



Why the Wrong People Get Hired

And What You Can Do to Avoid It

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Why the Wrong People Get Hired

Kleiman HRExchange Executive Reports are straightforward, fast-read reports designed for busy executives. These reports excel at cutting the fluff, eliminating jargon, and providing the information today's executives need to improve their organization's performance.

This Report was based on an exclusive presentation for Progressive Business Audio Conferences by Mel Kleiman, a leading authority on recruiting, hiring and retaining the best employees. This presentation contains information originally copyrighted by Mel during his 30+ years as a speaker, consultant and trainer.

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Executive Summary

Every new hire changes an organization. If the new employee is better than – or has the potential to be better than – half of the existing staff, your organization just got better... and, unfortunately, vice versa.

Too many organizations repeatedly hire people who are in the bottom 50% of employee performance the minute they walk in the door.

When that happens over and over, it means there's a flaw in the hiring process and, unless it's changed, the system will continue to deliver the same results. The only way to fix it is to change the system.

Myths That impede Our Ability to Hire Well

A number of common myths impede the ability to hire the best:

- “The best applicants make the best employees.” The opposite is more often the case. People who interview the best are often people who have been interviewed the most. They've heard every question and honed their answers over time. They know how to tell you what you want to hear. *(Page 3)*
- “I can tell when somebody's lying.” Not true. *(Page 5)*
- “You can't get references anymore.” If you change the way you check references, you'll get the information you need. *(Page 5)*
- “If you make it too hard to get the job, good applicants will drop out.” It should be hard; the applicant will place even more value on the position. *(Page 5)*
- “I have to see at least three to five people to make sure I'm hiring the best.” The object is not to hire the best of the lot, but to hire the best. *(Page 5)*
- “I can tell if someone's going to be good or bad.” If your gut says the applicant will be a bad hire, trust it. But if your gut says it's a good hire, do everything possible to prove yourself wrong. *(Page 6)*

Everything Is A Test

In the hiring process, every step should be viewed as a test. The goal is to find the right people for your organization and for applicants to find the right job for themselves. To that end, interviewers should never rely on just a resume because *(Page 5):*

- A resume allows the applicant to control the interview, and
- Resumes lie

Your own organization's job application form is a better tool. If it has not been fully completed, the person has already failed the "attention-to-detail test."

Pay particular attention to the references (Pages 8-10):

- Always ask: "Is this person eligible for rehire?"
- A reference verification form can open locked doors
- There are two great ways to find out what previous employers really think of the applicant
- Applicants' co-workers and friends can help you find out the truth
- Reference checks are a great tool for prospecting for new hires

Start with the End in Mind

Organizations that start with the end in mind (*Page 12*) know what they're looking for. They know if the goal is to have nothing but a team of A-Players or if it's best for them to be a farm team. In any event, they know what the best – and worst – employees look like when they're hiring. They can recognize winners and losers. (*Page 11*)

They ask themselves whether an A-Player will want to work for their organization or a particular manager. (*Page 12*)

The More You Know, the Less You Risk

The more you know about an applicant, the smaller the risk. (*Page 13*) To find out more, you may need to change the way you interview. If you first ask about the applicant's last job, you're actually watching the movie backwards. (*Page 16*) Starting with an applicant's first paying job will get you more candid answers and give you better insight into why he or she is now sitting before you.

A big signal that you've got the right person: He or she has passion. Dig for that in interviews. If you can't find the passion, the applicant fails the test. (*Page 19*)

Finally, knowing applicants' strengths and weaknesses is important. But what you really want to know is: What would it take to make them better? (*Page 20*)

The Executive Report

Why Wrong People Get Hired

Hiring is the most important thing we do for our organizations. Every new hire changes an organization. If the new hire is better than – or has the potential to be better than – half your existing staff, your organization just got better. If that person ranks in the bottom 50 percent, you just got worse.

So why do so many of us hire “stupid people” who end up in the bottom 50 percent?

