



Hiring Hints

Job interview, like first date, shows if you're compatible

Comfort level, preparation, personality traits important

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by [Eric Simmons](#)

A friend was sharing with me how everyone he knows has been trying to set him up on a date, each one thinking that the woman would be the perfect fit for him. While he has not been necessarily looking to date, he has given these potentials a try.

I think it is great that he has had the opportunity to meet these women, but I could tell from our conversation that there was something missing. He mentioned fabulous traits these women possess, but it seems the right connection is not there.

This can also be true in the human resources world of matchmaking. As an HR recruiter, you might view a candidate as the perfect fit when you see all of the credentials on paper. However, when you are conducting the actual interview, you might notice the candidate's nervousness is extreme. The opposite would be a candidate who doesn't stop talking and allow you to speak. And that's when it hits you: This person is not for your organization.

As a candidate, the same can be very true. Organizations always make themselves sound great through ads, Web sites and even the first "date" interview, but reality might be different.

Just as on a date, the interviewer needs to sense that certain criteria are being met in order to feel comfortable moving forward in a relationship between company and candidate. The first question that typically enters the minds of the interviewer and the candidate is, "Can I see this working long-term?" Candidates and employers should take these decisions seriously to make the right decision so that both will benefit and be happy.

So, what are the criteria?

The candidate should do the following:

§ Learn as much as you can about the organization. How long has the company been in business? What is the company's turnover rate? Your knowledge of the organization will be a positive statement of how serious you are about the position.

§ Learn the organization's growth history. Is it publicly or privately held? If publicly held, has its revenue increased significantly over the years? Has the company previously been acquired, resulting in staff cuts, or has it made any acquisitions that have proved to be complementary to the overall mission of the company? If privately held, ask appropriate questions about the growth strategies and revenue trends of the company. What is the privately held company willing to share with you in order to win you over?

§ What is the organization's culture? Do your values match the culture it promotes? During the interview process, ask for a tour so you can view other employees at work and get a feel for the work environment. Are people friendly and smiling, or do you sense a negative attitude? Like in-laws, these are people you will be spending a lot of time with. Note their reaction to meeting you as a potential new member to their team. Are they pleased to meet you, or are they inconvenienced? Culture is an important element when choosing your next career move, as you want to make sure you will be able to succeed in the manner in which you work best.

The interviewer should do the following:

§ Does the candidate present himself/herself professionally, especially with communication, appearance, attitude and confidence?

§ Does the candidate have the qualifications and experience necessary to succeed in the position, and additional skills and qualities that would enhance the position and company further?

§ Is the candidate looking for a new job or a career move? You could learn the answer to this question quickly by obtaining a sense of whether the candidate is willing to learn in order to grow further in the position and the company. Today, employers are looking for loyalty to the job and company.

§ Try to identify the candidate's personality. Many times, it's not a lack of qualifications that cause a candidate to fail in a position but simply not having the right personality for the job. If a position requires a driven, high-energy personality, a qualified yet passive-natured person will most likely fail. A candidate who has the right personality match but is lacking in a few of the qualifications will many times succeed.

§ Always check the candidate's references before hiring. You might have a great feeling about a candidate but receive questionable feedback from a reference.

Both the candidate and the interviewer should ask each other many questions. In order to find a perfect match, the candidate should be interviewing the company in the same detail that the company is interviewing the candidate.

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