



LOOKING *to* HIRE a **TOP PERFORMER?**

Try an In-depth Personality Assessment

By Herb Greenberg & Patrick Sweeney

How can you tell if a promising job applicant really has the qualities needed to become one of your top producers?

Does he or she have the empathy needed to understand prospects? The drive to make cold calls time and time again? And the resilience required to bounce back from rejection and get back in the game?

How can you determine if a friendly and outgoing applicant for a customer service position has the attention for details and desire to come through for others, which are required to succeed in the long run?

How can you tell if someone with a glowing résumé and impeccable references really has the organizational skills, discipline and ability to develop talent in others, which are necessary to excel in management?

You've got to delve below the surface to find out if the first impression an applicant makes will be a lasting one. Or is he or she what we have come to call an Interview Star—someone who knows how to turn it on during a hiring interview, but never quite hits that level of performance again.

The latter are individuals who, after several months of coaching to improve their performance and several sleepless nights, you have to let go. And, as you try to figure out what went wrong, you say to yourself, "But they were so good in the interview."

During the hiring process, applicants and employers are often both so busy trying to put their best feet forward that they end up tripping over each other.

How can you delve below the surface to determine if a promising applicant really has what it takes to become one of your top performers?

The unfortunate truth is that hiring people who will fit in with your company is hard. And hiring top performers is brutally hard.

But why is it so hard to hire top employees?

For starters, you can get a Masters in Business Administration from one of the finest schools in this country and not learn two of the most important things about running a business, which are: (1) how to hire the right people and (2) how to avoid hiring the wrong ones.

That's why the insights from an in-depth personality profile can provide employers with the insights they need to make a better-informed decision. The insights that a consultant can provide from a validated personality profile can provide a measurable, objective view of an individual. And the consultant can also serve as a trusted advisor, a sounding board for discussing whether someone has the qualities an employer is seeking.

Will the individual fit in with your culture? Work well with others on your team? Connect with his or her manager? Those are the important nuances that can make all the difference as to whether an individual will ultimately succeed or not.

DEVELOPING AN IDEAL PROFILE

The starting point to hiring effectively is to be absolutely clear about the kind of person you are looking for to succeed in the job. You don't just want a job description: you want a description of the person you are looking for.

You begin by gaining a clear understanding of the personality qualities shared by your top performers. No doubt, they are

all persuasive, able to read others and can bounce back from rejection. But what else do they have? Is it high energy? Discipline? A strong need to accomplish? Is it that they are bright? Assertive? Trustworthy? Are they responsible? Reliable? Capable of solving complicated problems?

What exactly are the qualities that distinguish your top performers? What do they have that the others lack? Those attributes, once pinpointed, become the profile of your top performers. And that profile becomes the model that you hire towards. Hiring applicants who fit that model becomes your goal. The closer your applicants match the ideal profile of your top performers, the more likely they will meet or exceed your performance expectations.

It all starts with having a clear understanding of the personality qualities shared by your top performers. Then hiring people who already have those defining qualities.

Personality assessments can provide the insights into applicants that résumés, interviews and references cannot uncover.

This approach to hiring is how enlightened employers are dramatically improving their ability to identify top performers during the hiring process. And to develop their potential.

Ultimately, what you're trying to uncover during each of the hiring stages is whether a promising applicant is really driven to succeed. What is the applicant's sense of urgency? Is the candidate persuasive and resilient? If those are the qualities that are important to succeeding in your organization, then how can you tell if someone has them or not?

By incorporating the insights from an in-depth personality profile into your hiring process, a consultant can help you discover whether a promising applicant has what it takes to succeed. A consultant can review the applicant's underlying strengths, motivations and any areas of concern, providing hard proof, either substantiating what you may have perceived in the interview or causing you to dig a little deeper into something you might have missed.

For example, if your consultant is concerned about the applicant's level of resilience, then you have the benefit of exploring that area in your next interview. You can ask questions about situations where the applicant struggled, specifically getting at where things did not work out as they wanted. And you can ask about how the applicant felt in that situation. And what he or she did to make sure the situation wouldn't happen again.

Through that exploration, you may discover that the individual might be well suited to the opening you have. Or it could save you from a huge mistake. Knowing that beforehand—so you can bring on the right people and avoid the wrong ones—can save you enormously.

In the hiring process, what you are looking for is that which is not so easily seen. It's what's inside an individual that really matters.

To succeed in sales, for instance, you need to know if a promising applicant actually enjoys being in stressful situations. Do they like competing? Can they cope with losing?

Will they go out of their way to develop relationships with high-level contacts? Will they ask difficult questions? Will they challenge prospects? Are they assertive enough to put themselves in a position to be successful?

The insights from an in-depth personality profile can also provide you with an understanding of the skill gaps of each of your new employees. Your managers will then be better able to work one-on-one with them to enhance specific skills—such as listening well or asking tough questions.

Ultimately, succeeding means constantly looking for, hiring and developing top talent.

It all comes back to having a clear understanding of the personality qualities shared by your top performers. Then hiring and developing people who start off with those defining qualities.

A CLEAR FORMULA

In-depth personality assessments offer objective insights that can help you determine an applicant's fit for a specific job, as well as how well they will fit with a particular manager, and whether they will fit your corporate culture.

The formula is clear: The better the fit, the higher the probability of the applicant's success.

Multiply that by all the individuals within your organization—and you have a powerful strategy for improving your company's overall success and profitability.

In today's uncertain economy, you need to be as certain as possible about whether an applicant has the qualities needed to succeed—the drive to come through for your customers immediately. And the insights a knowledgeable consultant can provide from in-depth personality assessments can significantly increase your ability to hire and develop top performers.

At the end of the day, that's the advantage that can set you apart from your competition.

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About Caliper

Caliper can help your company achieve its goals by aligning the talent and potential of your employees with the needs of your business. For nearly a half-century our expertise and accuracy, combined with the depth of our personalized approach, has enabled our consultants to provide the objective insights needed to help more than 25,000 companies succeed.

By helping you hire the right people, manage individuals more effectively and develop productive teams, we are able to bridge the gap between where your company is and where you'd like it to be.