First of all, "stupid" doesn't mean they're dumb. In fact, they're generally pretty smart. After all, they convinced us to hire them, didn't they?

The stupid people we're referring to are the ones who cause problems. They become disruptions. They don't carry their own weight. They undermine morale. They damage our organizations.

They're easy to spot in hindsight. The goal is to spot them before they're hired.

To do that, we must recognize there is something in our hiring processes that allows them to slip through.

W. Edwards Deming, the quality guru, said: “The system will give you 100% of what the system is designed to give you.”

Translation: If you have “stupid people” on staff, it means your hiring system is designed to hire “stupid people.”

The methodology outlined in this Executive Report will help you change your system to eliminate the bad hires. And if what you really want is to hire nothing but A-Players, it'll help you design a hiring system that does just that.

Be Wary of the "Best Applicants"

The goal is to hire the best employees, but too often what we hire are the “best applicants.”

And many of those “best applicants” turn out to be the “stupid” employees who cause problems later.

But they’re not stupid. In fact, they’re pretty savvy --- they demonstrated as much by getting hired.

In many cases, we hire people we shouldn’t hire because the applicants are better at interviewing than we are.

Why? They’ve had lots of practice.

They’ve been to more job interviews than those great, stable employees we’re all looking for. For the “good applicant,” each previous interview has been a training session. Result: They know what questions we’re going to ask (because they’ve been asked them before) – and they know the answers we expect (because they’ve gotten them wrong before).

The really good applicants have done their homework. They’ve Googled the term “interviewing” and found 1.4 million sites that literally say, “Here are the questions you’re going to be asked in an interview and here are the answers.”

They’ve read every article on “How to Look Good in an Interview.” They’ve bought all the self-help books like “How to Nail Your Next Interview,” which, of course, includes the answers to all questions posed.

They’re Better Prepared Than You (or Your Hiring Managers) Are

Result: The “best applicants” often are more impressive than the “best employees” we’re looking for and far better prepared than the people doing the interviewing. They already know the questions, and they’ve got the answers. They’re well-rehearsed and scripted.

Complicating this, the very people you don’t want to hire are very adept at looking you in the eye and lying to you.

“The best applicants make the best employees” is the most common myth out there. Many organizations have developed systems that are great at hiring great applicants. We hire the package, instead of the product we need. We get people who look good, people who sound good, people who give us the right answers. But when it comes to the product, the box is empty.

To change that, we have to develop a system that doesn’t focus on the packaging, but on the product inside.

Other Common Myths

The reasons we don't hire the right people say more about us and our hiring processes than about the applicants. Part of the problem is that we have allowed ourselves to believe a number of common myths. The "best applicant" myth is just one of them.

These five common myths also impede our ability to hire the best employees:

- **"I can tell when somebody's lying."** The truth is, you can't tell. Interviewers are only fooling themselves if they think they can. The average person can lie to his mother and not get caught. The key to great hiring is not to catch people lying to you, but to develop a hiring process that positions people to tell you the truth, even when they don't want to.
- **"You can't get references anymore."** Well, you can get references. It's just not easy, and you may have to change the way you get them. One tool that makes a major difference: A reference verification form. (*See details on Pages 8-10*)
- **"If you make it too hard to get the job, the good applicants will drop out."** The truth is, you should be making it hard to get the job. If you place no value on the job, the applicant won't place any value on it either. Great companies like Microsoft, Southwest, Disney and the Ritz-Carlton make it hard to get a job. People want to work for the best. Explaining that "we make hiring tough because we're only going to put the best people on our team" makes the most desirable applicants want the job even more. As long as applicants feel they're treated fairly and given an opportunity, they should be willing to invest in the process.
- **"I have to see at least three to five people to make sure I'm hiring the best."** Those words simply mean you haven't identified in advance what makes a job applicant a winner. The goal is not to interview five people and hire the best of the lot. The goal is to hire only the best – period. If a person walked in the door right now and completely met your criteria – answered the questions the way you wanted, had the work history you wanted, scored well on your tests and his or her references checked out

– why would you have to talk to someone else? Good interviewers know what a winner looks like before they interview anyone. They know what separates the average player from the great player. If you were hiring basketball players for your company team and Michael Jordan came in for a tryout, you don't want to be the one who says, "We'll get back to you soon. We have to try out three or four more people."

