

# HIRE SMARTER

Tips, ideas and suggestions on how to keep your hiring process on course



*"Big business never pays a nickel in taxes, according to Ralph Nader, who represents a big consumer organization that never pays a nickel in taxes." –Dave Barry*

## Hiring Tip

## Tip for the Executive

### You want fries with that?

I always ask candidates how their interviews went with the hiring manager. You would be amazed at the number of times I hear, "He just went down my resume and asked me a few questions." Or, worse, "She really did most of the talking and didn't ask me much at all."

Interviewing is a very important business process, yet it is not taught in schools, and rarely do middle market companies train their people how to interview candidates. Most hiring managers tend to "wing it" or ask candidates the same old questions they were asked when they were hired. There are a lot of strategies and tactics written on interviewing, but here's a couple of simple techniques that will make your people better at getting pertinent information from a candidate.

#### **Hiring Tip 1: "Could you give me an example..."**

The "You want fries with that?" equivalent in interviewing is "Could you give me an example of that?". It should be almost an automatic response to every claim a candidate makes. Candidates are trained to tell the interviewer what they think

### I won't believe you can walk on water

When reading resumes, and I read a lot of resumes, I'm noticing a growing trend. Candidates think they have to describe themselves as some sort of 'management warrior'. Perhaps they are trying to differentiate themselves in this difficult market, but I see "hands-on", "profit driven", "strong leader", "dynamic", "visionary" in the Career Summary section of resumes all the time. I don't read them simply because I know

they want to hear. Look at the Executive Summary on most resumes. They all describe themselves as “a dynamic” this and a “hands-on” that. Reading these you’d think walking on water would be a fairly common occurrence. Unfortunately, most interviewers will accept a lot of that at face value. Don’t. If they tell you they know how to do a particular task, ask them for an example, or two, of where they have done it before. Your position description should have the specific goals that the person in the position will need to accomplish in the first 12 months. Ask for detailed examples of where they’ve had similar accomplishments in terms of size and scope. If they tell you they’re “a very hard worker” ask them to give you an example of what they’ve done that demonstrates that. (If you really want to have some fun, when someone tells you their biggest weakness is “they work too hard”, ask them for an example of where working too hard has been a detriment to their career. The result is usually a ‘deer in the headlights’ look...) Getting your people to ask this simple question throughout their interviews will bring out a lot more meaningful information about the candidate.

### **Hiring Tip 2: Go deep, not wide.**

Interviewers will often feel the need to get through all parts of a person’s resume. Most of a resume may not be relevant to what you need accomplished. You are better off to get deep into the key areas than to spend time on areas that are less relevant. The key is that you want to know if this person has had like accomplishments to what you need done. Use the old story telling tool of: *who, what, where, when, why* and *how* to flush out what you need to know. If a candidate is making something up, it’s very difficult to make it up that fast. Who was on the team you led? How did you pick the team? What were the results? What would you do differently today? Why? Going deep may lead you to learn that the person who said they led a particular team wasn’t really the leader at all, but the person in charge of getting coffee and donuts.

These are a couple of simple tools that will help your people get to the heart of a candidate’s capabilities and sort out the best candidates from the best “actors”.

the candidate wrote them. I’ll decide how “dynamic” someone is when I interview them, not when I read their resume. A Summary of your experience in terms of function, industry and accomplishments is fine, but skip most of the flowery descriptions. I recommend you save the space to list more accomplishments.

**Recent Assignments/News**

**Here today, gone to Fiji.**

OK, I'm bragging to any of you who may be SCUBA divers. I recently spent a week with my dive club in Fiji. For color, soft corals and abundant life on the reefs, I rank it as #1 or #2 in the world, so far.

On the business front, we have continued to stay busy with two searches for Epson America and two more for Dunn Edwards.

## Links to Look For

Read about Hagerthy & Co's [Complementary Assessment](#) of your company's hiring systems.

Visit the [Hagerthy & Co](#) web site for more tips on hiring or contact Mike Hagerthy at [mike@hagnco.com](mailto:mike@hagnco.com).



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