yes" even if they have the creativity of a dead insect. Closed-ended questions start with words like "Do," "Can," "Would," or "Is."

In contrast, skilled interviewers ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions do not give away the "correct" answers. Plus, they force applicants to reveal their thoughts, feelings, goals, and experiences. That juicy information enables the interviewer to predict if the applicant may succeed if hired. Open-ended questions start with "How," "What," "Describe," and "Tell me."

SECRET TIP

Few managers know it proves best for two people to simultaneously interview each applicant. This boosts the likelihood of making accurate predictions about the applicant. One interviewer asks 99% of the questions while the second interviewer takes notes on the interview guide form. Both interviewers discuss the applicant after the interview. You will be amazed at how this approach improves interview results.

2 WAYS TO HIRE THE BEST

When you buy expensive clothing, like a fine dress or suit, you take it to a tailor who makes the clothing fit perfectly. The same principle holds true when you hire employees. You increase your odds of hiring winners by custom-tailoring your two key prediction methods: (1) tests and (2) interviews. First, do a test "benchmarking study" on behavior tests and mental ability tests by having your superstar employees take the behavior tests and mental abilities tests? For instance, to hire profitable salespeople, first have your superstar salespeople take the tests. Their scores are "benchmarks" which you compare against applicants' test scores.

Second, devise a customized interview guide form for each job. If you are hiring salespeople, customize the interview guide form for your company's salesperson job. Interviewers use the form to ask questions, take notes, and link test scores to interview observations.

Remember: Research proves you probably will not hire the best if you only interview applicants. So, customize your tests and interviews and "most importantly" only hire applicants who rate high on your interviews and tests.

About the Author

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