



# How Human Psychology IMPACTS HIRING

By Michelle Caspole

**H**iring managers are essentially the gatekeepers of a company because they have the largest influence over a candidate's admission. With this authoritative position and essential responsibility comes the demand to hire the right job fit while preventing employee turnover within the company. This can be a challenging process because hiring managers are, for lack of a better word, human, and it is inherently human nature to create bias or pass judgment when interacting with other people.

This makes it difficult to distinguish whether a candidate is *actually* a job fit or simply someone you see yourself golfing with on the weekends. Brad Wolfe of TLNT.com says, "The biggest psychological issue we have as humans is dealing with other human beings, not our cat or our stuff." It is our fallible quality that makes it impossible for us to be objective in our perceptions of people, which is magnified in an interview setting.

As I mentioned earlier, bias is weaved into our DNA, so we tend to assign a positive or negative bias based on a number of attributes. Consider these issues of human psychology that influence the hiring process.

Humans and hiring managers alike assign bias based on how similar or different a job candidate is to themselves. Assumptions about a candidate might be based on work experience or simple stereotypes. These stereotypes can be based on name, age, gender, race, or how a candidate looks—even though hiring managers know this kind of judgment is frowned upon when hiring for job fit.

Although psychologists agree that most bias occurs in the subconscious as a result of an individual's past

experiences and upbringing, most job fit decisions are strongly influenced by how much the hiring manager likes a candidate. Whether you consider yourself to be an "emotional" person or not, it is impossible to conduct an objective interview.

Interviews fail to reveal the abilities and genuine personality of a person and this is why "Forty-six percent of all new hires fail within 18 months, according to a recent Forbes article," mentioned Wolfe. However, interviews are still a crucial tool for determining certain soft skills.

## Combatting Hiring Challenges

Understanding your own bias means that you need to find other tools that can help you make hiring decisions. First, focus on the needs of your organization. Then evaluate the function and goals of the position you are hiring for. Keep in mind how a candidate aligns with those performance objectives and company culture. "Good talent managers think like businesspeople and innovators first and like HR people last," said former Netflix Chief Talent Officer, Patty McCord. Hire a job fit that works best for the company and its culture; do not just hire a body to fill a vacant position.

Consider using a pre-hire assessment like the ProfileXT® (PXT) to identify specific qualities and measure certain capabilities of a candidate that reveal a number of things you'll want to know about before extending an offer to a potential candidate. Hiring managers that incorporate pre-hire assessments into their hiring and recruitment processes have the advantage of uncovering the characteristics of a candidate that they might not have picked up on during an interview.

Assessment results provide hiring managers with a holistic view of a candidate's learning styles, ability to adapt, response to conflict, manageability, and reliability, among many other competencies. They reveal whether someone is a strong job fit based on how a candidate approaches and behaves in a given situation—NOT based on the numbers they answered "correct"—this is a common misconception because assessments do not have "right" or "wrong" answers. "The PXT always correlates to a company's business results," says Jason Ingram, blogger for Workplace 101. His presentation, *101 Things (Everyone Should Know) About Assessments*, includes assessment solutions and how they can add value to your business.

After you have used an assessment to narrow down your candidate pool of people who can perform the necessary duties of the job and that have a higher probability for success, it is time to extend an invite to interview. Wolfe suggests that hiring managers should "prepare your questions in advance to learn more about the candidate's skills, experience, attitude, and values so the interview doesn't get sidetracked by whether you like or dislike the person. This helps improve objectivity, and, remember, a 'bad attitude' is often the effect of poor [job fit] or environment and not the true cause of the person not working out. Attitude is rarely a stable characteristic. It usually becomes more positive or negative depending on job and culture fit."

Hiring is a tricky responsibility, but if you follow these tips, you will be amazed at how much time, stress, and money you and your company will save. **N**

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