

Finding Hidden Talent, Part 2

Job postings are not the only way to find talent.



In last month's article, I shared what I look for when I'm searching for a potential employee. This month I'm going to share where to find them. Hidden talent is rarely lurking in responses to a job posting — hence the hidden part. You have to look for it. The algorithm the online job posting is using to weed out potential candidates could be throwing out your future MVE (most valuable employee.)

Talent Could Be Right in Front of You

I'm always looking for hidden talent in the real world even if I don't have an available position. Your future employee may be a janitor, barista, restaurant host/hostess, delivery person, landscaper, repair person or work at a hardware store. Watch them work and see how they interact with others. Do you recognize a strong work ethic? Are they pleasant? Entertaining? Going over and above the expected? Detail-oriented? There is no substitute for watching someone in their current work environment. Look at the skill sets their job requires. How do they line up with what you are seeing?

Other industries can provide incredible employees. And most restaurant personnel, bank tellers, retail employees are not working those jobs for a career. They have other ambitions and may just need a break. You are going to train them to do things your way anyway, so find the right character, aptitude and fit for your culture and they may surprise you.

Hobbies Help

Whether you are talking with them at a job interview or just casually, ask them about their hobbies. Do they like to fix things around the house? They could be great at setup or maintenance. Do they like puzzles? Puzzle people are problem solvers. Are they creative? Do they like to read? Creative people and readers are usually curious people and curiosity is at the heart of continuous improvement. Do/Did they play a team sport? If so, they know how to work with

others toward a common goal. Were they in the military? Veterans understand the importance of reliability, standard work and working together. Are they social/Do they like to talk? Social people are great salespeople. Do they build model trains/cars? That person usually likes to work alone, has attention to detail and likes to make things.



Plug & Play Isn't Always The Answer

The dream is to find the person who can jump into the job with minimal training and be productive. It's possible. But dreams aren't always realized, so let's look at this another way. If I had a choice between an experienced, grumpy, stubborn machinist and an inexperienced, curious, aspiring machinist, I'll take the inexperienced person every time. In the long run, the aspiring machinist will want to keep learning, should work well with others and will probably be more productive. It's worth the investment of training.

In the end, hiring is always a gamble on both the employer and employee's part. But if you look to the core needs of each, instead of just what's written on paper, your next MVE may be hiding in plain sight. **P**

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