

What's Important Here?

There are so many things to consider when hiring a new employee, it's easy to miss some of the important ones.

The pity of it is, when all else fails, some managers go on "gut feeling" when it comes to staff selection.

If you work in the HR Department, hiring staff is actually your full time job, of course, but a Service Manager or Sales Manager has many other things on their plate. Hiring staff is usually an ancillary function — just part of "being a manager".

What are the factors?

The relative importance of the different elements of hiring vary according to the type of position you are filling. Following, however, are some of the major factors:-

- **Knowledge and Experience**
- **Motivation**
- **External Factors**
- **Personality**

Personal appearance and presentation can also be important in some jobs where client contact is a key factor.

By considering these things you are, of course, seeking to establish how effective the candidate will be at producing the results required of them.

You need to realise, however, that these considerations are actually *inferior to the achievement of results*. They are, however, a good starting point, to get the general idea of how several candidates might compare.

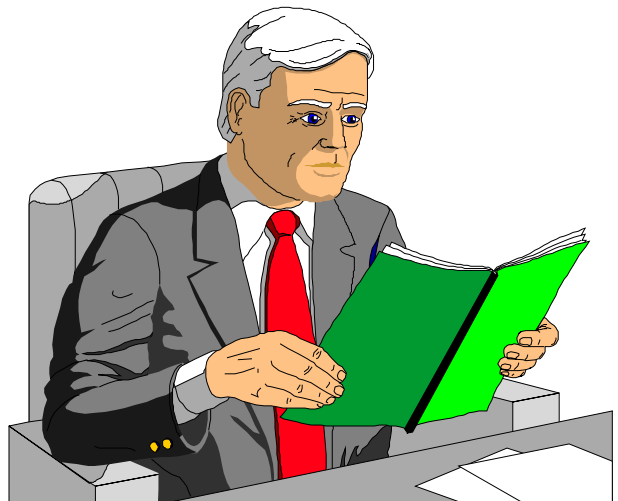
Knowledge/Experience

This is what you see in the candidate's CV. There is a trick to reading CVs. Some candidates have apparently been educated to include lots of statements about how good they are. You have to

ignore this "advertising material" and opinions in the CV and concentrate on:

1. What type of work have they been doing in the past?
2. What formal qualifications do they have, if applicable?
3. Does their knowledge and experience indicate that they are worthy of consideration?

If the job is a highly technical one, or if it requires very specific and detailed knowledge of certain areas, then this alone can be the overriding factor. In you need a competent Access Control Technician, for instance, who can hit the ground running, you can immediately rule out the Domestic Installers who applied! But, in other cases, you are simply looking for the right background for your work.



And don't be too influenced by the covering letter that often accompanies a CV. This is a *selling document* and may be quite persuasive, but it is often an inflated self-assessment of how good the person *thinks* they are. Look for the facts. Ignore the opinions.

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Knowledge and experience is usually the starting point. It's a quick way of eliminating candidates who would be quite unsuitable for the position.

But even when you have a selection of candidates with the right backgrounds, you are still a long way from deciding which one will be best for you.

Motivation

This refers to the reasons they have moved from job to job — in particular, why they left their last job and why they want yours.

- **What was the candidate's original intention when taking their *previous* job?**
- **How did that work out once they got established?**
- **Why did they then leave that job?**

One of the best reasons a candidate could give for moving from one job to another would be because ***they had grown out of it.***

If they became so good at producing results that they hit a ceiling and had nowhere else to go, that's probably ***the best motivation for leaving.*** And, if they see ***your*** job as the next step in their growth, that's an excellent reason for wanting to work for you.

Watch out for false claims here, by the way. Some candidates can sound very enthusiastic, but they may not be genuine.

Animated enthusiasm is not necessarily a clear indication of motivation. A genuine interest in the challenges the job poses is a much more reliable way of detecting potentially motivated candidates.

When you interview them, be alert to the following factors. These are all good indicators of a motivated candidate:

- **Do they ask questions about the job?**

- **Do they want to know what the end results of the activity are?**
- **Do they show a keen interest in how it has been running previously?**

These are all healthy signs of someone who could get a real kick out of performing your job. They may even wake up in the morning looking forward to coming to work! But let's not get too carried away...

