

EMPLOYEE SELECTION: Predicting Performance Success

Reaching an employment decision to hire a professional from among your qualified applicant pool is probably one of the most important decision making responsibilities you have as a manager. Employee selection cannot only be time consuming and costly they can have both short and long-range implications for the organization. The need for selecting the “right” professional for your organization cannot be overstated. Although selection decisions are so critical to an organization’s success, not to mention your own, managers rarely invest the thought and attention required to increase the probability of selecting a professional who is well suited for the specific needs of the position.

Most people agree that employee selection is not an exact science. However, this does not mean that we must rely exclusively on our intuition or “gut feelings”. Good people “savvy” is important in helping you make a selection decision but going beyond your feeling will make it even more effective. It has been demonstrated that managers can improve the quality of selection decisions by investing sometime at the start of the search. This can be accomplished by simply specifying what the position requires and how one will go about determining whether a professional possesses the skills and talents to meet short and long-term expectations. I would like to suggest a simple method for you to better use the intuition that you have about a candidate by asking better questions directly related to your need.

There is a commonly held belief among behavioral scientists the best predictor of what an individual will do in the future is what he or she has done in the past. This concept, that behavior predicts, is the key to better employee selection. When you learn more about the performance behaviors of the past you gain information, which will predict future job performance. Although people change and grow professionally, by and large their futures tend to be consistent with their past actions. In a phrase, past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. Structure your interview around this concept and you will increase the quality of information in making employment decisions.

The process on how to do this is not complicated but requires some thought and planning. First, analyze the position to identify the competencies such as technical knowledge, skills, abilities needed for successful job performance. Second, for each competency requirement, develop a set of question intended to obtain information on the candidates past accomplishments, work activities and job performance. Remember, your interview questions should target what the candidate has actually done (behaviors) not what the candidate would have or should have done. Third, prepare a list of desired or expected responses that reflect the work behaviors, experience, achievements and demonstrated skills or personal traits of an ideal candidate. Finally, conduct the interview, document candidate responses and compare the candidate information to your requirements and desired responses. You are now in a position to confirm your intuitive feelings with behavioral information that should enhance your final selection decision.

Trovato Group, LLC would welcome the opportunity to assist you in incorporating behavioral interviewing techniques into your employment process. Give us a call.