

Hire the Best And Forget the Rest

By Mark A. Walsh

The best time to fire a person is before you hire them! So why then are so many of the wrong people hired by otherwise intelligent and effective Managers?

Reason: *All too often the interview process is rushed or faulty procedures are in place.*

The time you invest in preparing for an interview will be far less than the time required to rehabilitate or replace the wrong candidate if you make a bad decision. Creating and sticking to predetermined interview questions will help you avoid the fatal flaw of interviewing...talking too much and letting the interview turn into a sales presentation. Your questions should revolve around past behaviors and performance. The key here is to determine what the candidate has actually done to get results in past jobs. Until you determine competence, factors like appearance, personality, education, and experience are mostly irrelevant. Keep in mind that the interview itself should be a fact-finding mission. The deeper you dig to follow up the answers the candidate gives, the more exaggeration you'll weed out.

Interviewing is a two-way process. Interviewees will use the interview to determine whether they want to work for your Dealership, so you need to create a good impression by projecting a professional image and making sure that interviewees feel comfortable.

The interviewing process can pose particular problems for the person conducting the interview. Potentially exciting candidates may know how to sell themselves really well at an interview... *Understand there's a significant difference between interview performance and job performance.* That means that you've got to dig beneath the surface, to probe and clarify until you're convinced this candidate would be a valuable asset to your business. Here are five simple steps you can use to improve the quality of the interviewing process:

1. Telephone Pre-Screen.

Since the telephone will play an important role in the new hires job function start evaluating the candidate during your first telephone conversation...

What is your impression? Does the candidate seem enthusiastic? Does he or she listen? Is he or she pushy or overly aggressive? Or is the conversation pleasant yet professional? Write down your impressions of the conversation, and see if you still feel the same way after you have met face-to-face.

2. Explain the interview before you begin.

An interview is conducted in steps...*just like you sell a car.* There's a lot of information both you and the applicant need to know about each other before a good decision can be made by either one of you. They have to sell you on the value of hiring them and you have to sell them on the value of working in your Dealership.

Tell candidates that this is an informal interview, and that you are going to ask a few questions. Let them know they'll have an opportunity a little later to ask questions about the job and the company. Important... *don't tell them what you want to hear!* Never explain to the candidate what you're looking for in a sales consultant before you ask them questions. For example, if you state that you're looking for someone who's a really good closer, you can bet your life that before the interview is over the candidate will describe himself or herself as a "really good closer."

Continued next page...



"Making a World of Difference"

Hire the Best And Forget the Rest *continued...*

3. Ask qualifying questions.

The best predictor of future performance is past performance. Create interview questions that determine what the candidate has done, not simply what they have. Experience, degrees, and specific skills are all well and good, however, remember *winners generally stay as winners unless the job or environment changes drastically*. Conversely, losers generally stay as losers unless the job or environment changes drastically.

Conducting an interview is very much like selling to a buyer. You need to find out as much about the candidate as possible. The most important thing you can do in an interview is to ask *one open-ended question followed by two or three related probing questions*. Dig into the information you get so that you can make a realistic evaluation of the candidate. Too often, managers make a list of questions, and simply go on from one to the next without full answers to any of them.

4. Set Expectations

During the interview, after the candidate has answered questions about themselves and their work habits, give them a complete job description. You don't want to hire anybody under false pretences. Tell them what your expectations are, what type of support they can expect, and give candidates every opportunity to decide whether this is a job in which they would be successful and productive. The job description also sets up your expectations from the start. A good start is to establish, quantifiable, time-based outcomes and expectations that must be met. This creates focus and a basis for accountability in the future. A job description explains the purpose, roles and responsibilities of the job and its required interaction with other people both within and outside the organisation – so it's an information, and activity tool which sets performance objectives.

The job description should include:

- Background...*The history and vision of the Dealership*
- Job purpose...*How the job functions within the Dealership*
- Key responsibilities. And daily activities
- Special features of the job.

5. Try to sell candidates out of the job.

One of the major reasons Sales Consultants flounder and ultimately fail is their inability to handle rejection. Given this fact, toward the end of the interview, say, *"Based on what I've heard so far, I just don't feel you're qualified for this position."* This question is designed to determine how the candidate handles rejection. Are they willing to fight for the job? If they just accept no for an answer from you...*what will they do when the buyer says no!*

So there you have it! Five simple steps to improve your interviewing process. Don't just hire somebody because they have two feet and a heartbeat. Remember, an empty house is better than a bad tenant...**so hire the best and forget the rest!**