External Factors

By this we mean those things that can influence a person's ability to perform well. These include such things as:-

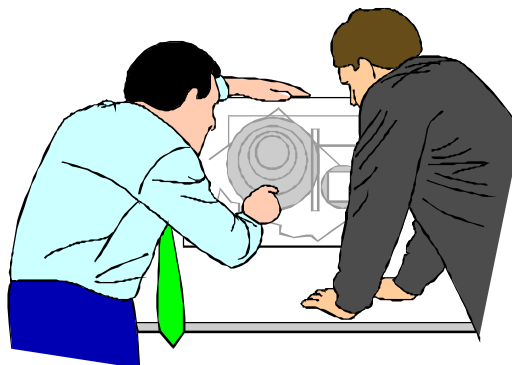
- **A crashing personal problem.**
- **The distance they have to travel to work.**
- **The money they need to make.**
- **Some type of physical disability.**

Personal problems can become evident when probing their reasons for leaving their last couple of jobs. If they always seem to have "personality conflicts" with their previous managers, you should take this as a warning flag.

On the distance factor, many experienced managers have lost good staff a month or so after starting, simply because the travel distance proved too much for them. The candidates probably knew this when they applied, but they were just desperate to get a job -- any job!

Money factors are pretty obvious. If they are looking for more than you can pay, there's not much you can do, except recognise the fact and move on to the next candidate.

Physical disabilities are not necessarily a problem. You simply need to evaluate how their disabilities would affect their ability to perform the function of the job. If they can show that they have previously performed well, then their disability



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is obviously not a problem. After all, it's the results that count.

Some people are affected more than others by External Factors. One may fall apart completely and be unable to perform, whereas another may show no detrimental signs at all. Always look at how **they** performed in their previous jobs in relation to the apparent impediment. DON't compare them to others you may have known with similar problems.

Personality

How does the candidate respond to the problems that life, or the job, throws at them? What is their general demeanour? Do they have the right approach and style for this job?

These are all questions of personality. And, yes, they are important, but they are certainly not the overriding factor in making a hiring decision. They are the icing on the cake.

For example, if you are hiring a Customer Service Consultant, you may want to know if they would be capable of eventually taking over as the manager of the department. They may have good previous results as a Customer Service Consultant, but no prior people management experience. The Job-Fit Analysis can tell you if they have the right profile to be able to develop management skills.

Of course, you can define the "right" personality profile for any job and judge your candidates on how closely their profile matches this benchmark. But you have to watch this one because it is also true that some people with the "wrong" personality **may well be the right choice.**



You would simply need to know about their "quirks" so as to manage around them.

Proven Results

The candidate's ability to perform is the primary factor in all this. Consider the following scenarios:

1. The candidate has certain knowledge or experience missing from their background. They have enough to be considered, but not as much as other candidates do.

If, however, they have done this type of work before and achieved outstanding results (far greater than the other "more qualified" candidates), what does it matter if they don't seem to have the same knowledge and experience as the others?

2. Consider the candidate who would have to travel further to work than other, equally qualified, candidates.

But suppose they had to travel just as far in their last two jobs, and it never affected their ability to perform at those times. If they achieved excellent results, despite the travel time, this external factor is obviously not a problem.

3. Consider also the sales candidate who appears to be much less enthusiastic than the others. Their personality is such that they do not express their emotions in a highly visible manner.

But their sales results were at the top of the list in their previous jobs, so this aspect of their personality (their outward appearance) is obviously not a barrier to production.

The point is this: of all the factors you consider when looking at job candidates, their proven record of results is, by far, the superior item.

**If they got results, despite their shortcomings,
then the shortcomings are not important.**

From this you can see that you cannot run on any sort of “fixed formula” when it comes to hiring. You can’t say, “I’ll only consider people with more than 10 years experience,” or, “They have to live no more than 20 minutes from the office.”

Imposing such arbitrary limits on the process could mean you eliminate candidates who may have actually turned out to be very good performers for you.

Having considered all of the above, the only thing remaining for you to check (when you conduct the interview) is how motivated they are for **your** job.

And if you would like some specific tips in this area, contact U-MAN for a separate document on this subject: “Interviewing Tips for U-MAN Candidates”.