

How To Discover a Candidates "True" Personality



In the past two articles we took a look at interview questions that can help go beyond the standard interview questions. This time we take a look at breaking through a candidate's best behavior during the interview and "honeymoon" period of employment.

From early childhood we are taught to always act on our best behavior when meeting new people. As we get older we are taught to put our best foot forward whenever we are networking or interviewing. **How people act in an interview can be very artificial.**

The best-case scenario is that the interview is a well-rehearsed production with a candidate who has dressed in their best suit ready to give a prepared "pitch" on their attributes and abilities. This production generally continues through the "honeymoon" period of the first six to twelve months that the candidate is in the position.

The shiny veneer usually fades at the 18-month mark, just when the candidate is fully trained and integrated into the team. How can this be avoided? Luckily the resume and interview can shed all the insight needed.

A candidate's true colors can be seen in a candidate's job history. If the candidate who has been in the workforce for 5 years or more has had five different jobs or more, there could be an issue. While this is not a tried and true means of weeding out potential issues in the future, it is definitely a talking point for the interview.

By asking the candidate about the chronic job changes, much more insight can be gained. What attracted them to the position and/or company? Why did they leave? Do they regret leaving? How did their manager rate their performance? What aspects of the job did they like and dislike?

Digging deep into the candidate's past will not only take them away from the well-rehearsed stock interview questions, but will also cause them to hopefully be candid about their job history. It could be revealed that they are a victim of layoffs, hence the frequent job changes. Perhaps they continually apply for and accept jobs that they are overqualified for, but feel that they can make the best of.

The most competent person may not possess good judgment. This is especially important in industries where confidentiality is important. Whether it is client/ patient information, trade secrets, or other sensitive information it is important to know that your staff is abiding by company policy and/ or the law.

Gauging a candidate's values can be achieved through interviewing. **Real life scenarios that take place in the specific workplace can expose how that candidate may react when placed in that situation.** Do they follow a manager's instructions about honesty with a customer when it comes to a product delivery date? If a manager leaves sensitive documents accidentally out in plain sight would they read them?

Once the interview process is complete- ideally with the candidate meeting with the hiring manager and another leader in the organization - it is time to check references. Candidates should be asked to provide contact information for direct managers of previous employers. These are the individuals who can shed the most insight on the candidate's past performance. Speaking to the direct supervisor's direct report can give even greater insight and unbiased information on the candidate. The BEST question to ask a prior manager is "What is the best way to manage and/ or motivate (name)?" While previous managers may hedge on not recommending they will often answer that question candidly.

Employee attitude, not skill is usually the largest factor in failure in the first 18 months of a position. Seeing through a candidate's best behavior during the interview process will help determine the long-term success of your new hire.

If you're losing exceptional candidates to your competition or finding that your

pool of qualified candidates is drying up, then I invite you to a complimentary consultation on how to attract great talent AND keep from losing them during your interview process. Simply reply to this email to schedule a call. I promise that you will leave our call with 2-3 ideas to greatly impact your ability to find, attract, and procure the top 10-15% of the candidate pool on a consistent basis.

7 Techniques to Stay Happy at Work



Happiness is a choice. However, as deadline approach we can feel pressure and stress that makes happiness feel like a pipedream. Under busy conditions, it's important to focus on achieving greater mental health. The following tips can help you stay happy at work:

Do Something You Love Every Day

Sure, you might love your job. However, work does not replace a hobby or family time.

Americans employed full time work an average of 47 hours per week which equates to 6 days per week. They also do not take all of their mandated time off. The average American receives 15 days off per year but only uses 14.

You need to make time for the things that you love to stay happy at work. This could be yoga, mountain biking, golf, knitting, or taking your kids to the park.

Stay Out of Work Place Drama

Nothing like a little “he said, she said” to bring you down at work! Gossiping is high school and should stop when you are fifteen.

Work place drama is also destructive to your professional reputation. Your coworkers might start to recruit you to take sides or talk badly behind your back. Gossip is a recipe for unhappiness at work.

How to Avoid Work Place Drama

- Save the venting for outside of the office
- Wait to reply to emails that feel like attacks to avoid scorching replies
- Never assume negative intent

Have a Clear Idea of Expectations

Employers hire employees that help their company make money. Clarify what your employer expects from you to achieve what they need. This reduces stress from unclear end goals.

Don't Overcommit

Have you ever felt pressure from not meeting job expectations? Avoid this by not overcommitting.

For example, your boss might be looking for someone to lead a project. This position could help you get a promotion. However, you are already loaded with tasks and working 50 hours per week. This is not the time to accept the position! Wait until you can perform to the best of your abilities.