- **"I can just tell if someone is going to be good or bad."** Your gut feel is important. If it says, "Don't hire them," then don't hire them. But at the same time, if your gut says "hire them," you should doubt it. A University of Chicago report says we make a decision whether we like someone or not in 14 seconds or less. If you like an applicant in the first 14 seconds, there's a good chance you won't ask the hard questions that could change your mind. If you like someone immediately, your job just got harder. Interviewers must put their gut feelings aside and dig deep to find reasons not to hire the applicant. The questions need to get tougher. Resist the temptation to give the applicant the benefit of the doubt or you could have serious regrets later when the applicant doesn't pan out.

Never Interview from a Resume

No one should be interviewed with just a resume. There are two reasons:

- A resume allows the applicant to control the interview
- Resumes lie

Interviewing from a Resume Gives the Applicant control

When you interview with a resume in front of you, the applicant controls the interview. You naturally find yourself referring to the resume throughout the interview and asking questions related to the information on the resume.

That's exactly what the applicant wants. A resume features all the good things the applicant has done and wants you to ask about. If the applicant says he or she increased sales by 40 percent, you're likely to ask very quickly:

“How did you do that?” Result: You’ve done exactly what the applicant wants.

Resumes Lie

Even worse, you can’t trust a resume. Why? Recent reports indicate nearly 40% of all resumes contain misleading information or omissions. Plus, there is nothing on a resume that states the applicant can’t lie.

Instead, every applicant needs to fill out a job application before being interviewed.

More than likely your company’s job application forms have language that says all questions must be answered and all information must be complete. Most forms also clearly state that any falsehoods, fabrications, or omissions uncovered later will be grounds for termination.

So before beginning an interview, put the applicant’s resume aside, pick up the job application and ask yourself:

- Is this application complete?
- Has the applicant covered everything?
- Are all the applicant’s employment dates covered?
- Are all jobs covered?

And let applicants know up front that you:

- Will be doing a background check
- Won’t be able to hire them if the background check turns up missing information
- Will terminate them after they’re hired, if you discover later they intentionally left out information

You’ve now positioned the applicant to tell you the truth.

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Everything's a Test

Every step in the interviewing and hiring process is a test. If a person doesn't show up on time, they fail the test. If they won't answer legitimate questions, they fail the test. If they don't completely fill out your employment application form, they fail the test.

Some applicants omit from their resumes employers they think will give them a bad reference. Sometimes it's obvious because there are gaps in their employment history. Other times applicants do a great job of obscuring it.

How can you find out?

Check references and verify employment with the companies the applicant does list. While many companies have policies that they will only confirm a former employee's employment, ask this additional question:

“Would you mind looking at the application they filed with you and tell me what company they worked for before they went to work for you?”

You'll be surprised how often this will turn up an employer the applicant omitted.

References: A Question That Tells You Volumes

When you call and ask for a reference, many companies are on auto-pilot to give you only the date the person was hired and the date of departure. Your company may do the same thing.

Questions about the applicant's performance generally go unanswered.

There's one question many companies will answer, but it's seldom asked: “Is this person eligible for rehire?”

The answer to that question alone will help keep you from hiring stupid people.

The Reference Verification Form

An extremely effective tool is the reference verification form. It not only helps when checking references, but it's a powerful interviewing tool.

A reference verification form is easily created to suit your business. It asks applicants how they think each former employer will rate them in

several specific areas, such as dependability, initiative, customer service, job skills, etc.

Make sure the applicant knows you will be asking former employers similar questions.

An Interviewing Tool

The reference verification form provides interviewers with a way to explore the applicant's performance with previous employers. It allows the hiring manager to dig deeper and get less-scripted answers.

