

# **SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS**

**PROVEN TACTICS FOR HIRING GREAT EMPLOYEES**

**By**

**Richard J. Lukesh**

**Your Part-Time HR Manager<sup>®</sup>, LLC**

**[www.YourPartTimeHRManager.com](http://www.YourPartTimeHRManager.com)**

Copyright © 2008

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Cover Page</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table Of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 1 – Why I Created this Interviewing Program</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – Recruiting vs. Interviewing</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter 3 – Ego and Expedience</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 4 – Predictability of Selection Methods</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter 5 – Observations About the Typical Interview Process</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 6 – Unique Aspects of this Interviewing Program</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Friends Don’t Let Friends Interview Alone.....	16
Organizational Culture and Candidate Fit .....	17
Values .....	18
Organizational Culture.....	18
Values and Culture of a Work Group, Department, or Organization .....	19
Values and Culture of a Candidate .....	21
DISCLAIMER .....	21
Personality Profiles of the Interviewers .....	23
Personality Profile of the Position .....	26
Personality Profile of a Candidate .....	26
Interview Preparation.....	29
Job Description .....	29
Hard Skills .....	30
Soft Skills.....	30
Quietude.....	32
Structured Interview Questions (Non-Management, Non-Sales) .....	32
Structured Interview Questions (Management) .....	33
Structured Interview Questions (Sales) .....	33
Scenarios, Situations, and Case Studies.....	34
Formal and Informal Testing .....	35
Need for a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview.....	37
Homework Assignments.....	38
The Legality of Interview Questions .....	38
Scoring Answers to Interview Questions and Taking Notes .....	39
Reference Checking & The Internet .....	40
Performance Rating Process .....	43

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

<b>Chapter 7 – Other Issues Regarding Candidates .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Reasons People Take Jobs .....	47
The Importance of Salary.....	46
Hiring A-Players .....	48
Allowing Candidates to Deselect Themselves.....	49
Looking for Patterns .....	50
<b>Chapter 8 – Interview Process for Senior Management Positions .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Step 1 – Setting Candidate Expectations .....	51
Step 2 – Initial 30-Minute Phone Assessment .....	51
Step 3 – The 1-Hour Behavior-Based Phone Interview.....	53
Step 4 – Preparation for the Onsite Interview.....	56
Step 5 – The Onsite Interview .....	57
Step 6 – The Onsite Interview – Selling the Opportunity.....	62
Step 7 – The Onsite Interview – Testing an Offer .....	63
Step 8 – Post Interview Process, Negotiation, and Offer.....	67
Chapter 8 Summary .....	70
<b>Chapter 9 – A Simplified Interview Process for Non-Senior Management Positions ....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Chapter 10 – Responding to the Unsuccessful Candidate.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Chapter 11 - Conclusion.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chapter 12 – Using the Interviewing Services of Your Part-Time HR Manager® .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Appendix of Forms .....</b>	<b>76</b>

Copyright © 2008. All Rights Reserved.

No reproductions, copying, or use of any portion of this work or related documents is permitted without the express written permission and authorization of Your Part-Time HR Manager®, LLC.

NOTE: Your Part-Time HR Manager®, LLC routinely grants authorization for reproduction or use of this work, in whole, or in part. If you would like to use any portion of this material in a book, article, ezine, newsletter, radio or television broadcast, podcast, or other publication, please call Your Part-Time HR Manager®, LLC.

DISCLAIMER: Please note that this document and any related forms are provided merely as samples. This work and related documents are not intended to provide legal advice and should not be viewed as a substitute for obtaining legal advice. You should always contact an attorney who is familiar with employment law to ascertain the lawfulness and legal ramifications of all employment actions and decisions. Your Part-Time HR Manager®, LLC assumes no liability for use of this material. Before implementing any portion of the advice contained herein or any portion of the related forms and documents, you should consult your legal counsel as the material contained herein and the related forms have not been reviewed by an attorney.

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

## INTRODUCTION

In the book, *Good To Great*, the author, Jim Collins, describes the 3 stages of transforming a company from good to great. The 3 stages are Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, and Disciplined Action. Under the topic of Disciplined People, Collins describes the concept of “getting the right people on the bus and the wrong ones off the bus.” Interviewing is a process of getting the right people on the bus.

Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon.com, is quoted as saying, “*Hire very carefully, you’re creating an enduring culture. That’s why I’d rather interview 50 people and not hire anyone, than hire the wrong person.*” How many of us have the patience to stay with an interviewing process like Jeff Bezos? Most of us can’t wait to fill an open position and move on to “real work.” What many managers don’t realize is that recruiting is real work. In fact, one of the four most important tasks that a manager will perform is selecting the right personnel.

I see the four primary functions of a manager as:

1. Selecting the right people (get the right people on the bus).
2. Pinpointing performance and behavior standards that employees are expected to meet.
3. Monitoring and recognizing employee compliance to performance and behavior standards via tangible and social rewards.
4. Implementing equitable processes for removing employees who do not meet performance and/or behavior standards (get the wrong people off the bus).

*Secrets to Hiring Success* is going to concentrate on “getting the right people on the bus.” Unfortunately, very few managers exercise the same diligence in hiring employees as they exercise in making other business decisions.

The process used in sizing up a business opportunity and sizing up a candidate is fundamentally the same. The process requires two different critical thinking skills – one for fact-finding and one for decision-making. A structured fact-finding process and the use of objective measurement tools can dramatically improve decision-making and minimize the possibility of hiring the wrong person.

*Secrets to Hiring Success* is designed to put candidate decision-making on the same level as all other business decision-making by:

- Maximizing the available information on each candidate, which will allow a manager the opportunity to select the best candidate rather than the best actor.
- Providing a manager with forensic information in order to make an informed decision as to the best person to hire. (Forensic is defined as evidence established and verified through a systematic process.)

The benefits to you of using the *Secrets to Hiring Success* are:

- You will find and hire top candidates faster.
- You will interview better qualified and vetted candidates.
- You will save time by only speaking with the best candidates.
- You will improve your skills at selecting the top performers.
- You will improve job performance of new hires from day one.

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

- You will increase job satisfaction of new hires.
- You will be able to prepare a candidate to “sell” your opportunity to his/her spouse or advisor after the interview.
- You will be able to utilize a proven tactic (i.e., EQRC) for effectively resolving candidate objections and concerns.
- You will be able to separate those who can do the job from those who are only good at talking about doing the job.
- You will save money by reducing turnover of employees who do not fit their positions.
- You will improve your skills at drilling-in to a candidate’s accomplishments.
- You will be able to test an offer without having to formally make the offer.
- You will minimize counteroffers that steal the people that you select.
- You will close more offers based on opportunity, rather than salary.

**NOTE:** Throughout this document, I will refer to a **hiring manager**. The hiring manager (HM) is not an employee of the Human Resource Department, but rather the supervisor to whom an open position directly reports.

## Chapter 1

### Why I Created this Interviewing Program

There is a country western song by the artist, Deana Carter, called “*Did I Shave My Legs For This?*” This song is about her frustration with having gotten all dressed-up for a night of dinner, dancing, and romance with her husband, but when he gets home, all he wants to do is sit on the couch, drink beer, and watch TV.

Well, “*Did I Shave My Legs For This?*” is how I have figuratively felt many times in the past when I met candidates. To say the least, the experience was painful for me, because I had just blown a hole in my schedule for somebody who “looked good on paper,” but who was an absolute dud in person.

The second reason that I created the *Secrets to Hiring Success* was due to the fact that despite how experienced I was in interviewing, I often fell victim to the #1 cause of hiring mistakes, which is the over-reliance on the interaction with the candidate in the face-to-face interview. I was swayed by good interview performances rather than systematically and objectively assessing a candidate’s ability to do the job. The result was that I occasionally missed the “red flags” that should have signaled potential problems.

The third reason I created the Program was to find a way to reduce expenses. You may be familiar with the old carpentry adage, “measure twice and cut once.” This saying has applicability to interviewing. Just as a carpenter can waste resources by not measuring properly and confirming the measurement, a manager can waste corporate dollars by rushing through the interview process. From a cost of business perspective, a wrong hiring decision can cost anywhere from 1 to 3 times the bad hire’s annual salary after considering departure costs,

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

replacement costs, lost sales, training and development costs, and miscellaneous costs such as lost opportunities, damaged goodwill, impact on employee morale, etc

## Chapter 2

### Recruiting vs. Interviewing

Let's distinguish between recruiting and interviewing. Recruiting is the entire process of

- Attracting candidates (both active applicants – people actively looking for a new position, and passive candidates – people who are not actively “in the market” for a new position),
- Interviewing/assessing candidates, and
- On-boarding (orienting) new employees.

