

## [How Not to Recruit the Next Ex-Employee](#)

by [Genevieve Tucker](#) February 14th, 2008

What matters more in a job candidate, experience or personality? In my opinion, it's personality, hands down. There, I said it.

Because of the current lack of skilled workers, the days of strapping strict, lengthy requirements on applicants are gone. It wasn't long ago that when clients asked for seasoned, highly educated candidates with Excel skills, technical expertise, a proven track record, solid work history and a great deal of energy, you could supply them. Today, though, you're lucky to find a small handful of warm bodies with even a few of these sought-after qualities.

The trend, therefore, should be to recruit and hire people with personalities showing potential to be productive, comfortable and fit for a specific job. They may not have the ideal years of experience, advanced degrees and strong technical expertise, but they can exhibit clear signs of aptitude and drive — and these are two traits that often breed success.

It's important to think outside the box when recruiting. Keep in mind an applicant's most dominant traits and probable response to situations before making any recommendations, one way or the other. How do you really know, for example, if the person you're interviewing is not geared toward sales? If he or she displays an outgoing demeanor, speaks enthusiastically and has a proven track record, is this person a safe bet? Could the more staid, introspective applicant be the producer your client needs? Maybe or maybe not!

It all depends on whether your client is looking for an emotionally based, persuasive sales personality or one who takes on a more consultative approach. The desired level of assertiveness also comes into play, as some salespeople will naturally press hard for results while others project a more subtle business style.

Know your client's objectives! The most qualified candidate may not be best for the job.

Another area to explore is a candidate's social awareness, as a lack of it can foretell the possible inability to empathize with others or listen carefully. Applicants for positions in sales, management and service who can't feel the pain of others or relate to their situations may be setting themselves up for disaster and probably need to be redirected to jobs where heavy interaction with people is not expected.

Matching employees to employers for a mutually beneficial long-term fit requires not only the ability to read people and trust your instincts but also an understanding of how applicants are wired and what motivates workers to do their best. Once you obtain this information, you might see that a candidate who looks so good on paper and interviews well is really ill-suited to a specific job or management style.

Behavioral assessments are fast becoming the tool of choice when looking to quickly assess a candidate's traits and typical response to situations. They flag strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas of compatibility and offer suggestions on how to maximize a less-than-perfect employee's performance. Some include management advice, others identify leadership qualities, and a few predict how a candidate is apt to respond to stress.

Anticipating how a person would respond in less-than-ideal scenarios becomes another important factor, especially when selecting a job candidate for sales. These are the days of unknowns and what-if s when it comes to working on commission and assuming financial risks. In a recent article written by Colleen Stanley, president of Sales Leadership Inc., she explains that as competition heats up and the talent pool becomes tighter, pressure is increasing. It s important that companies consider EQ (emotional intelligence, common sense) in hiring salespeople who can handle competition and pressure.

During these times of volatility, having a clear sense of how a candidate is apt to handle difficult situations is more valuable than knowing about their references, SAT scores, or past experiences. Some people acquiesce but many become more aggressive; still others simply become more vulnerable and discouraged. Pairing a candidate who is low-keyed and cautious with a boss who easily becomes agitated and demanding can prove disastrous.

Aptitude, expertise and experience represent only a small measure of a person s potential for success at a job. With increasing frequency, employees will need to take on not necessarily the person with the most impressive credentials but the one who displays the right personality, as this is what best determines long-term mutual satisfaction and success.

It's personality that counts. Period.

*Article from "The Fordyce Letter" ([www.fordyceletter.com](http://www.fordyceletter.com))*

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