

READING PEOPLE (Useful stuff for selection and placement)

© 2003 Gerald A. Hutchinson Jr.

ANOVA> Performance Solutions

THE DILEMMAS of SELECTION:

- I. What gets someone hired are their strengths, BUT, what gets someone fired are their weaknesses.
- II. Employers MUST look for a candidate's strengths to fill a gap, BUT, candidates showcase their strengths and hide their weaknesses to give them a better chance of getting the job.
- III. The ultimate purpose of an interview, from both employer- and candidate-perspectives, is to make sure that there is a good fit between (a) the person's capabilities and the job-skill requirements, and (b) the company culture and the candidate's personality. BUT, current interview practices, from both perspectives, operate at cross-purposes to full disclosure of factors that make informed decisions possible.

Your Purpose in an Interview:

To get them to reveal who they really are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, so that you will know (a) whether they fit with job requirements, (b) whether their personality will fit with company culture, (c) what problems you are likely to have with them, and (d) what problems that they will have with you (or the company).

Their Purpose in an Interview:

To show you only what they want you to know; to hide their weaknesses (or get you to overlook them) so that they do not look bad and so they can "save face;" to position themselves so that they look like the "best" candidate, and to get hired based upon their strengths.

How Do You Solve the Problem?... "Manipulation"

NOTE: Manipulation of the interview process serves the greater good of making sure that you get a good fit between the candidate and the job (and the company culture.) The following process is a manipulation. It differs from "casual" or "unstructured" processes, in that you intentionally manage the process so that you can defeat the unconscious (and off-purpose) motivations of yourself and of them in service to the greater good. If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can call your processes "maneuvers" rather than manipulations.

1. You must have a planned system of interviewing and selection in which the candidates:
 - a. get a "real" sense of the company and the job requirements, and
 - b. feel comfortable revealing who they really are and in what situations they are likely to experience "pressure" (and then "screw up), so that

- c. you, and they, can make a decision about “fit” that serves the greater good.
2. To create this system, you must understand that the interview process is an improvisational psycho-drama, with a stage and props, scenes, characters, and scripts.
 - a. The stage and props are the building, the office or interview room, the resume they provide, the “job description,” psychometric tests, the cup of coffee, etc.
 - b. The scenes are the distinct instances in which the candidate “touches” the company. There are several scenes: With the recruiter, being invited for an interview on the phone, when they first walk in the building for their interview, the building tour, the interview(s), etc.
 - c. The characters are all those individuals with whom the candidate comes into contact, but for all practical purposes, the only relevant ones are those contained within the mind of the candidate (his or her “characterizations” about employers and employees.)
 - d. Each character has a script. Each script is written by his/her unconscious motivations to stay as comfortable as possible, and avoid embarrassment. The script tells each character what to say, think, and do.
3. You must manipulate and direct the psycho-drama so that they reveal their weaknesses to you in one way or another, and so that they decide to select themselves out of consideration of the company as an employer if they deem that they are not a good fit. You also want to manipulate them into seeing themselves as a “friend” of the company, and not have any bad feelings.

Finding Out Who They Are: Building Trust

1. In order to get them to reveal who they really are to you, you must (a) build trust, and (b) have a way of “reading” the signals that they provide you. (Remember, their purpose is to hide their weaknesses from you. It is unlikely that they will directly tell you what their REAL weaknesses are. If they have had ANY interview training, then they are likely to have been coached to float up “fake weaknesses” in their interviews; that is, weaknesses that look like strengths. You must have a way of “seeing, hearing & feeling” the REAL weaknesses.)
2. To build trust, you must create a relationship of trust.
 - a. The quality of your BEING, as much as the overt actions of your DOING, conveys to them how safe they are, how much they will trust you.
 - b. You must AUTHENTICALLY connect with them, showing real interest in who they are. The style with which you connect with them is what they will perceive, not your intentions.

- c. You cannot undo their perceptions of you as a “boss.” But you can re-characterize yourself in THEIR eyes as a “safe-and-caring boss” so that they do not feel a need to hide behind their “ACT.”
 - d. To re-characterize yourself, you must really listen to them.
 - e. To listen to them, you must encourage them in any APPROPRIATE way possible to reveal more about themselves.
 - f. To get them to reveal more about themselves, you must not be afraid to ask questions that probe beyond the surface of their responses.
 - g. When they reveal themselves, they must not perceive you as being critical of them, or they will clam up and the defensive wall goes up again.
3. Because they are likely to be suspicious of unusual interview techniques, you must be careful to frame the process stylistically in a casual way that sneaks under their radar screen. This can best be achieved by acting as if what you are doing is completely ordinary for your interview process.

Finding Out Who They Are: Reading Their Signals

“All Utterances Reveal Something About The Personality.”

Useful CRITERIA in Assessing Personality:

- Level of defensiveness and ego-attachment (*avoiding* appearing “dumb, incompetent, unpopular, unworthy, irrelevant, etc., and *striving* to appear smart, competent, likable, etc.)
- Degree of self-awareness (more aware = better learner).
- Level of intellectual complexity (simple, moderate, complex)
- Style of thinking (structured and orderly, step by step; or more random, inferential and off the cuff)
- Level of negative emotionality (higher = more likely to make a “fatal blunder”, but must be checked against their level of self-control)
- Openness to new experiences and learning (openness is a sign of creativity, closedness is a sign of rigidity)
- Ability to profit from their experience
- Degree of sociability (important for customer interface issues)
- Degree of need for approval (question later will be: whether they are seeking YOUR approval, the approval of customers, or their peers)
- Degree of compliance to authority
- Degree of compliance to the group
- Level of ambition and drive
- Extent of ability to defer gratification

QUESTIONS:

- How did you get here? to your station in life?
- What are your preferred job roles and challenges?
- What really fires you up, trips your trigger?

- Where would you like to be in 3-5 years
- Best/Worse: Vacation, Movie, Boss, Job, Work Situation, Co-Workers.
- Highest Level of Professional Accomplishment.
- Everybody gets stressed. What stresses you out?
- How did you get to be the person that you are?
- Describe the best, most realistic year you can imagine (i.e. You can't "win the lottery" and quit working.)
- Biggest Failure and how handled it. Next biggest.
- Describe a situation in which you got some negative feedback. How did you handle it? How would you have liked to have handled it? What do you think others thought about you?
- How did you get to be the way that you are?
- Most difficult ethical challenge at work, and how handled it.
- What do you think about this interview?
- Speaking realistically, what do you think about our company?

To Observe their Thinking Processes:

How would you fight the "War on Drugs?"

How would you raise money for orphaned children?