

Three Step Hiring

by Dr. Larry Craft

Hiring a new employee can be a most expensive and time consuming process. In today's employment market, an extensive hiring process can not only waste your resources, it can lose the candidate to your competitor. The following *Three Step Hiring* process is designed to yield the most comprehensive results in the shortest period of time, helping you to hire Peak Performers. Within just days, you'll know the "Can Do," "Will Do," and "Follow-through" qualities of your candidate to help you make the right decision. *Note: though multiple sources of information are important, there is no research that confirms the need for more than two personal interviews when those interviews include other objective measures, such as employment testing.*

Step One: The Pre-screener: Most employers don't have the time to spend reviewing resumes or meeting with unqualified applicants, especially in larger companies that have dozens of applicants for a single job. The pre-screener is a most important step that brings only qualified applicants to the interview. Some companies use their web site and simply place a "Now Hiring" button on the first page. Other companies have recruiters who bring applicants into the "funnel." Still other companies rely primarily on job boards such as monster.com or career builder.

Whichever method is used, each applicant is given an "entry code" and asked to enter a special web site that begins the *Three Step Hiring* process. That web site can be developed in-house or by the test distributor. Upon entering the site, they are consistently warned about being honest and avoiding exaggerations. They are then asked to complete the initial pre-screener which takes approximately 10-15 minutes. This customized assessment asks nearly all the questions found on a standard application for employment, but also includes unique, job-related questions that are designed to prevent applicant exaggerations. Typical questions might ask about their education, the number of employers in the past three years, or their specific experience related to the position. Each question is psychometrically worded in a way that prevents inaccuracies. Repeated research has found that written applications or even online applications are rife with inaccuracies. Each of these pre-screener questions is specifically designed to generate the most honest response possible.

Many companies link the pre-screener to a personality test and/or an intelligence test, depending on the job description. Sales positions, for example, require a personality test, while an accounting position would require an intelligence test. Some companies that find it difficult to recruit applicants prefer to have a personal contact of some kind between the pre-screener and the personality/intelligence testing.

Based upon the test results, the administrator can choose to "promote" the applicant to the next phase of the selection process or choose to reject the applicant by going on to the next applicant (similar to reviewing resumes or mailed-in applications). This decision can be either quantitative (using a weighted scoring system) or qualitative (intuitively based). If the applicant is promoted, they become a "candidate" and are invited to the Initial Interview.

Step Two: The Initial Interview: Based on the candidate's test results, the candidate is invited to the initial interview. This interview is designed to assess the candidate's "Can Do" and "Will Do" dimensions of success. "Can Do" factors include job-related skills, knowledge, and experience. "Will Do" factors include personality and motivation. Both of these dimensions of success should have been already measured in the pre-screener and personality/intelligence tests, so the manager can use the test results to conduct the personal interview. Some testing companies even provide the interview questions to cross-validate their assessments.

The initial introduction should be warm and inviting. Some managers help the candidate "break the ice" by showing the facilities or introducing the candidate to others in the office. That said, the manager should avoid the temptation to "sell" the job or the company at this stage. Highly motivated candidates would rather "win" the position. When the interview begins, be sure to avoid using the term, "when you are hired." Instead use "if you are qualified." Ask questions that require an extensive response (open-ended questions, not allowing the candidate to respond with a "yes" or "no."). For example, one of the best questions for a salesperson is, "*Sell me on yourself for the next few minutes, in other words, why should we hire you?*" There is an art to interviewing that includes both "push" and "pull." The candidate should leave the office without knowing if they qualified for the position but feeling good about the professionalism of the interviewer and the quality of the company.

Step Three: The Final Interview: Based on the initial interview results, the candidate is promoted into the final interview. This interview should focus on the third dimension of success, the "*Follow-through*" dimension that includes three factors (the three P's): persistence, passion, and the ability to prioritize. Some managers refer to this interview as the "pain for gain" interview. In other words, do they have the self-discipline to do the things that failures fail to do. Once again, the manager can use the test results to conduct this interview.

Persistence can be seen in their employment stability and by asking questions such as, "Describe any hobbies or interests you have had in the past that show you have "pain for gain" persistence?" Activities such as military background, Eagle Scouts, martial arts, gymnastics, and competitive sports all contribute to self-discipline and impulse control. Be sure to ask follow-up questions to determine how actively involved they

were. **Passion** can be seen in the personality profile (intensity/drive) and their involvement in relevant job duties in the past. Are they committed to this field of endeavor or are they just experimenting with it. Ask them, "If we don't hire you, what are some other areas in which you are interviewing?" **Prioritizing** can be seen in their personality profile and their ability to manage their time. Ask the, "What time management system do you use on a daily basis?"

Some companies prefer to have two or three managers in this final interview. At the end of this final interview, the manager(s) make the hiring decision by reviewing notes and test results one last time. The candidate who is hired is invited back for a "career presentation" when the manager "sells" the position, the company, and the career opportunities.