Help a Co-Worker

Have you ever felt happier after helping another person? Altruists are more likely to be committed to their work and not quit their job.

“Being motivated to help and believing your work makes a difference is associated with greater happiness in our analysis,” claims Donald Moynihan, professor in the La Follette School of Public Affairs. Moynihan found a link between happiness and altruism in the workplace between 49 countries.

Take 10 minutes to help with a difficult project to increase your happiness levels for the entire week.

Think of 3 Good Things that Happened

When we focus on the negative, we will find the negative. Negativity can be a difficult pattern to break. Instead of focusing on your coworker’s rude comment or pile of work, reflect on three things that you are thankful for. Doing so, can improve your mood and make work more enjoyable.

Sleep More

Have you ever gotten a poor night’s sleep and woken up cranky and anxious? Your body needs sleep, just like air and water.

Signs that you aren’t sleeping enough:

- Yawning
- Irritability
- Daytime fatigue

Increase your amount of sleep to 7-9 hours per night if you are suffering with these symptoms. A well-rested brain is a happier brain.

How-To Overcome Common Fears at Work



Everyone strives for a job that they love. However, even our dream careers develop workplace fears. If we become focused on our fears, we can lose creativity, productivity, and develop stress. It's important to address our concerns. Fear could start impacting your job performance.

The Fear of Being Fired

Whether you love or hate your job, we all have a fear of getting fired.

How will we support our family? Will we be able to find another job? Will our new job make pay enough to support our lifestyle?

As a Recruiter, I help find you jobs that fit your skills where you can feel secure. Nevertheless, if you are scared of being fired, here are a few tips for you to help you overcome your fears.

How-To Overcome Your Fear of Being Fired

Firstly, assess your work situation. Is there a legitimate reason that you should be afraid of being fired? Some signs could be your boss being critical of your work, you are no longer asked to attend important meeting or your workload subsides.

If you can't find any reason, ask your manager for feedback on your work. Explain to your boss that you want to perform at the best of your abilities. Your boss will probably be impressed by your initiative.

The Fear of Not Receiving the Promotion that You Deserve

Everyone starts at the bottom of the ladder in their career. With hard work, you can increase your position to manager, supervisor, or even CEO. Almost everyone who dreams of climbing the ladder, fears that the “other guy” will get the promotion.

As a recruiter, I help employees find companies that have potential for growth.

How-To Overcome the Fear of Not Receiving the Promotion that You Deserve

Make it difficult for the organization to replace you. Always go through trainings to improve your job skills. Participate in brainstorming sessions. Be innovative! Be willing to help out in other areas and possibly get cross trained in those areas. It makes you more valuable to the company and your boss.

The Fear of Inadequacy

We can easily feel inadequate when our tasks begin to pile. We feel overwhelmed and question whether we can handle our workload.

At some point, someone will discover that we are incompetent.

This chronic self-doubt causes stress which decreases our productivity.

How-To Overcome the Fear of Inadequacy

Inadequacy can often develop from lack of communication. If you do not know what your boss wants then you are more likely to feel that you cannot complete the job well. Start by attaining a clear vision.

Ask your boss, “what would success look like in this project?” You can work confidently now that you know the company’s vision.

The Fear of Not Fitting In

Everyone wants to be liked. Fitting in creates a more comfortable and fun workplace. However, if fitting in is an obsession, you might not value yourself.

How-To Overcome the Fear of Not Fitting In

Start by being friendly to everyone. You will probably receive a positive response which will boost your confidence. After you boost your confidence, participate in brainstorming sessions. Impacting the office can also increase the chance of a promotion or raise.

5 Tricks to Ask for Time-Off from Work



Asking for time-off from work can be nerve-wracking.

Is our boss going to be upset?

How do we ask?

However, it's essential to take time-off from work to avoid burn out. When we have the vacation opportunity, it's important to know the best way to ask to make asking less nerve-wracking.

The first step is to know your company's vacation policy. For example, many

companies have busy seasons that do not allow time off unless it is an emergency. You are probably limited on time. Ask your Human Resources person before your supervisor.

Don't Ask at the Busy Season

Many companies have busy seasons. It could be when you gain the most contracts, develop a strategic plan, or attend conferences.

Plan for a break before or after your busy season. Recovery from intense work can also help you avoid burnout.

Schedule Your Time in Advance

The more notice you can give your boss, the better. Doing so, allows your team to prepare for your absence. You can also complete important projects. Check your vacation policy for the mandated amount of time that you must provide.

Ask in Writing

Submit your request in writing to ensure that your boss receives the correct details. Include the dates of your vacation and availability during your trip.

