

Finding Hidden Talent, Part 1

Looking beyond the resume can benefit you and your potential employee.



Confession time. I have this dream where I stand in front of a room full of people that I know and start singing and I blow them away with my hidden talent. Reality is that my singing abilities (or lack of) should be restricted to my car when I'm alone. However, I have realized over the years that my hidden talent was recognizing hidden talent in others and this has benefited my hiring choices. So, how can you spot hidden talent? It's not by using a computer to weed out potential candidates.

What Resumes Can Tell You

Resumes are still essential. They give you an outline as to a potential employee's education and work history. You can derive what skills they have (or claim to have), their education, if they are a job hopper and what their professional background looks like. But resumes also give you insight to their choices, opportunities and ambitions.

Access to opportunities is important to consider. I was fortunate to have access to the education I needed to get the job I wanted. However, not everyone is that fortunate. Hidden talent can be found regardless of the socio-economic status, age, gender or race of a candidate. Someone may have the aptitude for the job you are offering, but has never had the chance to nurture it. Or jumped jobs trying to find it. Or has a dream and doesn't know how to pursue it. Your job opportunity may just be the break a candidate needs to reveal their talents.

Beyond the Resume

Hiring is less about finding the right skills and more about character and aptitude. Think of your valuable employees. Did they walk in the door with the most skills or are they valuable because they show up, are willing and able to

learn, get the job done and help problem-solve? Again, they need an aptitude for it. But with the right training and encouragement, they could be one of your most valuable employees.

Work ethic. I think the most important characteristic for an employee is work ethic. Work ethic is a set of values and principles related to how a person approaches their work. It includes qualities such as dedication, responsibility, reliability, professionalism, and a strong sense of commitment to doing one's best. A strong work ethic typically involves traits like punctuality, diligence, accountability and perseverance in achieving goals.

I've always worked in small business so most employees wear more than one hat. And when workforce choices are slim or the economy starts to tighten, having employees who are willing to do what it takes to succeed is key

to survival.

Curiosity. A natural curiosity and willingness to learn is also important. Curiosity is at the heart of continuous improvement. How can we be more efficient? How can we make this better? How can we squeeze more money out of our machines? Curious people find joy in learning new things.

Compatibility. Do they work well with others? Will they fit in your culture? Someone with a strong work ethic and natural curiosity are only valuable if they are a good fit for your business.

Now you know how to spot hidden talent. In next month's article, I will share where to look. **P**

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