

5 Overlooked Ways To Hire Winners

Here is a true story. My dentist did a "clinical" evaluation of my teeth. That is his fancy way to say he looked in my mouth and stared at my teeth with his own two eyes. He found no cavities in his "clinical" evaluation. I felt happy and relieved!

But then he took a quick x-ray. Lo-&-behold, the x-ray immediately spotted a cavity hiding behind one of my fillings!!

In other words, what you see is not always what you get!!! An objective x-ray found a lot more important information than a highly trained eye.

Likewise, some applicants seem fine in a job interview. But, they then proceed to flop after you put them on the payroll. In fact, huge amounts of research prove most interviewers poorly predict how an applicant will perform if hired.

So, it is crucial for a manager to use special "x-rays" to spot potential trouble lurking within an applicant—and also uncover skills and talents that will prove beneficial on-the-job. Here are five superb "x-ray" methods you can use immediately to help you hire high-achievers—and stay away from underachievers.

1. Pre-Employment Tests

Research shows that customized tests are the best way to accurately predict on-the-job performance. You can use three types of tests:

- Behavior tests—to evaluate interpersonal skills, personality, and motivations
- Abilities tests—to predict brainpower in problem-solving, vocabulary, arithmetic, grammar, and handling small details
- Character tests—to detect a "bad apple" who has a bad work ethic or might steal

Tests can be given in paper-&-pencil test booklets or on the Internet. Importantly, only use tests designed for pre-employment assessments.

Customize tests you use by doing a "benchmarking study" to find out how your highly productive, low-turnover employees typically score. Then, you can quickly compare applicants' test scores against scores of your most productive employees. Of course, you can show preference for applicants who score like your winners.

2. Remember One Truism

When I deliver my speech or seminar on *Hire the Best—& Avoid the Rest*[™], I always point out: Whatever behavior you see from the applicant during the screening process is likely to be the very best behavior you will ever see from that person! Surely you have witnessed this truism.

Let's say you want to hire a high-energy person. Candidate A stays very high-energy during your entire screening process, including all in-depth interviews. Candidate B starts interviews high-energy (a good sign) but then acts increasingly drained as the interviews go on (a bad sign). Candidate A is much more likely to be high-energy on-the-job than Candidate B. Do not expect Candidate B to suddenly explode with energy if you hire that person.

3. Referrals from Your Best Employees

Winners hang around with winners. Losers hang around with losers. Your best employees probably hang around with high-achievers. Ask those employees to refer applicants.

4. Bio-data

I'm not referring to DNA. Instead, bio-data is biographical data. Here's how to benefit from bio-data. Grab the files on your superstar employees. Look for common work-related experiences or education that most of them have.

For example, one company I consulted wanted to hire salespeople to sell a service (not a product). Upon examining bio-data of the company's superstar salespeople, we found the high-achieving salespeople had worked selling services. Most of the company's underachieving salespeople worked in sales, also. But, the underachievers sold products, not services.

Interestingly, the same company also discovered most of its superstar salespeople worked at McDonald's for six months or longer in high school or college. This showed an interest in serving customers (after all, that is what McDonald's stresses) plus stick-to-itiveness (lasting six months or more in a normally high-turnover job). So, start digging into your bio-data treasures located in employees' files.

5. RJP

RJP stands for realistic job preview. To do an RJP, (a) show applicants exactly what they will do on-the-job if you hire them, (b) let applicants think about it for 24 hours, and (c) then ask applicants if they want to take the job. Research shows employers who give detailed RJPs get two results:

- less employees accept the job offer
- applicants who accept the job offer are less likely to turnover

Importantly, an RJP needs to be super-realistic. For example, I consulted a tire company that had great difficulty getting people to work in "purgatory"—a horribly hot room in which hot, just-made tires were moved on the tire molds. Anyone who worked in the "purgatory" room spent all day covered in sweat and thick white dust. No wonder most people quit that job after a short time!

I recommended using RJPs. The company worried, "Applicants won't take the job if they know too much about it!" I said let's try RJP anyway. Sure enough, after seeing this awfully hot and dusty job, only a small percentage of applicants took the job. But, those who did stayed a long time.

Do It Now

If you remember these points, you can hire the best—and profit from it:

- what you see is not what you get—but it is the best you will see
- use customized tests, since tests predict job success better than other methods
- take advantage of predictors right under your nose, including referrals from winners, bio-data, and RJPs

Importantly, you can start these valuable methods today so you immediately start hiring the best.

