Lou Adler

Hire with your Head (Adler, 2007)

2007

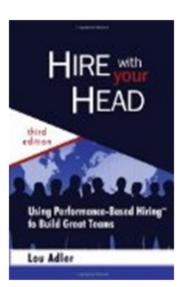## Inside this issue:

HIRING IS A PROCESS, NOT AN EVENT!

For hundreds of years, hiring has been an event. Only recently has the lens changed to view hiring as a process, taking time and requiring experts in the area. In *Hire with your Head: Using Performance Based Hiring to Build Great Teams,* Lou Adler (2007) provided sound advice on attracting and hiring the top job candidates. Interviewers frequently focus on the candidate's qualifications and interview skills rather than the job requirements. Using Adler's Performance-based hiring and Performance Profiles, managers can attract the best candidates for the job, provide better hires, and help reduce future turnover.

Hiring mistakes are costly. They waste company time, money, and energy. Using tips from *Hire with your Head* (Adler, 2007), managers will learn what to look for and how to act to attract the best candidates to be a part of their workplace.

"What you'll find in this book is a step-by-step process with detailed instructions for taking a logical, systematic approach to getting the right new-hire in the right place at the right time every time." (Tulgan, foreword in Adler, 2007, p. vii)

***

WORDS FROM LOU ADLER

"No matter how hard you try, you can never atone for a weak hiring decision. A weak candidate rarely becomes a great employee, no matter how much you wish or how hard you work. Instead, hire smart. Use the same time and energy to do it right the first time." (Adler, 2007, p. 3)
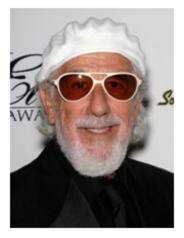
PERFORMANCE– BASED HIRING

Secret to success #1: don't make a decision about hiring in the first 30 minutes of an interview

Most hiring mistakes are made because of first impressions and personality. *Hiring with the Head* (Adler, 2007), demonstrated how most hiring is often based on chemistry, first impressions, emotions, biases, stereotypes, the "halo effect" (globalizing a few strengths), and the tendency to hire in one's own image. This is not recommended (Adler, 2007) because it assesses a candidate's ability to *get* the job, rather than to *do* the job. To hire the best candidate means learning how the best people look for new jobs and how they decide to accept an offer.

Lou Adler, author of
Hire with your Head
(2007)

6 STEPS TO INCREASING INTERVIEWER OBJECTIVITY

To increase objectivity during an interview, six steps were followed. Initially, first impressions were measured at the end of an interview. Second, they suspended all judgement of the candidates for the first 30 minutes of the interview. An immediate "no" was only given to complete failure. Third, the interview was seen as a means to collect information about the candidate rather than make decisions whether or not to hire them. When the interviewer recognized they do not need to provide a yes/no answer, the focus changed to collecting evidence towards a future decision. Fourth, Adler (2007) recommended only giving partial voting rights to each interviewer so that decision-making about hiring was a collaborative process. Fifth, it was necessary to demand evidence before accepting an interviewer's "gut feeling" about a potential candidate. Last, interviewers needed to make a "no" vote harder to justify than a "yes". Adler (2007) believed this would reduce laziness and unpreparedness on the interviewers' part since "no" was an easier judgement to make than a "yes". A "no" was, however, acceptable if it was backed by factual information about the candidate.

To hire superior candidates, Performance-Based Hiring must be implemented. The four components of Performance-Based Hiring are:
1) Performance Profiles,
2) Talent Centric Sourcing,
3) Evidence-based Interviewing,
4) Integrated Recruiting. (Adler, 2007)

GUT FEELINGS

"Hiring is too important to leave it to chance."

(Adler, 2007, p. 5)

PERFORMANCE PROFILES

Secret to success #2: Define superior performance

Performance profiles describe six to eight performance objectives an applicant must accomplish to be successful. Here, the objective is to attract superior candidates by defining superior performance. A performance profile clearly denotes the job stretch and job growth.

To do so, interviewers can create **SMARTe** performance objectives to define the desired results.