Ask Rather than Tell

Requesting time off should be a discussion. The essential technique to creating a discussion is to ask rather than tell. It brings a sense of cooperation, understanding, and compromise.

Avoid phrases such as;

- "I am going..."
- "You need to..."

Instead, use phrases such as;

- “Can I...”
- “Would it be possible...”

Plan the Best Time to Speak with Your Boss

You don't want to catch your boss at a bad time when you are asking for time off. Email your boss a meeting request. The meeting will be more relaxed when it is convenient for both of your schedules.

Share How You Will Prepare for Your Time Off

Your absence could mean that extra work for the team. Explain to the boss how you will prepare for your time off. Share the list of projects that need to be completed before the trip. Discuss your availability during the trip. Your boss might expect you to check emails and voicemails. Make sure you are on the same page.

How To Achieve a Healthy Work Environment



A healthy work environment is important to your team and can be achieved fairly easily. It boosts productivity and happiness and increases employee retention. If you have not created a healthy workplace, then it is time to make that effort, especially in this tight market for talent. Learn what creates a healthy workplace and start making improvements for the future of your company.

Offer Rewards and Incentives for Superior Performance

Rewarding employee performance is strategic. You must offer desirable incentives that fit the company's budget. If strategized correctly, rewards can lead to a more motivated and positive team.

There are many types of benefits that you can offer employees. This includes bonuses, gift cards, and event tickets. You may choose to reward an entire team or specific team member for achieving a goal.

See *20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work* for more ideas on rewards and incentives.

Choose Stimulating Paint Colors

The workplace can have a big impact on attitude, and colors can profoundly affect productivity. Angela Wright is a world-renowned color psychologist. She developed the scientifically tested color-affect system. According to Wright's research, the intensity of a color determines whether it is stimulating or soothing. More saturated colors are best for the office place.

Wright's theory states that blue is connected to the mind, green to balance,

yellow to emotion, and red to body.

The most obvious answer to a productive work place would be blue. However, you might want to incorporate green trim to create balance.

Offer Stand-Up Desks

Stand up desks have become part of many company's employee wellness programs. For example, Google provides standup desks for all employees. Facebook also has more than 250 employees using standup desks. Even I use a flexible desk to allow sitting or standing.

Research by Texas A&M Health Science Service Center concludes that employees in a call center are 46% more productive when using a standup desk.

Benefits of Standup Desk

- Improves Focus
- Increases Energy
- Reduces Back Pain

Be Flexible on Timing

Different people are more productive during various parts of the day. Some people perform better with a morning workout. Others get in early but need a 1.5 lunch break to renew their day. If your company's processes allow flexibility with timing, give it to your employees. It also helps attract people that may have a longer commute when hiring.

Allow a 2-hour window for morning arrival. You can also allow extended lunch breaks. Figure out what is right for the company and be as flexible as possible to your employee's lifestyles.

Communication Skills

The ability to communicate effectively within a company is essential. The skill

prevents misunderstandings, which leads to errors and missed deadlines.

In our digital age, companies often communicate over email, text, and phone. Do not underestimate the significance of meetings to prevent confusion.

Tips to Communicate Well

- Practice Active Listening
- Use Strong Eye Contact
- Explain Tasks and Provide Detailed Handout or meeting agenda with time targets
- Speak in a Friendly Tone
- Be Open-Minded to Other Opinions
- Accept and Encourage Feedback

Improve the Lighting

Studies show that office lighting can play a role in employee productivity.

“Effectively lit and attractive environments enhance your image, help you recruit and retain high-value employees, and increase the total value of your facility.”

Philips Systems

To effectively light your office, incorporate natural light. If your workspace does not have windows then use broad spectrum lightbulbs. Broad spectrum produces the most similar affect as natural light.

How-To Not Land the Job



You have revamped your resume, applied for hundreds of positions, and you still do not have a job. What gives?

The problem could be your interview skills. There are a variety of nonverbal and verbal cues that can immediately turn off potential employers. As a recruiter, I have seen highly experienced candidates ruin their chance of getting a job with inappropriate social cues. It's important to know what these traits are because they can be very easy to avoid.

Answering Phone Calls or Texts

Most of us are hooked onto our smartphones. We rarely leave the house without them. While this is appropriate during our personal time, it is not acceptable to text or answer a call during an interview. The employer could feel as though the interview is not a priority. Therefore, the job is not important to you. Turn your cell phone on silent before entering the interview.

Timeliness

We are all late occasionally. However, do not be late for an interview! If you are late for an interview then chances are that you could be seen as being late to meetings or on projects.

