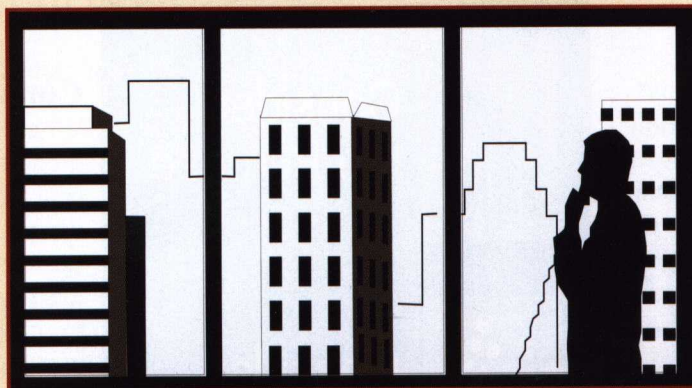


Finding The Needle In The Haystack

Who is the perfect hire?

By Robert Meier

How do you find that one-in-a-million employee, the perfect candidate whose past results prove they can contribute to your company's bottom line **NOW**? First, let's define the perfect hire as someone who **proves, not only implies**, how their past jobs benefited their employer financially, operationally and strategically.



When you want to add new staff or replace someone, you have to dig through a blizzard of resumes. And let's be up-front about it, reading resumes is one of life's most tedious tasks. But when reviewed with a shrewd eye, the resume can eliminate a whole lot of wasted time interviewing hopelessly inappropriate candidates. The key is to look for resumes where the candidate validates their capabilities, results and contributions.

It is worth noting that a typical hiring manager seeks what are termed *exceptional performers*, or those who are part of the top 20% of their peer group. The reality is that managers really want to find the top of the top. The key is to discern from the resume whether a candidate is in that elite 20%.

Reading resumes is a little like studying weather charts. A whole lot of information, facts and statistics but without all of the underlying data needed to make an accurate forecast. The weather analogy has led me to put job candidates into three groups: Cloudy, Sunny and Clear. Cloudy prospects find it impossible to communicate anything clear or compelling and tend to focus on functional skills (they typically write a resume from the job description). Sunny prospects use results, usually a bunch of blindingly bright points of success, yet leave out the details that validate those results. Clear prospect is the one that realizes results are critical

and also understands that hiring authorities need concise explanations of the strategies or tactics used to gain the results so that they can make valid decisions.

Here is an example of "responsibilities" from the resume of a Business Development Manager (BDM) of a medical device company from each of the three prospects:

A Cloudy BDM

Responsible for supporting general managers of all company operating units in Asia Pacific to analyze and grow their businesses.

A Sunny BDM

Grew business 18% annually in a market growing 3-5%.

The Clear BDM Created the first-ever Regional Marketing Program,

a strategy that uses clinical research to prove our product-line advantages. Hired 4 regional sales managers and trained 100 account executives on how to use the \$1.5m clinical studies as a selling tool.

Result Sales increased by \$10mm or 18% from \$55 million to \$65 million a year.

Although the Clear (thinking) prospect used a lot more words, he knew this was his cornerstone strategy to building revenues and was worth the extra ink. There are 200+ resumes for each good job opening; and a hiring

manager has the time to interview 4 or 5 candidates, at best. Clear prospects take it upon themselves to make the evaluation process simple by pre-selling their qualifications clearly and compellingly with validating information to support their successes.

Using the resume this way becomes your first level of screening and different than basing your

search solely on looking at career progression (some people are promoted due to internal champions or friends in high places), educational pedigree (even an idiot can get into the Ivy League if their parents donate a million dollars), or referral from an internal employee (referrals are great, but they still need to prove their worth). Since good job openings generate more candidates than needed, the key is to interview only job seekers who best fit the profile of the position. It is simple logic to assume that marketing professionals that can communicate clearly, with points of validation in their resume, are just as likely to be capable of handling the complex projects that they are hired for.

The key is to bring only top candidates in for an interview, and top candidates are those who explain accomplishments clearly and believably with plausible statistics. A candidate who can write a resume that explains the projects and tactics they executed along with tangible results is a keeper. ■

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