For example, the interviewer can say, "Bob, you said that when I talk to your reference over at XYZ company he is going to rate you 'above average' in dependability. Will you tell me specifically why? Why is he going to tell me you're above average?"

By asking for specifics and examples, the interviewer is more likely to get a true picture. Even the best-prepared applicants haven't scripted answers down to that level. It'll be easier to spot what's genuine and what's not.

Follow-up with References

The reference verification form helps you get more when you eventually do call for a reference check. Now, when you talk to the employer or reference, you can ask a specific question that seems reasonable to answer: "When I talked to Bob (the applicant), he told me that you (employer or reference) would rank him above average in dependability. Can you confirm that?"

By approaching the reference check in this manner, you'll be amazed how many times employers and references will confirm or contradict things they wouldn't tell you otherwise.

What the Previous Employer Really Thinks

Getting accurate references from former employers can be difficult, but there is still a good way to get a detailed report on an applicant's performance in many cases. Most people you interview come from companies that do performance appraisals and 90 percent of those companies give a copy of the appraisal to the employee.

So during the interview, ask applicants when they last had a performance appraisal at their current or last job. That opens the conversation to talk about the performance appraisal. “How did they rank you?” “How did you do in (a particular area)?”

If the applicant is a serious contender for the job, ask if he or she has a copy of that appraisal and if you can see it.

One of two things is likely to happen:

- The applicant shares it with you and you get a good sense how he or she performed or
- You never hear from the applicant again, which likely means you avoided hiring someone else’s problem

References from Co-workers and Friends: Why You Should Call

Applicants often list co-workers or friends as references, people they know will say positive things about them. Those references often aren’t given much credence. But not calling them can be a mistake.

Talking with people the applicant has worked with – and not just for – can be revealing.

Instead of asking questions about how they liked their former co-worker, probe deeper. Example: “Jordan, when I talked to Tom, he gave you as a personal reference and said he worked with you from this date to this date. Is that correct? What is your job and how did it compare to his job?”

Another example: “You both were in sales – what did you do in sales? How did he do in sales? How would you rank yourself as a salesperson? How would you rank him as a salesperson?”

Reference Checks Can Also Be Recruiting Calls

Think of every applicant as being worth two, three, or more applicants.

In general, A-Players like working with other A-Players. In many cases, an applicant will list A-Players as references.

If they don’t, ask for the names of additional people the applicant has worked with. The result could be another good hire the next time you need somebody for a similar position.

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What the Best and the Worst Employees Look Like

The fact of the matter is the people who get hired are not stupid. The question is: Why do we keep making the same stupid mistakes over and over again when we hire people?

Often it's because we don't know or haven't decided what the best employees really look like.

Red Auerbach, the late coach and general manager of the Boston Celtics basketball team that won many championships, said, "If you hire the wrong people, all the fancy management techniques in the world won't bail you out."

So how do you spot the A-Players, the best people to hire? Conversely, how do you know which ones are the losers?

Think about the very best employees you now have working for you. The ones who:

- have been promoted
- do everything that needs to be done
- come in early and willingly stay late, and
- can be counted on to do all the tedious or boring jobs when necessary

Now, how much time do you spend managing them?

The truth is, you spend almost no time managing them. In fact, if they're really good, they're managing you. They tell you proactively about the problem they had yesterday and don't wait for you to find out. They tell you how they handled it. Customers make a point of telling you great things about those employees.

These are the people you want to have. They are the A-Players. These are the people you need to have more of.

Now reverse it and ask one simple question: Who do you spend almost all your time managing?

The names likely will come to you very quickly. These are the people you don't want to hire more of. These are the people who:

- cause problems
- don't carry their own weight

- have to be told everything that needs to be done
- drag down morale, etc.

When you eventually get around to firing them, everyone in the organization says, “What took you so long?”

Start with the End in Mind

Any organization that ends up with these kinds of people time and again has a flawed hiring process that:

- doesn't spot problems in advance to weed them out and
- isn't designed to hire the best

The only way to eliminate the “stupid” problem people is to change the way we hire.