Tardiness can be recoverable. Call as soon as you realize that you are going to be late. Take an extra minute to compose yourself and apologize when you get to the interview.

Confidence

The feeling of sitting across from a hiring manager can make your heart race. Nevertheless, to get the job, we need to collect ourselves and act confidently. If you panic during an interview then you will probably never land the position.

Confidence is an essential quality that many candidates fail to exude. Even if you do not feel cool, calm, and collected, there are a few ways to make you appear that way.

- Take Deep Breathes
- Sit Still
- Make Eye Contact
- Slow Your Speech and don't ramble
- Think Positively
- Don't speak negatively of current or former employers/bosses

Interview Attire

Leave the jeans behind when you are dressing for an interview. The first impression you make will be by your attire. Dress in a way that is professionally appropriate.

Attire for Interview

- For men: A suit- matching jacket and pants, dress shirt, tie and formal shoes (shined)
- For women: A pant suit or mid-length skirt, or dress and formal shoes
- Avoid loud colors and strong perfumes or colognes
- Clothes should be clean and wrinkle-free
- Hair should be neat, clean, and conservative

This is the proper attire for the first interview. Your second interview should still be professional but may be more relaxed depending on the company and position.

Cursing

Cursing is a risky move during an interview. Some people do not mind the occasional curse word but for others, cursing is a deal breaker. Be safe and do not curse during your interview.

As you prepare for interviews, keep in mind that you are showcasing how you will act with co-workers in the office. Present yourself professionally for the best chance to get the job.

How-To Keep Employees Engaged With Their Work



Every empowered team has one thing in common - they are engaged with their work. Achieving engaged employees may seem simple. Unfortunately, only 32 percent of workers are engaged in their jobs. As a business owner, this is a frightening statistic! We want employees that are passionate about their careers.

As a recruiter, I seek candidates that enjoy their career field. However, after I find the employee, it's up to the business leader to keep them happy. Learn six tricks to keeping your employees happy at work.

Be Transparent

Transparency should be core in a company's values. It develops trust and productivity within the organization.

To be transparent, make important information available. This does not mean that you should broadcast your company's finances. Instead, create charts on the progress of meeting company goals.

You can also trust employees to make decisions. This may seem scary at first. After all, you are loosening the reins when an employee starts making decisions. However, they will become more invested in company operations and will learn to take ownership of their projects.

Take Responsibility for Mistakes

Nobody wants to take blame for something that was not their fault. It will be very difficult for you to maintain the respect of others if you do not take responsibility for your actions.

Apologize when you know that your decision was not best for the company. Your employees will appreciate your honesty and you will gain their respect.

Make Training Available

Employees who are enthusiastic to learn are some of the best additions to your team. Make sure training is available to help their skills develop. This could be webinars, online courses, mentoring, or job shadowing. These passionate employees can potentially be your managers and directors. By providing training and learning options you increase the chance they will want to stay on your team.

Allow Individuality in Dress Code

Suit and tie attire are a thing of the past for most jobs. Allow your employees individuality in their clothing -within reason. You can provide guidelines for what is appropriate such as no t-shirts, jeans or sandals. However, small changes that allow self-expression can make employees feel more engaged in their job position.

Thank Employees for Good Work

Everyone likes to know that they are appreciated. Acknowledge your employees hard work. For large projects, you may choose to reward an employee with a gift certificate, bonus, or extra vacation time.

See [20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work](#) for ideas on thanking employees for their good work.

Provide Flexibility on Hours

Different employees are more productive different hours of the day. If your office allows the flexibility, provide your employees with a two-hour window for coming to work. For example, your employees must start work between 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM. They can leave from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM. This flexibility works for employees that workout in the morning or drop their kids off at school. It can also attract potential employees that have a long commute or have to deal with a lot of traffic that might not otherwise consider your company for employment.

Take the time to build a company with engaged employees. You may find that you have a decreased turnover rate, increased productivity, and you have a team that is easier to manage. Not to mention, you will build a healthier, happier working environment.

What to Look for In a Potential Employee



Hiring the right employee requires more than reviewing resumes. You must understand the candidate's attitude, expectations, and work habits. Hiring the wrong candidate can result in thousands of dollars wasted training and pausing the growth of your company.

Before you hire, understand the most valuable characteristics of a long-term employee. The extra time spent hiring will be an investment for your company's future productivity and growth.

Someone that Loves Their Career

You may provide a great salary and superior benefits but company perks are rarely enough to make an employee change their outlook on their career. Find an employee that loves what they do. Passionate employees are often harder workers who think creatively. You can teach technical skills, you can't teach passion.