Performance objectives need an action verb (e.g., increase, change, improve) and a measurable objective (e.g., 10% in 90 days).

Specific

Measureable

Action- oriented

Results

Time-bound

environment

The fundamental difference between performance profiles and experienced-based job descriptions is that the focus is on the **output**, rather than the **input**.

Hiring the wrong candidate wastes your time!!

BENCHMARKING THE BEST

Benchmarking is a technique for sourcing, interviewing, and recruiting the best candidates. Studies have shown that good interviewers: 1) Remain objective throughout the interview, 2) Collect information about multiple job factors, and 3) Use an evidence-based approach to determine whether the candidate is motivated and competent (Adler, 2007).

Secret to success #3: Benchmark the BEST and the WORST candidates to find out what to look for and what to avoid.

"To *hire with your head*, you need to combine emotional control with good fact-finding skills and intuitive decision making."

(Adler, 2007, p.27)

TALENT– CENTRIC SOURCING: FINDING TOP CANDIDATES

Sourcing the top candidates for a position can be easy! The first step was recognizing that top performers look for new positions in different ways. They were selective and only consider positions that offered true opportunities. Top candidates wish to accomplish long-term goals or make major career steps. To attract such applicants, job descriptions must be appealing. Companies required attractive and appealing ads. It was the first impression to prospective candidates. Remember, however, "If you want to hire great people, you have to find them first." (Adler, 2007, p. 98).

Employers should create a proactive, talent-driven culture through aggressive, proactive sourcing.

Secret to success #4:

Advertise on performance rather than skills

Secret to success #5:

Select on performance rather than personality

"An ad needs to overcome the inertia of not responding."

(Adler, 2007, p. 79)

WHAT TOP CANDIDATES SEEK

Top candidates are looking for fulfilling careers rather than a job. When looking for a new job, they will first consider whether the job is a match in terms of the challenges they are seeking and whether it offers the opportunity for growth. Second, they will consider the hiring manager and their strengths as a leader. Third, they will consider the quality of coworkers. Fourth, they will examine the company and its initiatives. finally, they may consider the compensation package. Most, however, do not consider compensation the primary drawing factor. Only when the compensation is very high or very low does it become the primary consideration.

Great candidates are willing to go above and beyond to achieve greatness

THE 2 QUESTION PERFORMANCE-BASED INTERVIEW

There are two questions to assess the ten best predictors of on-the-job success. They help the interviewer understand a candidate's past performance and target their thinking, planning, and problem-solving abilities.

Q1: Can you describe a major career accomplishment that best represents your work?

Q2: If you were to get this job, how would you go about problem- solving?

(Adler, 2007, p. 103)

PHONE INTERVIEWS: A PREVIEW

To reduce impact of first impressions, interviewers can conduct a telephone interview prior to the face-to-face interview. Fifty percent of the face-to-face interview time should be spent reviewing the candidate's work history with the remainder discussing one or two major accomplishments. Enough information should be gleaned in 20 minutes to decide if the candidate is a definite "no" and in the remaining 30 minutes there should be enough information to decide if the candidate is worth bringing in for a second more intensive interview.

Phone interviews maintain initial objectivity

REMEMBER: STAY OBJECTIVE!!

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

Upon closing, the recruiter must remember three concepts:

1) Let the candidate know there are other people being interviewed (because jobs are more attractive when there is competition),

2) Express sincere interest in the candidate (because you want the candidate to think positively about accepting the position), and
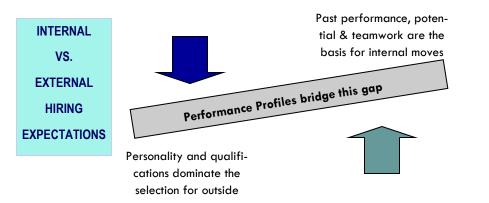
3) Ask the candidate what they think about the position now that they've have the interview to gauge their true level of interest in the position.

Secret to success #6: Listen 4 times more than you talk.