So, what works? A fact-based selection system that uses interviewing techniques that reveal a prospect's real achievements and behaviors.

To do that, companies have to start with the end in mind.

They need to know in advance what and where they want to be. Is the goal to select, recruit and retain the best A-Players? Or is the goal to be someone else's farm team? Or what?

We've got to say what the objective is in hiring.

Start with the end in mind.

Fill in the blank for this statement:

“Our objective is to recruit, select, and retain a _____ workforce.”

Would an A-Player Work for You?

If the goal is to hire A-Players, ask yourself:

- Why should A-Players go to work for your company? Do you have a list of reasons why A-Players should want to work for you?
- Would an A-Player want to work for that manager? A-Players want to work for great managers. Are you a good enough manager

or are the people you're putting those A-Players under good enough to lead them and challenge them?

Remember, if offered the chance to work for the best manager in the country, one who will grow you, train you, motivate you, and make it fun to come to work every day, 99 percent of us would say, "I'd take a pay cut to work for somebody like that."

How do you and your company rate? How do you rank yourself? How good are you at recruiting? How many people are lined up wanting to go to work for you? How good are you at selection? Do you know the questions to ask to get the right people? How good is your retention rate?

Some Frightening Facts

- The U.S. Justice Department says one-third of all employees are hardcore thieves.
- A leading background check company says 25% of all resumes have major omissions, fabrications, or misrepresentations. (Other reports say the percentage could be as high as 40%.)
- The U.S. Department of Labor reports 50% of all new employees are gone within the first six months on the job. That means we make hiring mistakes about 50% of the time. You get those odds by simply flipping a coin, and you want to do better – a lot better.

The More You Know, the Less You Risk

W. Edwards Deming, founder of the modern quality movement, said, "The system will give you 100% of what the system is designed to give you." He also said: "Ninety-four percent of all failures are caused by systems, not people."

So if you have a system that hires people who steal from you, you've developed a system that hires people who steal from you. If your system hires people who aren't smart enough for the job, that's what your system is designed to do.

How do we do it differently?

The key is: The more you know, the less you risk. We need to know more about the applicant. We have to gather information from every source possible:

There are two sources of information about every applicant:

- the applicant – and the most common tool we use to get information from an applicant is the interview, and
- anyone or any organization that knows something about the applicant.

There are four primary ways to get information from an applicant:

- Verbally
- Written
- Physically, and
- Visually

The first two are where most of the mistakes occur. After all, if a job requires a physical and they fail it, you're not going to hire them for that particular job no matter how smart they are.

Most of us over-rely on “verbal information” generally received during the interview process. We ask questions; they give answers. More questions, more answers. And who tends to get hired? The people who are more verbal – people who are able to answer the questions more effectively and comfortably.

Problem: Some people are naturally more verbal and those people who have done more interviewing are more skilled at the art. They're not necessarily a better hire. Contrast that person with another prospect. This applicant hasn't interviewed in 15 years because he or she was a great employee for someone else and didn't need to look for a job. A person who hasn't interviewed in 15 years, is probably a bit nervous and uncomfortable, which many interviewers read as, “Well, they probably won't perform well on the job either.”

But which one would be the better hire?

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Why Testing is Critical

The written component is critical, too. Resumes are part of the equation, but they are frequently misleading and a poor tool. The two best tools are the employment application form and job-specific testing.

We outlined the value of job application forms earlier and almost everyone uses such a form already.

Testing is not as universal, but it's a powerful tool in the search to hire the best people.

Testing is nothing more than another interview of an applicant. But instead of asking the applicant a handful of questions (which is all you can really do in an interview), you get to ask 100 or 200 or more.

Tests can measure skill levels and attitudes. They can help eliminate people who have personalities that won't fit your organization. A personality assessment will tell you in 20 minutes what it will take you six months to find out once they're on the job. (Remember, we hire most people for what they know and fire them for who they are.)

