

THE VOICE



Must-Reads for Every Practice

5 Great Interview Questions to Assess Cultural Fit

According to a study by Leadership IQ, 46% of newly-hired employees failed within 18 months, and contrary to popular belief only 11% failed due to technical skills. The majority of the 20,000 new hires tracked in this study failed for interpersonal / fit issues. As I once heard it put, “you’re hired for what you know and fired for who you are.”

As a result, it’s absolutely critical that anyone involved with interviewing potential employees have a good grasp of your culture and refer back to it throughout the hiring process. All leaders must understand and be able to articulate the founding principles of your culture, and know how to effectively test for these principles when they are interviewing candidates. It’s also important to include culture-based questions in every interview round. Here are five interview questions that should help assess ‘culture fit.’

1. What was the most frustrating thing about working at your last company?

If the candidate expresses frustration about the amount of email, daily meetings, or anything else that your company also has, you can probably assume this candidate isn’t a good fit for your company.

2. Describe your ideal work environment. What is the single most important factor that must be present for you to be successful at your job?

Personal work environment preferences can vary greatly. Some people like a set schedule while others require a great deal of scheduling

flexibility. Some don’t mind travel while others do not want any travel at all. Some employees like working for a smaller more personal company while others prefer being part of a larger organization.

3. What is your preferred work style: alone or part of a team? If you could divide your work time, what percentage would you assign to each?

Most jobs are a mixture of working alone and working on a team. However, the mix can vary widely. Knowing if a person prefers working alone most of the time is critical in a job where most of the work is done as a team. The opposite is also true. For someone who will primarily interact with patients, such as the front desk receptionist, we wouldn’t want an applicant to prefer working alone. However, if you are hiring for an insurance billing position, where working alone may be 70% of the job, it may be acceptable to you for this person to prefer to work alone but comfortable playing the role of team member.

4. What characteristics would you ideally want to have in a boss? Describe the management style that brings out your best work.

Some job candidates have a strong preference in the kind of manager they like to work with and the ones they don’t. We want to hire those who will be successful working for the leaders within our organization. If we have an RN applicant who prefers to have some initial guidance but then be able to work at their own pace, they would not be successful working for a Nursing Supervisor who tends to dig down into the weeds and “micromanage.”

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THE VOICE



Welcome to The Voice Newsletter for Spring 2016

The Voice provides a quarterly update on external regulations at the state and federal level that affect your practice along with timely advice on ways to respond. It is provided as a benefit to Medical Mutual members.

The Voice is written by Breni Malpass, HR Advisor. You can reach Breni at breni.malpass@callhrexperst.com or 1-800-HREXPRT.

MUST-READs (cont.)

5. When working in a team, describe the role you most often play? How would your co-workers describe the role you play on the team?

Most people have a preferred role when it comes to being a part of a team. It might be as leader, a coordinator, or an implementer. It is good to know what their preference is and if they are able to adapt their approach. It is good to have a balance of all styles within your organization.

For help with this subject, or any talent management issues, please contact HR|Experts at breni.malpass@callhrexper.com or 1-800-473-9778 (919-431-6096).

How to Handle the Chronically Late or Absent Employee

Absent. Tardy. Leave early. Words that have made managers cringe since the first workplace. "Attendance" can be a real hornet's nest that can go in many different directions. When you're too lenient people can take advantage. Too strict and it can damage morale and/or drive away good people. Finding the right balance can be tricky even for seasoned managers.

So how do you handle the chronically late or absent professional employee?

Strike three you're out! One strategy is to adopt a very strict attendance policy. Every tardy, leave early, or absence is

documented to the minute and after a preset number has been exceeded disciplinary action ensues. While this approach is a way of life for many employers who have large numbers of hourly employees, it will sound totally foreign to more white collar environments. If you're managing in a strict policy environment, perhaps this article isn't for you. Otherwise, read on ...

Keep those germs out of here! It bears saying that you really don't want sick employees in your workplace infecting other workers, a situation some call "presenteeism," meaning they're present but very unproductive because of an illness (and infecting others making them less productive). And this advice goes for you as the manager when you're sick. No one wants you there and you're setting the wrong example. Work from home if you must.

But what about the person that is just sick a lot? There are a few regulations you must consider that deal with sickness such as the Family Medical Leave Act (must have 50 employees or more) and potentially the Americans with Disabilities Act (15 employees or more). Once you've exhausted those requirements, you may find that you just can't continue to employ someone who is chronically not there or late, even if they have a legitimate reason(s) for being absent. My typical advice is to stay focused on job performance. If someone is always calling in sick or late, if you're paying attention, their job performance is suffering as measured by project completion, customer satisfaction, effect on other employees, cost, etc. Focus on the performance and not the "sickness." The more you make it about the sickness the more you're making their case for being "disabled" or covered by some other law.