THE EVIDENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

5 key steps to implement an evidence-based assessment process:
1) Evaluate all candidates based on the real job needs
2) Don't give interviewers, other than the hiring manager, complete yes/no voting rights
3) Assess all candidates using formal assessment tools (e.g. 10-Factor Candidate Assessment template)
4) Debrief all members of the hiring team prior to the beginning of interviews
5) Generalities, gut feelings, and intuition are unacceptable input for ranking candidates

INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL HIRING EXPECTATIONS

Past performance, potential & teamwork are the basis for internal moves

Performance Profiles bridge this gap

Personality and qualifications dominate the selection for outside

Using the 5 key steps will eliminate bad hires:

MISMATCHED HIRE

INCOMPLETE HIRE

NON-HIRE

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN INTERVIEW

- The talent and motivation to get the work done
- Ability to persuade, motivate, and cooperate with others
- Problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Past accomplishments
- Planning, management, and organizational skills
- Environmental and cultural fit
- Trend of Performance over time
- Character, values, commitment and goals
- Potential for growth

Secret to success #7:

The professionalism and quality of the interview are very important in attracting top candidates.

"Accurately assessing candidate competency is the key to better hiring decisions."

(Adler, 2007, p. 137)

COMPLETING THE ASSIGNMENT

Since the first interview provides an interviewer with **less than half** of the required information, they must remain objective until further evidence of the candidate's merits is acquired. This can be accomplished using additional interviews, reference checks, and testing. A background check must be completed on every candidate, e.g. degrees, certificates, employment history, driving record, criminal record. Adler (2007) provided a useful checklist to fulfill this specific purpose (p. 171).

ADLER'S REFERENCE CHECKING CHECKLIST

♦ Determine the relationship to the candidate. Find out the titles of both the reference and the candidate, how long the working relationship lasted, and their most recent contact.

♦ Obtain the reference's current title, company, and the scope of the job in comparison to the job when the reference knew the candidate.

♦ Determine the reference's scope of responsibility by asking about the size of their organization and the number of people on the staff.

♦ Determine what the company environment was like— pace, standards of performance, quality of the people, and the quality of the processes and systems.   (Adler, 2007, p. 171)

A third interview should involve lunch or dinner, paid for by the interviewer.

THE SECOND INTERVIEW

Second interviews provide an opportunity to examine more carefully the candidate's actual abilities. Here, the interviewer must focus on management, team, and organizational skills. This interview formatted around the performance objectives from the performance profile that have not yet been discussed. A take-home case study (homework for the candidate) was viewed positively as part of a second interview because it allowed the interviewer the opportunity to see what the candidate could accomplish.

A third interview should always involve a meal.

Recruiting, negotiating, & closing offers

A recruiter should not make it too easy for a candidate to get the job.

Recruiting begins at the first interview and presents the position in a manner that compels them to convince you that they are the best candidate. Interviewers must remember it is about the opportunity offered.

Two of Adler`s fundamental recruiting principles were: 1) never make a formal offer until it is accepted to prevent candidates from shopping around for better offers, and 2) Provide the candidate with a compelling vision so they hope to stay and work for your company.

Remember: LISTEN four times more than you talk.

What do potential candidates look for?

Recruiters must understand *why* candidates accept jobs and then use this to their advantage. Candidates look for:

- quality of the job,   - quality of the hiring manager,

- quality of the team,   - quality of the company,

- future plans for growth,   - compensation package

The 10-factor Assessment

When using the *10-Factor Assessment,* each interviewer receives an identical form to fill out regarding the interviewee. Each interviewer is assigned the task of evaluating and collecting evidence regarding specific factors (e.g., Motivation, Technical Skill, Problem Solving/ Thinking, Character and Values) (Adler, 2007, pp. 142-143). Following the interview, the information is used to label candidates from Level 1-5, with 5 being best.

Adler (2007) was adamant that Level 1 and 2 candidates not be hired. Level 3 was considered to be a good candidate and Levels 4 and 5 were to be hired immediately.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF HIRING

1. Prepare a performance profile before every new job requisition gets approved.

2. Everyone must use performance-based interviewing techniques and ask the two core questions.

3. Do not hire a candidate unless a group 10-Factor Candidate Assessment template has been prepared with all hiring team members during a formal debriefing session.