The *Secrets to Hiring Success* concentrates on the interviewing/assessing subset of the recruiting process. As such, the *Secrets to Hiring Success* does not address the processes open to organizations for attracting active or passive candidates to apply for an open position, nor does it address the techniques for ensuring that the new hire is properly indoctrinated into an organization.

The *Secrets to Hiring Success* is concerned with finding the best qualified applicant within the pool of available candidates. Finding the best qualified applicant is a challenge in the current environment due to the fact that puffery, exaggeration, and outright lies have become art forms among candidates and even among companies.

I have had numerous experiences where the person who showed up on the first day of the job was nothing like the person who interviewed for the job. Similarly, I'm sure many employees have felt that the company they interviewed with is nothing like the company they joined. It seems both candidates and employers use a degree of puffery in their presentations.

With the exception of the outright liars who lie about educational degrees, certifications, responsibilities, etc., there is a certain amount of puffery that can be expected when a candidate or a company is in the “sales pitch” mode of the interview process. The *Secrets to Hiring Success* is designed to help an interviewer distinguish between acceptable puffery of the typical candidate and the unacceptable exaggeration of the poor candidate. It has been said that good interviewing is good investigative reporting. Thus, the *Secrets to Hiring Success* helps to hone your investigative skills by providing you with a structure that allows you to expose the inconsistencies in a candidate's story.

In creating the *Secrets to Hiring Success*, it is my belief that employers need to have a thoughtful and thorough interview process that is:

- Designed to identify the best candidate for a position and
- Designed to have a candidate earn the right to receive an offer of employment.

It has been my experience that the thoroughness of the interview process raises the value of the position in the mind of the candidate and increases the professionalism of the organization. Proof of this was noted in the March 1998 edition of *HR Magazine*, which recorded the

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

following comment, “70% of interviewees feel that the interview process is a strong indicator of how the company operates.”

## Chapter 3 Ego and Expedience

In presenting the *Secrets to Hiring Success* to some managers, I have occasionally run into some resistance. The issue that I have faced has to do with the fact that some managers (most often the Type-A or alpha manager) believe that they have an innate ability to select good people. In fact, there is a very small minority of managers and even professional recruiters who have such a natural ability. Everyone else has a self-assumed confidence level that allows them to believe that they are good at selecting employees.

This managerial confidence (or ego) is probably the reason that these managers are successful at what they do. Unfortunately, this confidence level is often supported by erroneous hiring data. Some managers assume a 90%+ hiring success rate because they refuse to count the people who resigned or were fired. They assume that these terminations were either flukes or something wrong with the people, rather than problems with their selection process. The result is that these managers look at a process, such as this Program, that is more systematic, compare this new process to the “success rate” of their own expedient method, and conclude that changing to a new system has no value.

One manager even said to me, “*Besides, everyone knows how much of a time waster interviewing is. So, why would we want to have a process that causes our managers to spend more of their valuable time interviewing? The sooner we get people in and interviewed, the sooner we can get someone started and get back to real work.*”

Well, if your measurement statistic is the amount of time it takes to fill an open position (time-to-fulfillment), then I have a solution – post an ad, review resumes, do phone interviews (Why waste time with in-person interviews?), and hire the first person who sounds good. Your time-to-fulfillment might be as low as 5 days, and statistically, you have a 57% chance (see Chapter 4 for details) of hiring a good employee. The odds here are way better than buying lottery tickets. And if after the first 2 weeks the person is not working out, then fire the employee and start over again.

I have spent time analyzing how these alpha managers select employees within their homegrown interview processes, and I have found that their method of selecting employees is very heavily influenced by the aesthetics and energy of the candidate, which were the same factors that often influenced me.

By aesthetics, I’m referring to the appearance of the resume and cover letter, the clothing the candidate wears to the interview, and the applicant’s physical attributes such as height, weight, facial features, etc. By energy, I’m referring to the how well the candidate can tell a story and utilize body movements to amplify the story, the self-confidence the person exhibits, and the friendliness and openness of the person.

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

When you consider these aesthetic and energy characteristics, the only ones that a candidate cannot fake are the physical attributes, plastic surgery aside. For all of the other characteristics, an applicant can be trained just like you can train an actor to give a great performance. The result that often occurs is that these alpha managers become victims to the #1 cause of hiring mistakes.

