

In This Issue: How To Make Bad Hiring Decisions Rule #20- The “I Really Like This Guy” Pothole

Test for Success
Tools, Tips, & Techniques for Avoiding
Hiring Mistakes and Developing People
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How To Make Bad Hiring Decisions Rule #20- The “I Really Like This Guy” Pothole

The “I Really Like This Guy” pothole happens when you are interviewing a job applicant and you feel yourself shifting from viewing the applicant objectively to really warming up to him. While this is natural, and no uncommon, whenever we meet a new person, it can be a problem in a job interview.

The potential problem lies in a simple, but often overlooked fact, which is that the interview is not a social situation. Let me say that again: **THE INTERVIEW IS NOT A SOCIAL SITUATION.**

When we meet someone in a social situation, we usually seek to establish rapport. We look for things we have in common- interests, past experiences, reactions to common occurrences (“Sure is hot/cold/rainy/etc. recently.”) We do this because it makes it easier to find people with whom we can have enjoyable conversation or relationship.

The interview differs from a social situation because it is NOT your goal to like the applicant, but to evaluate his suitability for the job in question. Liking the applicant is, or should be, a secondary consideration because if the “like” is strong enough, it can get in the way of making an objective evaluation of the applicant.

Now, having a good personal chemistry with an applicant can be a positive, job-relevant sign. For example, if the applicant is going to work with or report directly to the

interviewer, then good chemistry in the interview suggests good working relations if the person is hired.

Or, if the applicant is applying for a job that requires the ability to establish rapport readily and build relationships, as a job in sales or customer service, then the applicant's ability to do this in the interview is a good sign. If he can establish rapport well in the interview, then he should be able to do so with prospects and clients as well.

The downside to good chemistry with an applicant is that it can blind you to potential problems. For example, good chemistry with the applicant can cause you to minimize the importance of differences on key characteristics, or to disregard red flags that show up from reference checks, background checks, or even in the interview.

If you hit it off too well with the applicant, it can be tempting to cut short the selection process. The reasoning goes something like this: "The reason we go to all the trouble to gather background information, references, Performance Profile reports, and more, is to find out whether the applicant is "great," and I already know that. So, let's save everyone concerned time and effort, and just hire him!"

Worst-case outcome? You hire the guy and later learn about his criminal record, or his \$95,000 in credit card debt, or his temper problem with "demanding" clients.

Avoiding this pothole is relatively simple but, as with so many "simple" tasks, simple doesn't mean easy. Here's the trick: in your mind make a "box" and label it "My Personal Interview Impression" Keep this "box" filed away in the back of your mind as you fill in the other "boxes" of information about the applicant, such as the "Background Information" box, the "Performance Profile" box, and the "Reference Check" box.

When all these boxes are full, pull together information from all of them to create a full and well-rounded picture of the applicant's fit for the position in question.

Supplementing your interview impressions with impressions of other credible individuals and objective information from a variety of sources is the best way to avoid this particular hiring pothole.

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Remember, People ARE your most important asset!

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To Diagnose Problem Behavior, Test!

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