What about the person that is out a lot and/or absent who really isn't sick? Think of all the reasons, legitimate and not, for someone to be absent. Hundreds of scenarios. Some are obviously ok and not ok, many are grey. Do you really want to have to make an individual decision every time someone is absent as to its legitimacy? That's why my advice, absent a clear policy, is to stay focused on job performance, unless of course they are misleading you as to why they are out, in which case disciplinary action is usually called for.

But what if their job performance isn't suffering? Perhaps some of your "best" employees just don't like to work to a strict schedule. You're concerned if you lean on them they might leave. I would look to your company culture and policy. If your firm expects people work a strict schedule then you will need to reign in your prima donna or risk losing other people and / or getting in trouble yourself. Other employees who aren't out a lot are watching your every move. At some point their attendance will also start to slide if they see you're ineffective in dealing with it.

What about consistency? Should you give more leniency to a long service solid performer who gets into a temporary bind or do you treat them the same as you would a six month employee? Trying to be 100% consistent with attendance on professional employees is a losing proposition.

When to take action? When someone's attendance is affecting their performance or others, or is so far above the norm from the average employee, it's time to start the disciplinary process. Follow your company's process, or in the absence of one I like the three strikes rule. Talk to them about it once, then provide a written warning, then on strike three let them go. At each step make it clear what successful attendance looks like and the consequences for not improving. And make

sure you document every step clearly so you can go back and see a clearly communicated line from offenses to termination.

You may be the problem. Your own management style and behaviors can greatly contribute to or reduce employee absenteeism. Poor management causes more employee "sickness." Chose to be a good manager. Set clear and high expectations, hold people accountable, and treat them like adults and you'll be amazed at how those attendance issues you're having go away.

Please contact HR|Experts at breni.malpass@callhrexper.com or 1-800-473-9778 (919-431-6096) if we can help you think through your attendance policy, or how to handle individual situations.

The Employee Incentive That Works Like No Other

The one reward that most employees crave, but few get, doesn't cost anything to provide.

Is there a "best" reward—a reward that every employee craves but few receive? Many management teams are in search of just such a reward. HR|Experts is frequently asked to provide Practice Administrators, Providers and HR professionals with low cost, or no cost, ways to reward employees. Most resources suggest everything from pizza parties to extra time off to premium parking spaces. There is nothing wrong with any of these ideas, and the more creative you can be the better. However, there is still a much higher reward that won't cost you anything and will produce positive employee motivation. Have I piqued your interest?

OK, here it is: The one reward that most employees crave—but few get—and that is almost guaranteed to motivate employees to do good work is quite simply ... praise. Praise is a very powerful idea that managers often forget about. Bosses usually are good about recognizing and pointing out bad behavior, but they often forget to recognize good behavior.

Think this sounds like a bunch of "touchy feely" HR stuff? Don't be so quick to judge. As it turns out, receiving praise actually stimulates a chemical neurotransmitter in the brain called dopamine, something we all need. Shortages of dopamine can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and difficulty in learning, all traits we definitely don't want in employees. But receiving more of the chemical boosts feelings of pleasure and pride, according to a report from Gallup. Once you get that rush, the brain wants more of it, needs it regularly, and instinctively figures out what behaviors result in more praise and thus more dopamine.

So we have a relatively simple concept that produces quick increases in employee motivation that doesn't cost anything. The workplace must be awash with employee praise, right? In fact, research conducted several years ago by Gallup found that less than one-third of American workers strongly agreed that they had received any praise from a supervisor in the last week. That's a sad statement about the quality of supervision that many employees receive each day. Employees who think that nobody cares about

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their work will be less motivated. Some leave the company. Others remain on the payroll but essentially quit working.

There are many reasons for this lack of praise. Some managers don't regularly praise because they are too busy and just forget about it. Others don't praise because they don't receive any praise from their boss either. Some managers worry that recognizing one employee and not another will make it look as if the manager is playing favorites.

How can employers do a better job? First, it's important to differentiate between appreciation and recognition. Appreciation is the act of expressing gratitude to employees for their positive actions. It is best accomplished through simple expressions or statements: a simple thank you, a card, a pat on the back. Recognition means acknowledging workers in front of their peers for specific accomplishments, actions, or behaviors. It's important to tailor both of these strategies to each employee's personality. Some people just don't like to be called out in public.

If you just don't have time to recognize or appreciate your employees on a regular basis, you should take stock of your daily activities to make the time. Remember, genuine praise produces quick increases in employee motivation, and it doesn't cost you anything. Before you start handing out gift cards, make appreciation and recognition a priority—then watch how morale, motivation, and productivity improve. Here's a quick way to remind yourself to praise employees. Let's say you have 10 direct reports. Start the day with 10 pennies in your left pocket. When you praise an employee move one penny to your right pocket. It won't take long before you get in the habit and won't need the pennies anymore.

As always, please contact HR|Experts at breni.malpass@callhrexper.com or 1-800-473-9778 (919-431-6096) to talk through ways you can build a positive culture and for a sample PowerPoint training program you can deliver to your supervisors and managers.

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