

When evaluating candidates - think photocopiers!

We often state at our interview training that the typical hiring manager will spend more time assessing an equipment purchase than the purchase of a human asset.



A branch manager for an insurance broker supported this by sharing a recent experience with us.

His business was growing and he was in the market for a new photocopier. His office manager contacted four office equipment vendors, who came in, made one-hour presentations and submitted proposals.

To make an objective comparison, a grid was created and the products were ranked on seven criteria – such as capacity, cost, special features, etc – and the top two vendors were invited back to make more detailed presentations and “sharpen their pencils”. The office manager and her assistant even attended product demos. Finally, two client references were contacted from each company and a decision was made.

At about the same time, they decided to hire another customer service representative to handle an increasing number of calls. They were about to run an ad when one of their current CSRs mentioned that she had a roommate she thought would be good. The branch manager and office manager interviewed her for thirty minutes and they really hit it off – she was very

personable, had worked in customer relations before and could start right away.

Since the person who referred her was their top CSR, they decided that their search was over and the roommate was hired.

The photocopier was leased and the total investment over a five-year period was £20,000, or £4,000 per year. They spent approximately twenty person-hours researching,

evaluating options and arriving at a decision.

On the other hand, the CSR would be paid £20,000 per year and would deal with their most

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THE BOTTOM LINE:
Many hiring managers resign themselves to the fact that appraising people is a hit-and-miss process. They accept a much higher failure rate than they would in many other aspects of their business.
But it is possible to add rigour and objectivity to the recruitment and selection process with a few simple tools.
Remember to make the most of The McQuaig System™ and spend appropriate time on all your new appointments and promotions.

valued clients on a daily basis. This decision was made in less than an hour.

The branch manager informed me that the new CSR was let go within three months after they received several complaints from customers.

The photocopier, on the other hand, is working just fine.

Two ways to assess candidates more objectively.

Any way you look at it, the typical interview is an ineffective way of assessing job candidates. Research consistently shows that, on a 10-point scale, the typical unstructured interview – where the hiring manager reads the resume, makes a few notes and asks a few of his/her favourite questions – scores somewhere between 1 and 2.

Below we are giving away two practical tips that can help improve the hiring manager’s odds:

- ask the hard questions
- ask the same key questions of all candidates

Ask the hard questions.

A recent study conducted by a North American University found that interviewers were reluctant to ask questions about such issues as past firings, short job stays or unsuccessful projects. Interviewers – as well as candidates – are far more comfortable discussing successes.

A reluctance to ask the hard questions will lead to an incomplete picture of the candidate's abilities – and possibly surprises later on. Interviewers need to probe areas where shortcomings may exist. When asking the hard questions, remember to use tact and empathy, for example: "You're right, I once had a boss I didn't see eye to eye with either, but could you tell me ..." or "I understand, it's hard to achieve targets every quarter – can you give me a little more detail..."

Ask the same key questions of all candidates.

Many interviewers like to "wing it", resulting in a job interview that is a meandering conversation and a decision made from impressions and gut feel. In research conducted by Dr. David Cohen, author of *The Talent Edge*, he found one simple step that increased objectivity

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and improved interviewers' ability to predict performance – asking each candidate the same questions. By having the interviewers write down a set of key questions to be used with all candidates, they improved their objectivity considerably.

Of course, interviewers need to make sure their questions are the right ones and often need help anticipating what the "hard" questions might be.

The McQuaig Job Survey® helps managers profile the critical behaviors required for success in the job. Additionally, The Job Survey generates questions to assess critical job behaviours and identifies potential candidate gaps and lists the "hard" questions.

To find out how your organisation can benefit from The McQuaig System™ contact:

The Holst Group
19 Manor Courtyard
Hughenden Avenue
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 5RE

Tel: 0845 456 4000
Fax: 0845 456 4001
mcquaiginfo@holstgroup.co.uk
www.holstgroup.co.uk