Our Expert Contributors

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Katie is a licensed CPA and PHR with a background in both accounting and talent acquisition. Additionally, Katie has been involved in several start-up ventures. Katie serves as a talent thought leader with CliftonLarsonAllen. Her practice focuses on strategic recruitment initiatives for construction and development companies throughout the United States including organizational assessments, hiring initiatives, and full-service search consulting. Katie is a frequent speaker with organizations throughout the United States on topics including talent acquisition strategy. You can also find her publications on LinkedIn Pulse. Her passions include helping businesses grow, yoga and wine. She has been quoted in a variety of industry publications on topics including hiring and developing talent.

Zina Sheya
Zina is the principle designer and owner of Zina Sheya Designs which offers full-service interior design and project management services for real estate investors. Her 20+ years in interior design and remodeling gives her broad insight into both consumer and builder trends. Zina’s designs have been featured on the Street of Dreams Luxury Home Tour Las Vegas and The Sedona Arizona Luxury Home Tour. She has also received multiple awards for her designs. Her projects span in size and style with largest being a 30,000 sq. ft. private villa.

Kelly Resendez
Kelly serves as the Executive Vice President of Sales and Business Development at Paramount Partners Group. In her 20+ years in the mortgage industry, she has helped many loan officers and managers achieve their personal and professional goals. She is the published author of “Foundation to Sustainable Success” and runs a national coaching program for Realtors and Loan Officers who want to take their business to the next level.

Is Your Hiring Effective?

The Scene
I am sitting across the table from the CEO of an $18M commercial construction company, assisting with a day of interviews to find the company’s newest Accountant. It’s 7:45 a.m. (those construction folks start the day before the sun is even up). The other two company owners arrive to join the interviews two minutes before the first candidate arrives, which means we did not have the time to meet and prepare for the interview beforehand. I welcome the candidate, and the questioning begins.

“Tell me a time about you…”

“Have you ever witnessed an accounting fraud, and how did you handle it?”

“What was your college GPA?”

“Tell me all about everything you have done in your career before this day” (while you do, I will gaze over and feebly pretend to be interested).

After the interview ended and the candidate exited the building, we gathered to talk about the interview. And the conversation looked something like this:

Me: What was the reason you asked about an accounting fraud? Have you ever had a fraud? You are the owners and also run the company, so you would essentially have stolen from yourselves. Has that ever happened?

CEOs: No.

Me: Do you think their past experience means they were good at their job? What if they performed poorly?

CEOs: Hadn’t thought of that.

Me: What is the idea behind the GPA requirement?

CEOs: It shows me how smart someone is.

Me: Is that the only measure of how smart someone is? What was your GPA?

CEOs: <Crickets. No comment.>

I then asked the company owners what qualities they were looking for in the person who would best fit this role. We discussed the link between the true needs of the business and valued-added interview questions. And we developed a set of questions that addressed those needs.

The Argument
There are many ways to evaluate if a candidate has the attitude, aptitude and ability to be successful in your organization. Open-ended interview questions that allow the candidate to answer in a thoughtful way that sparks conversation is the best way to approach this. Closed questions such as “what was your college GPA” do not open the door for conversation, and are isolated facts that leave a giant hole open for your judgments.

Further, past experience is not an indicator of future performance. Past performance, however, is.

The Bottom Line
Before you are sitting across the table from your next potential new employee reading off a list of interview questions from Google, ask yourself:

- What are the traits you are looking for in a candidate? What kind of questions will help you explore if the candidate has those traits?
- What are the important company initiatives you want to accomplish next year?
- What kinds of questions can you ask to explore indicators of past performance?

Simply sharing this information in an interview and asking the candidate what his thoughts are is a great way to open a dialogue and obtain value-added information to help make better business decisions.