

My employees aren't doing a good job



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The scenario: In my small company I don't have a designated "HR" person. I've always done the hiring myself. Based on results, I seem to be perpetually disappointed with my employees. I always hired based on resume, references and a whether or not I thought they would be a good person for us. Any suggestions for someone in my situation?

Coach: Harvey Smith.

Is there a magic formula for hiring successfully? Consider this: We scrutinize potential employees, but how closely do we scrutinize a *job* before we fill it? If the job could "speak" to its managers, what clarity would it offer?

I advise people this way: Look at skills, behaviors and motivation.

What skills will it take for the job to be successful ... the competencies? Marketing savvy? Verbal proficiency? Flawless numbers crunching? Listen closely to the job; does it need a wiz at Microsoft Office? Or perhaps someone who is merely proficient on the computer but also

capable in packing and shipping orders?

Look at the behaviors the job demands. Decisions makers? Risk takers? Cheerleaders? Define what works before you hire. I have a client who hired a woman to sell for his company. She was warm and engaging when meeting clients, but her follow through was terrible. She wouldn't get back to clients with information. She would forget to return phone calls. She had lists of things to do and then she would forget where she put her lists. If this job could "speak" it would ask for someone warm and engaging but focused and efficient as well.

How many of us have walked into a physician's office for the first time and been turned off by a dismissive staff? Office "gatekeepers" might serve a purpose; too often they do a *dis*-service by skipping the niceties. If this job could "speak", it would demand a warm and courteous greeter as a primary requirement, with the competencies such as appointment setting and insurance filing as secondary.

What kind of motivation does the job need? A hospice position might require a person who is inspired by social issues and is compassionate with others. A fund raising position would "speak" for a person with leadership skills who can inspire others to contribute. Sales positions scream out for people who are motivated and even driven (show me the money).

Assessments are one way to get assistance interpreting what a job "says", then matching the competencies, behaviors and motivations of potential employees. They offer businesses an inexpensive short cut to employee selection. They allow you to see – in black and white – what you are getting, giving you the option of moving forward with someone else.

If hiring isn't your strength, be cognizant of your company's needs. Remember, everyone walks into an interview with his or her "game face". However, if you let the job speak-up in the selection process, your next decision stands a better chance of being the right one.

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