4. Do not hire level 2`s.   (Adler, 2007, pp. 260– 261)

HIRE SMART. HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD.

RECRUITING MISTAKES

- Talking negatively about the position
- Being unprepared
- Being unprofessional
- Asking stupid questions
- Appearing over-eager
- Discussing money too soon, or too late in the interview
- Discussing personal, ethnic, or family matters
- Demeaning the candidate or going overboard on technical aspects
- Waiting until the end of the interview to make an offer
- Waiting until the end to recruit
- Ceasing to recruit after the offer is accepted

Hiring is NOT just another "to do" task.

WARNING:

Jobs change, people don't.

Secret to success #8:

Always finish the interview on a positive note!

CRITIQUE BY KIM THOMLISTON

Hire with the Head (Adler, 2007) is founded, for the most part, in recommendations supported by the material presented in Walker & Bayles' EADM 826 course (University of Saskatchewan, Swift Current cohort, 2012) and the course textbook, *Human Resource Management* (Steen, et al., 2009). An example paralleled in both Adler (2007) and EADM 826 lectures was the notion that money was not the main motivating factor for good candidates, provided the money offered was reasonable. Good candidates sought more from a job; they wanted a career and job satisfaction. Good candidates enjoyed work, were driven by vision and mission, and were motivated and inspired to continuously improve through their working relationships with colleagues. Both the text and book mentioned the necessity to do a thorough background and reference check prior to hiring a candidate. This involved verifying the résumé and employment history, education, references and, depending on the job, criminal record, personal credit history, and driving record (Steen, et al., 2009). Further, the text and book both mentioned the benefits of subjecting a potential candidate to employment tests to be better equipped to measure their actual ability as an employee. Most importantly, however, the book, text, and lectures all outlined the importance of hiring the correct person for the job. "An organization that appreciates the competitive edge provided by good people must take the upmost care in choosing its members. The organization's decisions about selecting people are central to its ability to survive, adapt, and grow." (Steen, et al., 2009, p. 173).

Kim Thomliston, Masters student in the program of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan

USEFULNESS OF THE BOOK

This book is a good resource for those involved in Human Resources (HR). It provided many practical tools, such as the 10-Factor Candidate Assessment Templates (pp. 142- 143), reference checking checklist (p. 173), interviewing and assessment checklist (p. 194), and Structured Performance-Based Interview (pp. 284-285). These tools could be implemented immediately and do not require additional resources or training, thus increasing the practicality of the book.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

The primary weakness of this book, however, was its lack of scholarly research. Adler (2007) offered an abundance of recommendations and anecdotes, replete with personal stories and examples of his journey through the world of HR. While undeniably there is value in his years of personal experience in HR, Adler's opinion cannot be regarded as fact. *Hire with your Head* (Adler, 2007) would be strengthened greatly through the inclusion of current research in the field of HR. Despite the lack of scholarly evidence, however, this book is a valuable and practical resource for those working in HR as well as professionals working in other fields.

AUTHOR LOU ADLER

Hire with your Head (Adler, 2007) is based on Lou Adler's 40-year career as a successful executive with Rockwell International and The Allen Group, and as one of the top recruiters in the United States. His book has been celebrated and used throughout North America and in many parts of the world by a wide variety of companies and organizations including: Bose, Verizon, Cancer Centers of America, Cognos/IBM, Broadcom, YMCA, and the Inter-American Development Bank. For more information about Adler, visit:

http://www.adlerconcepts.com/

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Should instinct have a part to play in hiring?What is your personal belief about "gut feelings"?

2. What qualities do you have that make you a top candidate?

3. Do you think the Two Question Interview is an effective strategy? What elements do you like? What elements would you change?

4. Imagine you are calling to check an applicant's references. Using Adler's criterion, create three (3) potential questions you could ask.

"To *hire with your head*, you need to combine emotional control with good fact-finding skills and intuitive decision making."

(Adler, 2007, p.27)

References

Adler, L. (2007). Hire with your head: Using performance-based hiring to build great teams (3rd Ed.) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Steen, S. L., Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B., & Wright, P. M. (2009). Human Resource Management (2nd Canadian Ed.). Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.