Other than from the applicants themselves, where else can you find more information about them? Try past and present co-workers, past and present managers, customers, teachers they've had, credit bureaus, government agencies, drug testing and background checks. Some or all of the above can provide information to help you make a better decision.

The Interview: Make It Clear What You Want to Hear

While we should be wary of the "best applicants," there's nothing wrong with an applicant being prepared for an interview. In fact, most of us will give points to those who have done their homework. Someone who is not prepared probably loses points.

The goal, though, is to find the person who is right for the job, right for the company – and to confirm that the job is right for the applicant.

Many interviewers like to ask, "What do you know about our company?" Or "What have you found out about our company?"

But the key question to ask is: "How did you prepare yourself for this interview?"

Get applicants to detail all the things they have done to prepare for the interview. It shows you how much they want the job and what they were willing to do to get it.

More importantly, it also signals that you're not interested in stock answers.

And in case the applicant has missed the subtle cues, let the person know in straightforward English what you expect from the interview:

“I'm not looking for canned answers. There are only two important things that we need to do at this interview. No. 1: You need to find out if this job is right for you. And No. 2: We need to find out if you're right for the job. That's it.

“The worst thing that can happen is we hire you and find out we've made a mistake. It'll cost us some money. For you, it'll be a lot worse. It's going to cost you lost time and you're going to end up with a job on your resume or your next employment application that forces you to explain why you only stayed for two months.”

The Flaw of Watching the Movie Backwards

In the typical interview, the first thing most of us ask about is the applicant's current or last job. It's exactly what we shouldn't do. Every applicant has a canned answer for the “last job” question.

More importantly, we're starting in the wrong place. When you ask about a person's last job, what you're doing is like watching a movie backwards.

If you start at the beginning of the applicant's work history – the very beginning – you get a good sense of the person's development and growth. When you ask, “What was your first paying job?,” you'll see the things that shaped the applicant. You'll better understand the how and why of their careers. And you will better understand how those things influenced later decisions.

Additionally, you're likely to get more candid answers because most applicants haven't given those early jobs much thought recently.

You can build an entire interview off that particular question and follow it up with “What did you do next? Where'd you go from there? How did you learn to do

that job? Did you ever teach anybody else to do that job? If you were going to teach me how to do that job, how would you go about it?"

Run the Movie Forward: A Sample Interview

After making the applicant comfortable and helping him or her relax, it's important to set the groundwork of the interview. Here's a sample:

Interviewer: Susan, what I want to do today is No. 1, gather some information from you, okay?

Susan: Okay.

Interviewer: Secondly, I'm going to tell you about the job and the company. And third, I'm sure there are some questions you want to ask. So after I gather some information and tell you about the job, I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Susan: Okay.

Interviewer: But before we start, let me tell you what is most important about working here. It's our values and our culture of who we are. There are some great things here. We have some great opportunities, some great challenges, and I'm going to tell you about them. There are also some challenges on the other side. There are some long hours and some difficult challenges so I'm going to be very truthful with you and I need you to be honest with me. Okay? It doesn't matter if you've ever been fired or asked to resign from a job; you just need to tell me about it so I can take it under consideration.

Susan: Okay.

Interviewer: It doesn't matter if you've had a problem with a boss or a teacher. As long as you tell me, I can take it into consideration. But if there's been a problem in the past, and you don't tell me about it, and I find out about it when we do our background check, credit check

and everything else, then I can't hire you or – if I find out about it after you're hired – I'm going to have to terminate you. Does that make sense to you? Do you understand what I'm looking for, Susan?

Susan: You're looking for me to answer your questions truthfully.

Interviewer: Great. Let's get started. Tell me about the very first job you ever had that you got paid for?

Susan: The very first job I ever got paid for was babysitting.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Susan: Eleven.

Interviewer: Eleven? For one family or for several families?

Susan: Um, I had a couple of families that I babysat for.

Interviewer: Yeah? And here you are, eleven years old and you've got this responsibility for these kids. What were probably the three most important things you learned at age 11 babysitting?