My investigation of the selection processes of these managers has revealed that they unconsciously follow the old interviewing adage that states, “Hire a candidate if he/she exhibits at least three of the following Four A attributes – Attractive, Aggressive, Articulate, Amiable.” The result is that these managers do not make employment decisions with the same objective diligence that they make other business decisions. They make employment decisions based on subjective impressions of the candidates.

In fact, some of the managers that I have analyzed had such strong personalities that they monopolized the interview with presentations about their companies. As such, the candidates who were successful in landing jobs were the applicants who were smart enough to just shut-up, stop “selling” themselves, and listen intently to the manager pontificate.

By using the Four A’s approach to interviewing, a manager might be able to achieve a success rate as high as 70% or even 80%. And if the pool of people hired is small enough and the manager mentally discounts the people who didn’t work out, the manager might conclude that he/she has a hiring success rate of 90% to 100%. My investigations show that after factoring-in the people who didn’t work out (resigned or were fired) within the first year of employment, the actual success rate approaches that of the typical employment interview (57% success rate, see Chapter 4).

Fortunately, there are many non-alpha managers who realize that interviewing is an activity that they do not engage in with a regularity that would make them proficient interviewers. As such, they are open to utilizing a consistent and objective process for analyzing candidates. Additionally, these managers understand the value of using a system that will help them separate information about a candidate’s ability and motivation to get a job from data that can help to predict a candidate’s ability and motivation to do a job. In the end, doing the job and being a productive member of an organization is what really counts.

## Chapter 4 Predictability of Selection Methods

In 1988, Professor John Hunter of Michigan State determined that the typical employment interview is only 57% effective in predicting subsequent success in a job, which means that the typical interview is only slightly better than flipping a coin.

In the July-August 1999 edition of the *Harvard Business Review*, an article titled “Hiring Without Firing” identified that 30% to 50% of all executive-level appointments end in firing or resignation. This turnover statistic is significant when one considers that executive-level positions are not only the most important positions in the organization, but the positions that command the largest amount of face-to-face interview time. As such, one would expect that



## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

people hired for executive positions would have been the most heavily vetted candidates, but yet a third to one half of those appointments have a very short “shelf life.”

The article from Harvard and the study from Professor Hunter would certainly lead one to conclude that better methods need to be employed in assessing, not just executive candidates but, all candidates for employment. The question is, “What methods are the best?”

In searching for the best methods, I found a 1998 study (Schmidt, F.L. and Hunter, J.E. (1998), “The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Research: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 262-274), which helped to focus my approach to interviewing. On the basis of meta-analytic findings, this study presented the validity (R) of 19 selection procedures for predicting job performance. The procedures with the highest validity for predicting on-the-job performance were:

- Work Sample Tests (R = .54)
- General Mental Ability Tests (R = .51)
- Structured Interviews (R = .51)
- Peer Rating (R = .49)
- Job Knowledge Tests (R = .48)
- Training & Experience Behavioral Consistency (R = .45).

At the lower end of the validity scale were the following procedures:

- Unstructured Interviews (R = .38)
- Traditional Reference Checking (R = .26)
- Years of Job Experience (R = .18)
- Years of Education (R = .10)
- Interests (R = .10)
- Age (R = .01).

The most well known conclusion of this 1998 research project is that for companies that hire candidates who have no prior experience in the job, the most valid predictor of future performance and on-the-job learning is general mental ability (i.e., intelligence or general cognitive ability).

A note must be made here about the practical relevance of general mental ability (GMA) in this study. The predictive ability of GMA listed above at R = .51 is the validity rating for jobs that rank in the middle range of complexity. The actual research from this study regarding GMA revealed the following validity results for different levels of complexity by position:

- Professional & Managerial Jobs (R = .58)
- High Level Complex Technical Jobs (R = .56)
- Medium Complexity Jobs (R = .51) (This represents 62% of jobs in the U.S. economy, which includes mid-level white-collar jobs such as clerical and administrative positions and skilled blue-collar jobs.)
- Semi-skilled Jobs (R = .40)
- Unskilled Jobs (R = .23).

# SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

This data indicates that GMA becomes an important predictor of job performance as the level of complexity increases in a position. However, one cannot discount other factors such as behaviors, experience, etc. and their significance in helping to predict success in a job.

