



Staff Development Services

building strong businesses one employee at a time.

People are hired for their skills and fired for their behavior!

I received a letter from a company recently that had this as the subject line: People are Hired for Their Skills and Fired for Their Behaviors. That is so true. We look for candidates to fill positions who have the needed skill sets and then assume they can do the job quite well.

But why have they applied for that particular job? Based on my experience, it is often to 'escape' their current job. People seem to spend far more time running away from what they don't like instead of thinking about what they want and then trying to find a job that matches their needs.

So, they begin a new job with some excitement and enthusiasm for their responsibilities. But, very soon it becomes commonplace since it isn't really what they want and they find their work less enjoyable each day. And, when work is not enjoyable, people look for excuses to do something else.

According to the 2004 CCH Unscheduled Absence Survey conducted by Harris Interactive®, most employees who fail to show up for work aren't physically ill. In fact, the study found only 38 percent of unscheduled absences are due to personal illness, while 62 percent are for other reasons including family issues (23 percent), personal needs (18 percent), stress (11 percent) and entitlement mentality (10 percent).

If an individual is unwilling to think about what is best for them and simply seeks a job, perhaps employers need to spend more time thinking about what they need from a candidate in a given role. So, the better the employer understands what is needed for someone to successfully perform a particular role, the more likely they are to find the right person. But, if they do not know what is needed and the job candidates do not know what they want, the result is "the blind leading the blind".

Of course, a person needs skills to perform a certain job. But, by spending a little time identifying the characteristics that are needed to successfully function in a role, the employer removes much of the guesswork out of matching the right person to the right job, resulting in a win/win situation.

Let's consider the role of a receptionist. This is usually a job that does not require a lot of 'concrete skills' but is probably one of the most important roles in any organization. Because an organization can't do business if they can't get 'customers through the front door' and the first person the customer talks to is most responsible for making that happen—the receptionist.

This person must have a pleasant demeanor in order to successfully meet and greet people whether by phone or in person. They must have an uplifted demeanor and be capable of making the potential client feel that they have made the right decision by calling your firm. Secondly, the receptionist must have the ability to control conversations so that she can quickly get the caller or visitor to the appropriate person.

Think for a moment of your own experience in calling or visiting another organization and how the receptionist treated you. Were you greeted with a pleasant demeanor and left with a positive feeling or did you want to 'strangle' the person at the other end of the line or sitting behind the desk? Is that person simply earning a paycheck or do they truly enjoy their job and find pleasure in what they are doing?

So, to sum up my thoughts—hire employees based on behaviors and then train them to do the job you need done. You will have to fire far fewer people.

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work. - Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC)

Best Regards,

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