Someone that Is Compatible with Company Culture

Fitting into company culture is an essential trait that cannot be trained. However, the importance of company culture can often be undervalued. A compatible employee can be easier to approach with new ideas and are generally easier to manage overall.

How-To Determine if Your Candidate is Compatible

- Check if potential candidate gets along with current co-workers and boss.
- Introduce candidate to current employees.
- Ask the candidate about their values in the workplace.

Someone with Analytical Skills

Every company experiences mishaps where employees are forced to think outside of formal training. For example, difficult clients, software malfunctions, and miscommunication between co-workers. When challenges arise, your employee must have analytical skills. They will better be able to solve important problems by making logical steps.

Top Five Analytical Skill

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Data Analysis
- Research

Someone with Long Term Potential

Training new employees can cost your company thousands of dollars. Find an employee that is passionate about their career and company's values. A dedicated employee is an investment toward your company.

Someone with Ambition

You cannot overestimate the power of an ambitious employee. It creates competition amongst employees, often increasing company revenue and productivity. During the interview, assess whether the candidate has ideas on growing their department.

Don't waste valuable time training the wrong candidate! Spending extra time hiring will have great reward for the productivity of your company.

6 Tips to Keep Your Clients Happy



We can focus so much on getting new clients that we forget to keep our current clients happy. This is the quickest way to lose internal and external clients, and get a bad reputation for yourself.

Additionally, Forrester Research claims getting a new client costs five times more than retaining current customers. Don't forget to keep your clients happy if you want to have a profitable business.

Not sure how to keep your customers happy? Start learning with these six tips:

Own Your Mistakes

We all make mistakes. Admit yours. Clients will be happier with a meaningful apology and honesty rather than trying to cover up your mistake. Usually your client is able to see your fault. They might not mention it but they could lose trust in your abilities if you try to just cover it up as an external influence or another person's decision.

Go Above and Beyond

Everyone wants to feel special - including your clients! Do more than what your client asked for to make them feel appreciated. Offer specific tips, suggestions, and ideas. You will be seen as what the company genuinely needs in order to succeed.

Return Calls Promptly

Time is money. Your unanswered questions could be preventing your clients from completing an urgent task. Return emails and calls within 24 hours or one hour if possible.

Do Not Overpromise

Overpromising and underdelivering can kill your business. Don't do it! Be realistic when you make contracts with customers. That way, you know you can meet their expectations with the opportunity to go above and beyond.

Add a Personal Touch

Allow your clients to get to know you. This does not mean that you have to invite them to your wedding or child's piano recital. Instead, send them a handwritten Christmas card to show that you care.

Create a Valuable Product

If you produce a poor product then eventually you will lose all of your clients. Invest in creating a reliable, high-quality product.

Retain your clients and you will not always have to be searching for new business! Eventually, your reputation will speak for itself.

5 Tips for More Productive Work Days



Staying focused in a world of distractions can be very difficult. However, every successful business leader will tell you that building their business required more than stamina and willpower. You must develop skills to beat everyday distractions. For some people, that means putting on headphones. Others arrive before anyone at the office. If you find yourself taking hours to complete a task that should take half the time then try a few of these tricks to get your work done more efficiently.

Set Up Your Day in a Planner

Set up your day in a planner before your day starts. Make a note of the most important tasks that have to get done that day. Start with those tasks. Cross tasks off as you complete your work.

Some people use a written planner and others use Google Calendar. Use whichever tool allows you to visualize your day.

Do the Most Difficult Things First

It's natural to postpone our most difficult tasks. After all, who wants to get the tedious work done that we dread?

There are benefits to finishing your most difficult tasks first. Completing the work you dread immediately will put a more positive spin on your day. Therefore, you will feel more motivated throughout your work day.

Take Breaks Throughout the Day

When we have a full plate of work, it can be difficult to take breaks. We may feel

like we should work non-stop throughout the day. However, breaks can help renew our energy to continue work more efficiently. It can also help to get away from a problem you are trying to solve for a few minutes and possibly come back to it with a new perspective or energy.

Work Out First Thing in the Morning

Do you rely on coffee every morning? How would you feel if you did not need morning coffee to get you through the work day? Exercising in the morning can build natural energy to leave you more alert, focused, and fight fatigue. Start working out in the morning to feel more energized as you work through the day.

Other Benefits of Working Out in the Morning

- Increased Metabolism
- Improved Mood
- Leaves Time for Other Priorities

Avoid Multitasking

Multitasking can be our work's worst enemy. We think we are getting more done but typically our work is getting done less efficiently while taking longer. Focus on one task at a time for higher quality work.

Try incorporating one of these efficiency tips into your day. You may find yourself working fewer hours.