This study presents strong evidence to suggest that GMA in conjunction with positive indicators from other assessment methods will present a high correlation of success in higher level complexity positions. This information is presented here because as you will see later in this Program, I recommend some GMA tactics for high-level positions that will assist you in selecting the best candidate.

The truth is that there is no “silver bullet” selection method and this research is not suggesting one method over other methods. As with any decision-making process, a manager should collect as much data as possible about an issue and then use his/her intuition and experience to make the best possible decision. *Secrets to Hiring Success* is purposely designed to present a manager with as much data as possible about candidates in order for the manager to make an informed decision about the best person to hire.

## Chapter 5

### Observations About the Typical Interview Process

Admittedly, the traditional recruiting process is expeditious from a time-to-fulfillment perspective and in the short run is very cost effective. It consists of the following five steps:

- A. Review the job description, write an ad specifying the hard-skills of the position, and begin collecting resumes.
- B. Select the top 3 to 6 resumes of candidates for face-to-face interviews who on-paper represent the hard-skills, experience, and salary requirements that best match the job.
- C. Allow the hiring manager, to whom the open position reports, the freedom to single-handedly implement a free-form personal interview process that unconsciously emphasizes hard-skills, experience, and likability.
- D. Check 1 or 2 personal references of the candidates or just accept the letters of recommendation that the candidates bring to the interviews. (This step is often skipped because of time constraints and because the candidate made such a good impression in the interview that he/she couldn't have any “baggage” that would disqualify him/her.)
- E. Make an offer of employment to the candidate who best “sold” him/herself in the interview.

One cannot argue with the short cycle time of the interviewing phase of this traditional recruiting process. However, the objective is not to make a decision in the shortest amount of time and at the lowest cost. The objective is to hire the best person who will “fit” the position and will be fulfilled enough with the job and with the culture of the organization to become a long-term, productive employee.

The interviewing process used by most organizations is not a process at all but rather a “beauty contest” approach to hiring. Many managers use what I loosely call “techniques” such as likability, gut-feel, chemistry, and/or the Four A's in selecting the person to hire. Here are the

## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

top 15 mistakes the typical interviewer makes as well as my recommendations for resolving the issues.

1. Most interviewers make a like or dislike decision about a candidate within the first 5 to 15 minutes of an interview and spend the balance of the time confirming their first impressions – positive or negative impression. This first impression will often taint the interviewer’s perception of the answers received. (e.g., A candidate who is perceived negatively will have his/her answers judged more critically than a person who is perceived more positively.)

RECOMMENDATION: Interviewers should make a conscious effort to reserve any judgment for at least 30 minutes to allow any nervousness on the part of the candidate to dissipate. Very often, a candidate who does not make a positive first impression can really shine as the interview progresses, while the candidate with a great first impression begins to diminish as the interview questions require more specificity.

2. If the interviewer’s impression is positive and the interviewer uses an unstructured interview process, the interviewer usually begins asking “softball” questions for the candidate to hit a “homerun.” Similarly if the interviewer’s impression of the candidate is negative in this free-form interview process, the interviewer usually ends up asking “hardball” questions which has the tendency to confirm the interviewer’s already negative impression. Both of these situations become a self-fulfilling prophesy in that the interviewer will see what he/she expects to see, rather than looking at the facts objectively.

RECOMMENDATION: Use a structured interview process that levels the playing field for all candidates and reserve initial judgments for at least 30 minutes.

3. If the interviewer’s first impression is positive in an unstructured interview process, the interviewer usually asks fewer questions of the candidate and quickly switches into a “selling mode” in which the interviewer now tries to “sell” the applicant on the organization.

RECOMMENDATION: Use a structure interview format, which creates a more legally defensible interviewing process because it asks all the candidates the same questions. Also be sure to separate the process of gathering information about the candidate from the processes of promoting (selling) the company, making a decision, and negotiating an offer. Each of these processes, as you will see below, is different.

4. Many interviewers have a few favorite questions and unofficial tests that they believe are keys to vetting a candidate. (e.g., a Question = “What would you write on your epitaph?” Tests: a firm handshake; or a manager who walked candidates to their cars and made a decision about the candidates based on the cleanliness of the inside of their vehicles.) Unfortunately, these clever questions and tests are not supported by statistical evidence that proves the conclusions that the manager believes they prove. There is no empirical evidence that concludes with any degree of certainty that the cleanliness of an applicant’s car is directly related to the quality of his/her work. That is not to say that this hypothesis cannot be proven to be true. However, the interviewer would need to statistically validate his/her conclusions, rather than creating a homegrown test.

## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

**RECOMMENDATION:** Use a structured interview process that utilizes work-related interview questions, rather than a free-form and unstructured process. Also, forget any personally concocted questions (trick or clever questions), tests, or systems for making “go” or “no go” decisions. Stick to the responsibilities and goals of the open position and you will have plenty of material with which to assess a candidate.

5. Many interviewers assume that the top performers in an interview will also be the best employees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Utilize an interview process that is less influenced by the personality and performance of the candidate and more heavily weighted to the quality of the answers and the actual or comparable experiences of the candidates that match the position.

6. Most interviewers don’t have the skills to “coach” candidates to give complete answers to interview questions. As such, less articulate candidates may be overlooked if the face-to-face interview is the only tool utilized.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Use a variety of forms and techniques as noted in this *Secrets to Hiring Success* in order to get complete details about a candidate and his/her accomplishments.

7. Many interviewers only look at a candidate’s experience and education. Then, they assume that if these two criteria match the needs of the position, the person is a good match for the job.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Utilizing only a hard-skills match for a position is a mistake. There are many Harvard MBAs who have the education and experience to be senior executives, but lack the interpersonal and leadership skills to effectively run an organization. I recommend a simple formula: Education + Experience + Soft Skills + Values + Personality + Performance + Intelligence + References = A Good Employee. The formula breaks down as follows:

- a. Education + Experience (exact or comparable experience) = Admission of the candidate to the Soft Skills Interview phase of the Program.
- b. A successful Soft Skills Phone Interview = Admission to the Onsite Interview where Values, Personality, Performance, and Intelligence are assessed.
- c. A successful Onsite Interview = Strong consideration pending Reference Checks.

8. Most managers are not good at interviewing because they interview infrequently. A 1998 survey in *HR Magazine* noted that 39% of candidates stated their #1 frustration with interviewers was that the interviewers were “not prepared and not focused during the interview.”

**RECOMMENDATION:** Use a structured process with specific forms and interview questions to follow that will take the spotlight off the interviewer and place the spotlight where it should be, on the candidate.

## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

9. Most interviewers cannot articulate the culture and values of their organizations. As such, they are not well prepared to conduct a thorough investigation of the values of a candidate to determine if the values of the candidate are aligned with the values and culture of the company.

RECOMMENDATION: Use a process that forces a candidate to expose his/her values and engages the candidate in a meaningful discussion of those values relative to the values and culture of the organization.

10. Most interviewers do not intimately know the job. By intimate, I mean the actual processes and performance standards that are necessary for success in a given position. Most interviewers have a basic understanding of a simplified list of job duties for an open position, but lack the detail knowledge of the position. With only a general understanding of a position, interviewers can easily gravitate to candidates with similar experiences and bypass candidates with great potential who only have comparable experiences.

RECOMMENDATION: Interviewers need to create a thorough job description similar to the standards-based job descriptions created by Your Part-Time HR Manager®. A standards-based job description identifies the major responsibilities and related performance standards for each task. A standards-based job description also identifies the top 10 soft-skills required for the position, the organizational impact of each responsibility, the work experiences needed, and the physical and mental demands of the position.

11. Most interviewers try to memorize the questions that they want to ask a candidate, whether they use an unstructured or structured interview format, and then hope that they will remember a candidate's answers when it comes time to make a decision in a week or two.

RECOMMENDATION: Use a printed list of interview questions that you can physically hand to the candidate. The result will be a process that takes the burden off the interviewer trying to remember the questions and it will allow the interviewer to concentrate on the candidate's answers. Additionally, the interviewer can use his/her copy of the questions as an assessment tool by checking off the question in a coded fashion to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable responses, which will help in the post-interview assessment of the candidate. The interviewer should also make notes to remember significant accomplishments of the candidate that can be reviewed later.

12. Most interviewers tend to "hire in their own image," rather than the image that fits the position.

RECOMMENDATION: Interviewers need to understand their own behavioral strengths and weaknesses and the behavioral profile required for the open position before interviewing any candidates. An impatient and hard charging executive, who is interviewing individuals for a customer service position may end up selecting a candidate who is the soft skills mirror image of the executive, rather than hiring a person with the patience and empathy skills required for the position. Later, the executive will often wonder why the employee is often rude and impatient with customers who call looking for a sympathetic ear to hear their complaint and resolve their issue.

## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

13. Most face-to-face interviews are conducted with just two people in the room – the candidate and the interviewer.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Always conduct interviews in conjunction with at least one other interviewer, which will allow you to confirm your reactions to a candidate's answers and body language.

14. Most interviewers waste valuable time on face-to-face interviews with candidates who are well qualified for the position but who are not willing to take the position because of the unusual demands of the job, the salary, the benefits, the location of the job, the non-compete agreement that must be signed, or other reasons that may be deal-breakers.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Use an initial 30-minute phone interview to talk to the best candidates about the position and any of these potential deal-breakers. This is the first step to negotiating an offer (testing the offer) and a major time saver for the hiring manager.

15. Most managers assess the motivation and energy of a candidate by the person's display of extroverted qualities such as assertiveness and confidence, while assuming that a more introverted or quiet applicant has less initiative and energy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Let the accomplishments of the candidate speak for the person's motivation, energy, and work ethic and stop falling into the trap of being swayed by the social skills and exterior mannerisms of an applicant who may simply be a good actor.

### **Using the Interviewing Services of Your Part-Time HR Manager<sup>®</sup>, LLC**

Your Part-Time HR Manager<sup>®</sup>, LLC is not a retained or contingency search firm. Our Partners provide Human Resource (HR) services to their clients nationwide. As part of those HR services to clients, our Partners do assist clients in various aspects of recruiting. The parts of the *Secrets to Hiring Success* interviewing process that our Partners can implement for a client are:

- A. Preliminary work with a client to address:
- a. Job description for the position and establish salary.
  - b. Organizational culture analysis.
  - c. Interviewer behavior assessment.
  - d. Values of the organization.
  - e. Preparation of additional Structured Interview Questions.
  - f. Preparation of scenarios or case studies.
  - g. Preparation of the interviewers relative to appropriate and inappropriate questions, goals of the position, use of the forms with a candidate during the onsite interview, etc.
  - h. Writing and placing the recruitment advertisements.
- B. Step 1 of the interviewing process:
- a. Receive all resumes from recruitment advertising.
  - b. Review of resumes to select the top 10 to 20 candidates.
  - c. Email forms to top candidates.

## SECRETS TO HIRING SUCCESS

- d. Review completed forms.
- C. Step 2 of the interviewing process: Select the top 8 to 12 candidates from those who returned the completed forms and conduct the 30-minute phone interview.
- D. Step 3 of the interviewing process: Select the top 5 to 8 candidates, conduct the 1-hour behavior-based interview, and score the answers using the tally form.
- E. Step 4 of the interviewing process: Select the top 3 to 5 candidates for onsite interviews, coordinate all arrangements for the onsite interview at the client's location, and email selected material to the candidate for the onsite interview.
- F. Step 5 of the interviewing process: Depending on the proximity to the client, one of our Partners may participate in the onsite interviews and can implement Step 6 and Step 7. Otherwise, the client's hiring team conducts the onsite interviews and implements Step 6 and Step 7.
- G. Step 8 of the interviewing process:
  - a. Debrief each candidate after the onsite interview to get feedback as to the person's level of interest in the position.
  - b. Debrief the interviewers following each onsite interview.
  - c. At the conclusion of all the onsite interviews, conduct a phone conference with the hiring manager to review all the candidates and select the #1 candidate.
  - d. Conduct spouse interviews, if appropriate.
  - e. Conduct reference checks.
  - f. Act as an intermediary and help negotiate the offer.
  - g. Write the offer letter for the client's signature.
  - h. Follow-up with the new hire during the "dead zone" to troubleshoot any counteroffers and to ensure that the person is still committed to starting on the assigned date.
  - i. Reply to all the unsuccessful candidates.
- H. Follow-up with the new employee after 30 days on the job to ensure that he/she is still satisfied with the new position.

Whenever one of our Partners works with a client to recruit a new employee, we normally charge our hourly consulting rates for the actual time we spend working on the project. As an example, we completed a nationwide executive search for a \$150,000 per year Vice President of Operations that required a total of 60 hours of our time. As such, our invoice for this placement was about 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the 30% fee that a professional headhunter would have charged.