



Interviewing for the Right Match . . . It's More than a Job Description

BY KATHLEEN RICH-NEW

55%

A recent Gallup study calculated that 55% of U.S. workers are “not engaged” and 19% are “actively disengaged.” Not-engaged employees are essentially checked out. They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting time but not energy or passion into their work. Actively disengaged employees are not just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their dissatisfaction on your nickel.

If you conservatively estimate a 10% to 30% productivity loss, depending on the level of disengagement, what’s the bottom line impact of this statistic on your organization? The solution is to find the right employee match for you in the first place. Start by defining the “whole job” and interviewing for the “whole person.”

To define the “whole job,” create a concise, action-oriented word picture that captures what would excite you about an employee’s behavior with respect to the most important aspects of their job. It is not a job description of how to do a job, rather a vision of what success looks like. It provides an employee with a blueprint they can move toward, pulling in all their skills and talent.

Focus on what a successful employee should do, instead of a list of traits you want them to have. Study your top performers – how they behave, how they produce results, solve problems, develop opportunities and achieve goals. Learn how they apply their knowledge, skills and experience. You will want to interview for similar behavior patterns.

define the whole job

The whole job description is centered on the effects of success:

What important purpose does this job serve?

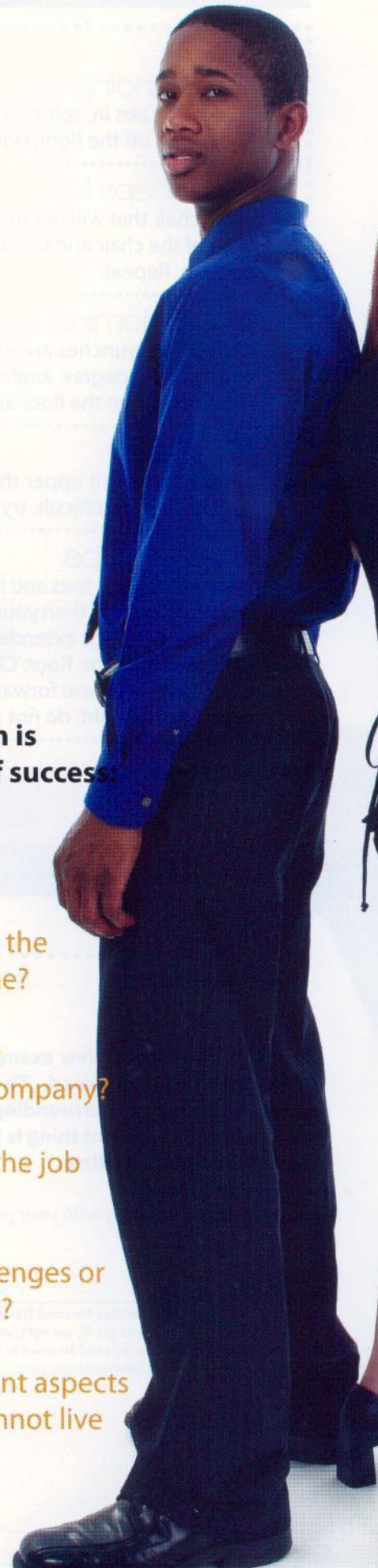
Who benefits and what are the outcomes of a job well done?

How does it connect to the mission or values of your company?

What have others done in the job that makes you proud?

What are some of the challenges or obstacles that make it hard?

What are the most important aspects of the job, the ones you cannot live without?



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questions to find the person

Hire for character first, then skills and experience. Look for patterns that match your most successful employees. What caused one employee to be fired in one job may be the key to success in another. Tell me what you are most proud of and why. (Where is their passion, their success?)

Tell me about the last few times you felt stressed. What happened? How did you handle it? (Was what created the stress something too complex or too routine?)

Tell me about the biggest mistake you made in your career. What would you do differently now? (Are they smart enough to learn from their mistakes?)

What job do you wish you would never have to do? (If it is detail oriented and that is your job, it will be a bad match.)

Tell me about an obstacle you had to deal with. What did you do? (Is this someone who can figure it out or do they wait for someone to tell them what to do?)

What would you do if ... (then state a real scenario of possible situations.)

Look for patterns of their preferred work and environment; lots of activity or established routine? Working alone or with others? Innovative or follows procedures?

You need to define the "whole" job and focus on the "whole" person. When you find the right match you will have passion and performance.

Next month: How to engage four generations of workers – veterans, Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. Remember you can't have happy customers with unhappy employees.

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