

8 Personality Traits of Successful Hires

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With many positions receiving hundreds of qualified applicants, narrowing down the pool of applicants can be a challenge. Although skills are important, making the right match to your company culture is also critical for long-term retention. Here are 8 personality traits you should look for in interviews to make sure your next hire is the best one.

Professionalism

Professionalism encompasses more than just how a candidate dresses to an interview, it's their total persona. Do they slouch in their chair, answer questions with brief replies or show up too early or too late? How do they communicate? Professionalism requires conscious effort every time and candidates that display professionalism at the interview stage are likely to deal professionally with their peers, bosses and even your customers long after they are hired.

High-Energy/Enthusiasm

It's important to look for candidates that are not only passionate about the potential role, but are also excited about your company. Demonstrating enthusiasm by researching your brand and having a strong interest in what you do translates to a good employee. Lack of enthusiasm at the interview stage will likely make for a hire that lacks a real interest in the business. This may translate into a flight risk if the only reason they join you is for the pay and benefits.

Confidence

Hiring a candidate that has confidence in themselves results in hires that make an impact. Many candidates try to make a good impression by parroting back your own opinions and thoughts, rather than voice their own. Although these candidates might be good for repetitive or entry-level type roles, having a hire that can think for themselves and can challenge the status quo in a respectful way is the best type of employee. How can you gauge if a hire has the right type of confidence needed for success? A good method is to challenge a potential candidate's answer. Some candidates may lose confidence and try to change their answer to match what they think you are looking for. Others might vehemently stand up for their opinion, unwilling to consider another possibility. Neither would be a successful hire, one lacks confidence and the other is over-confident to the point of not being able to consider another point. The best candidate will answer something along the lines of "that's an

interesting approach, I actually go about it this way, but I'm curious to hear why you feel your approach is the best way”?

Honesty and Reliability

Every employer values employees that are honest and reliable. A candidate that demonstrates their honesty during an interview might not come across as the strongest skills-wise as they will be upfront on areas where they are weaker in. However, they are often the best hire as they recognize their weaknesses and will work harder to catch up in those areas if they are weaker. Be wary of candidates that rate themselves highly across the board, either they are as strong as they claim or they are over-exaggerating some of their skills. Having follow-up questions is a great way to see how honest a candidate is in their self-assessment.

Positivity

Candidates that bring positive energy to the interview process go on to become positive employees. Positivity can be nearly impossible to train – candidates either bring a natural positive outlook to their workplace or they don't. Questions about past work experience and environments (i.e. what did you like the least about your last workplace) can be a good way to determine if a candidate will be a source of positivity as a new hire or will drag the team down.

Drive

If you're like most managers, the thought of having to micro-manage or constantly direct a new hire sounds exhausting. After all, the reason for hiring someone for your team is because you may already be overloaded with work as it is. Hiring someone that is independent and responsible for themselves saves you time and a lot of hassle. However, finding a candidate wise enough to pick up the slack without having to be directed every time can be difficult. Past manager references can be a good way to flesh out how self-motivated and driven a candidate is.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) encompasses four areas – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Having a high emotional intelligence is a strong indication of being a strong employee. Although some people naturally have a higher EQ than others, each of these areas can be strengthened with practice. Many of the common interview questions are an attempt to gauge a person's EQ, such as “what's your greatest weakness”, or “tell me about a time you resolved a conflict with a colleague.” Although questions like these may be thought of as cliché, the answers may reveal a candidate with high EQ based on discussion of past work experiences and relationships. High EQ candidates will report positive interactions with colleagues and managers, even friendships, and will typically be part of resolving inner-office conflict.

Sense of Humor

Candidates that feel comfortable to share their sense of humor with you are likely to go on to become highly successful hires. Being comfortable meeting a new person and showing off their unique personality speaks volumes for how they will interact in the workplace, especially if their position involves a lot of interaction with new people. Candidates that keep their personality under-wraps might end up surprising you, however, the surprise might not be a good one.

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