

# Effective Hiring More Than Just Filling a Position

By **Anthony Casablanca**

**H**iring managers, and companies in general, often view the hiring process as satisfying the need to fill an open position. At Batesville Casket Company and Hillenbrand, Inc., we have taken the approach that a person's career development starts during the talent selection process.

The focus of that selection process is to create an on-boarding feedback and development binder, which will be provided to the new associate during his or her first 30 days on the job. This binder includes such elements as the job description, a draft performance appraisal document, feedback from our external assessment firm and our detailed interview summary that includes developmental suggestions. When hiring managers interview from this perspective, an entirely different experience is created for the candidate and the selection criteria fundamentally shift for the manager.

We start with a detailed job description. This includes the company's vision and guiding principles. An effective job description should also include the behaviors that are critical to success as well as the accountabilities and key metrics for which the person in that role is responsible. Having such a detailed job description ensures that hiring managers and the HR team actually know what they are looking for during the screening process.

## In-depth screening

After resumé's are reviewed and candidates identified, we conduct a thorough phone screen, which typically takes about an hour. During the first 10 minutes, we ask the candidate to provide an overview of his or her current role, including responsibilities, reporting structure and company culture. The next 30 minutes are focused on questions aimed at uncovering critical behaviors we are looking for in a successful candidate. A couple of examples might be:

- "When you are in a complex situation in which you have to do a lot of learning quickly in order to bring yourself up to speed, how do you go about getting the needed learning?"
- "Describe what metrics you would look for when coming into this role and why."

Finally, the last 20 minutes are dedicated to allowing the candidate to ask questions. The depth of these questions is

important to our assessment as they can reveal a great deal about the person.

Next, the successful candidate takes an online assessment tool that provides insight into 17 behavioral attributes regarding how the person works and 17 attributes on how he or she leads others. This assessment and the phone screen form the foundation for the decision of who we will bring in for in-depth interviews.



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## Detailed interview procedure

The candidate has been selected to come in for a face-to-face interview. Depending on the role, this is a one- to two-day process that includes a plant tour, customer business center tour, between two to six hours of interview time with both the hiring manager and the HR department lead, as well as several one-hour sessions with other members of the interview team (normally people who will interact with the person in this position).

During this phase, everyone has an assignment. The people conducting the tours are "soft selling" the company and helping us gauge how the candidate conducts himself or herself in a non-interview setting. You would be amazed at some of the feedback we get. The six-hour interview with the hiring manager and HR lead is conducted in a very structured way, although it is very conversational. We are looking for behavioral patterns, starting with high school and progressing through the candidate's most recent roles.

This culminates in a detailed interview report (generally between four to eight pages long). The report is written by the hiring manager, who is expected to provide a summary of the candidate's personal life and work history, and describes the candidate's behavioral patterns – both strengths and weaknesses. They are also required to make a call on the candidate's talent level, fit for the role and potential next roles. If we cannot see candidates moving to that next role, we will more often than not pass on hiring them.

How do we know this works? Our human resources team has developed metrics around our success rate of hiring "A" level talent. The HR team goes back to the hiring manager after six months and asks if the new hire is performing well, and if he or she is still considered an "A" talent. This is repeated at one year. Currently we get it right about 70% of the time.

### Searching for the 2010 HR Award Winner

**N**ominations for the 2010 Ogletree Deakins/HR Dimensions HR Professional of the Year award are being accepted until April 2. The award will be presented May 6 during the Indiana Chamber's 46th Annual Human Resources Conference & Expo. Complete information and the nomination form are available online at [www.indianachamber.com](http://www.indianachamber.com) (membership tab/awards programs) or by contacting Jesse Brothers at (317) 264-7549.

#### INFORMATION LINK

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