Susan: Uh, the three most important things I learned were to always pay attention to what the kids were doing and to know who I would need to call in case of an emergency and um, probably, one of the things I always did when I was babysitting was also clean up after the kids, before the kids went to bed or whatever, so I learned housekeeping skills.

Interviewer: Did you find there were some other advantages to cleaning up after the kids went to sleep?

Susan: Well, it kept me busy for one. And also, I felt like I was getting paid to work and so rather than sitting around doing nothing, I found things to do.

Interviewer: Ah. Very interesting. Okay, and what did you do with the

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money you earned? Do you even remember?

Susan: Um. I don't remember what I did with the money. I think I saved it for a while and then I bought some things I'd been wanting for a while, but I don't know what specifically right now.

Interviewer: And what else did you do to earn money after that? You babysat for a couple of years, I guess?

Susan: Oh yeah, I babysat for many years, and actually when I was 12, I cleaned people's homes in the apartment complex where I lived.

Going back to the beginning lets you find out who people really are.

In this case, the applicant's first job was babysitting when she was 11. In many ways, the applicant is the same person she was back then. She still has certain qualities. In this case, the applicant is a person who doesn't sit around. She likes to be busy. She likes the idea of giving you your money's worth.

The Search for Passion

What's the applicant's passion? Questions that reveal passion are some of the most important ones to ask. Ask about applicants' achievements in life, in their careers, the moments they're most proud of. What have they accomplished at work? What is the one accomplishment or the one achievement in life they are most proud of? And what were the challenges that make that achievement important?

How did you do that? Who helped you? Ask enough of those questions and you'll find their passion. And when you find their passion, you'll be closer to knowing if they're the person right for your job and your company.

Plus, you'll discover that some people haven't achieved anything. People who haven't achieved something and don't have something to be proud of aren't going anywhere. They're not going to grow. And most likely they're not people you want to hire.

What Would Make You a Nine?

Most of us ask people about their strengths and weaknesses, but that really isn't very revealing. Instead, ask them what it would take to get even better. The result will be the kind of depth knowledge that can be helpful in making a decision to hire.

Here's a way to ask about skills or abilities that works: "On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being perfect, how would you rank yourself as a"

Let's say they answer they're an eight. The natural follow-up is to ask, "OK, what are the things that make you an eight?"

Once you've thoroughly explored that, there's one more question: "What would it take make you a nine?"

Job Applicants Deserve Your Thanks

Everything in the hiring process is a test. People who don't show up for their job interview on time have done you the biggest favor in the world. They've told you they don't meet your criteria, and you don't need to waste any additional time on them. They've failed your test for employment.

Another case: 15% of the time you will get applications that aren't complete. What these people have told you is they can't or won't follow directions. So why would you hire them? They've also failed your test.

Resist! Don't Help Too Much

In many cases, interviewers help the applicant too much.

Example: Most interviewers talk too much. And no one learns anything when they're talking. Or if an applicant doesn't answer a question quickly, we tend to help them.

If you want to learn something, you're better off saying, "That's a very difficult question. Take as much time as you need to think about it." And then wait for them to come up with an answer on their own.

WHY THE WRONG PEOPLE GET HIRED

How Long Should an Interview Last?

How long should an interview last? As long as it takes for you to feel comfortable that you'll make a sound decision. It could be five minutes; it could be two hours.

Hiring decisions are the most important decisions a manager makes. They can make or break that manager's career. They can make or break the company. If you hire the wrong person, your job becomes much more difficult, and it reflects poorly on you. If you hire the right person, your job gets that much easier, the job is fun, and everyone thinks you're brilliant.

In the End, We Get the People We Deserve

Every organization is a reflection of its hiring process. If we have stupid people working for us, it means the system is designed to hire stupid people. If we hire thieves, then the system is designed to hire thieves.

This Executive Report should help you find the flaws in your hiring process. Changing the system will change the kind of people you hire.

Identifying and hiring A-Players really isn't that hard. And in the end, those are the people we deserve.