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Two Traits Hiring Managers Look For During Interviews

Hiring managers look for similar things when interviewing candidates. However, there are some traits they look for and they don't even realize it themselves. Job seekers need to understand this in order to interview well and be seen in the best light.



Are You Displaying The Traits To Get Hired?

“Strategy Smategy!”

We hear a lot about strategic planning these days....but does it work?

Often we hear; *my business is doing fine...I got here without a strategic plan...why bother?*

The answer; because your competitors are...and they are looking for ways to grow their business...which means taking business away from yours.

Hiring Managers are Only Human

A company's hiring manager is often quite skilled in the recruitment process. However, at the end of the day, they are only human like the rest of us. This means that they are prone to making snap judgements and assumptions.

Interviewers usually start the conversation by getting to know you and then assume they have you all figured out. Most people call this their gut feeling. One psychological study has shown that this feeling comes down to these two things:

1. Warmth: Do I even like you?
2. Competence: Are you any good at what you do?

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Strategic planning is the process of creating a vision of the future, aligning your people, processes, and systems, and creating the necessary steps/goals towards that future. It is like looking at your company and industry from a helicopter to see where it is going, what has changed, and to see if there are other opportunities. Then coming down and setting the direction for your business based on the information.

After you create the vision for your company, you operate under a mission statement which is the short term objectives (1-3 years) to help you achieve your vision.

Strategic planning answers these questions:

- *Where are we today?*
- *Where do we want to be in the future?*
- *How are we going to get there?*
- *What is standing in our way?*
- *Who are our competitors; are they better, why are they better, are we better? etc...*
- *What helps govern our decisions?*

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Four Categories

Hiring managers are no exception to this line of thinking. In fact, the study says that they box people into these 4 categories:

1. Warm and Competent
2. Warm and Incompetent
3. Cold and Competent
4. Cold and Incompetent

Warm and Competent

In order to get the job, you should try and fall into the warm and competent category. Hiring managers will see you as pleasant and think you'd be great to work with.

Warmth and competence judgments are not conclusive evaluations but simply one's perceptions. We can't change everything about our personality and who we are; however, we can influence how others perceive us.

How to Get the Job

Job seekers can get hired by appearing warm and competent. They can do this by focusing on using specifics, practicing self-awareness and taking a step-by-step approach.

In order to use specifics, you'll want to bring your examples and stories to life using details. You'll be seen as more conversational and less boring.

Try to have self-awareness about yourself and exemplify that you know you're human and not perfect. Don't get so salesy about yourself that the hiring managers sees you as one with an inflated ego. Remember you want to be warm and likeable.

A step-by-step approach will give someone a clearer picture of what you're trying to explain during an interview. Don't gloss over details but rather share them to exemplify your competence and knowledge.

Focus on being warm and competent. You'll seem more real, engaging and likeable which will help as they consider your application. ❖

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Once these questions have been answered, you can start working towards your objectives. Of course, there are more steps to creating a strategic plan.

Important elements of your plan:

Vision, mission, values, critical goal categories, marketing and sales plan, financial projections, S.M.A.R.T. goals, and follow up.



Each element of your plan takes some time to create. Utilize the talent you have within your company to help you create your plan and to get "buy-in". You can use other leaders within your company to assign goals to and/or to help track progress.

Every month, week, or at each meeting you should be asking these questions:

- *Are we closer or further away from our objectives?*
- *Are we working towards our most important goals?*
- *Are we getting closer to or further away from our vision?*
- *What should we be doing?*
- *What is our next step?*
- *What should we not be doing?*
- *What has changed in our market place that may affect our business?*
- *Do we need to address that issue?*

A good strategic plan will help you (and others in your company) make decisions today based on your long term goals. It will help you take your business to the next level. It is also a means for you to communicate your ideas and your vision to other people who can help you build your business. In addition, the plan helps focus the company, and the people involved, on a direction and helps them commit to making this idea a success. ❖

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How To Bridge The Soft Skills Gap

As more and more young people come into the marketplace, the larger the soft skills gap becomes. There is no way to avoid hiring individuals that lack these skills. Instead of limiting your hiring radius, build soft skill training into the culture of your business.

Determine What Soft Skills Are Most Important:

There are some soft skills that you will want to be especially honed in your employees. Identify what these skills are and work with employees on these areas. When you know what needs to be focused on, it will help you to implement training programs that will increase your team member's soft skills.



Help Team Members Understand The Importance: People will get behind ideas and processes that they understand and believe in. Explain to your staff that these soft skills are not only important to the business, but will be beneficial to the individual. When your employees understand that you are teaching them skills that will carry them through their careers, they will be more vested in learning.

Get Active Participation From Employees: In an age where you can get online and Google how to do just about everything, the younger generation is used to self-learning. Get them involved with coming up with valuable training programs and speakers that will teach what they are in need of.

It is important that you allow them to bring some of their own creativity to the process. This simple idea alone will help bridge the soft skills gap.

Give Opportunity For Hands On Experiences: Part of the learning process is to give people hands on training experiences. Pair your untrained employees up with those that are more skilled in these areas. Allow them to shadow the stronger staff members to see exactly how to use the soft skills they have been learning.

Once the team member has walked alongside a mentor, they need to be given the chance to do it on their own. At first, they need to be shadowed by the more knowledgeable staff member. When they are ready, they can be turned loose to use their new skills.

Reward Model Behaviors in The Company: When employees are found modeling the behaviors that support the company culture, they should be rewarded. With the right incentives, others will follow suit. With a reward system, you will encourage compliance amongst the rest of the staff.

Be prepared to implement soft skill training for your team members. This is a great way to build a greater unity in the company. The more your staff learns together, the more unified they will become. ❖

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One Minute Ideas

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Managing Through Goal Setting

Unless you know what you want to achieve, there's no way to measure how close you are to achieving that objective. Goals give you a standard against which to measure your progress.

The goals you set for accomplishing the company's/department's mission must be in line with the vision and what your company wants you to do. If what you plan to achieve for your job, department, or team isn't coordinated with the goals of your organization, you'll waste your time and energy.

Goals are the foundation of motivational programs. By reaching toward your goals, you become motivated, and by knowing the goals of your team members and helping them reach those goals, you help to motivate them.

The process of setting goals takes time, energy, and effort. Goals aren't something you scribble on a napkin during a coffee break-you must plan what you truly want to accomplish, establish timetables, determine who will do each action step, brainstorm all the possible obstacles, create a solution for the obstacles, review all of the rewards and consequences of achieving or not achieving the goal, and implement the goal.

Criteria's for setting goals. To ensure that goals can be accomplished, follow these guidelines for setting your goals. Your goals must be **SMART**: **S** – Specific / **M** – Measurable / **A** – Attainable / **R** – Realistically High / **T** – Target Date or Time Bound

Example: Your goal is to save money. This is a hazy goal. You could put one dollar in a jar and that hazy goal would have been accomplished. It does not conform to the above criteria. Instead your goal could be: Save \$100 per month for the next 12 months starting (today's date) to be complete by (target date). This goal is specific, measurable, attainable, realistically high, and has a target date. ❖

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A publication of Chiro1Source

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