Grading candidates for comparison using a candidate scorecard

After you have acquired the information you need from your candidates with a Skills Survey, you need to take that information and use it to assess your candidates to determine which one is the best for the position.

In addition to the Skills Survey, you also have their resume and possibly some cover letters, and maybe some notes from phone calls.

Before you do any interviewing, you want to evaluate the candidates by using the information you have already gathered. Since interviews take considerable time and money, you want to cut down on this cost by focusing only on those that you determine to be the top talent you want for your company. A good motto to follow in this case would be to "Interview the best and wait on the rest."

THE SMART CANDIDATE SCORECARD PROVIDES A WAY TO ASSESS CANDIDATES BEFOREHAND

A tool that you can use to make the assessment is the SMART Candidate Scorecard.

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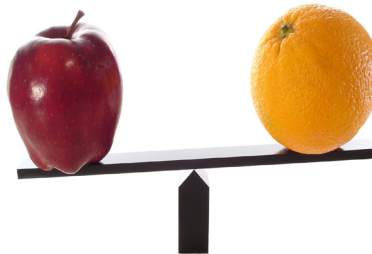
This scorecard will help you to separate the best candidates from the rest of the pack. It is a customized form that you fill out and use to score each candidate, and it enables you to do it objectively. When completed, each candidate is given an A, B, or C grade, enabling you to set aside the C's, and start your interviewing process with the A's and B's.

In our previous examples, we used a position description for a job at the Prestige Medical Center. Here is how the SMART Candidate Scorecard and evaluation might look for a fictitious candidate named Shelly Smith after she applied for the job.

THE SCORECARDS PROVIDE UPDATED RATINGS WITH EACH CANDIDATE INTERACTION

When you fill out the Scorecard, it is important that you do not use a pen. Use a pencil instead, or fill it out electronically. You want to fill out the Scorecard initially as you read the resume and other materials the candidate has provided. Then, you will want to reassess your evaluation of the candidate after face to face interviews, and again when you meet with other members of the hiring team to discuss your findings. This scorecard will continue to be used, and information will be added and modified throughout the entire interview process.

Filling out the scorecard for the first time will give you an estimated value of the candidate.

As the interviews progress, you will learn more about key areas of the candidates skills, and each interview will enable you to see more and make better, more educated evaluations. After you complete the interview process for all of the candidates, you can use the scorecards to compare all candidates on a level playing field. One neat way to use the scorecards for quick results is to use colored markers to highlight specific numbers on the cards. By choosing a color code for certain grades, you can quickly compare which candidates stand out. Then, you can also use the same color code to indicate what piece of information your grade was based on, such as the Skills Survey, the resume, etc. There is little doubt that using such a system will take some time on your part. However, when you balance the time it takes to fill out the Skills Survey and the Scorecard – and update them – with the busy work, the headaches, and opportunity losses that are involved with the putting out of small fires and micromanaging of low-level performers, you can begin to understand that the SMART system will enable you to save large dividends (time and money) over the long run.

MANY ORGANIZATIONS USE RATING SYSTEMS TO EVALUATE EMPLOYEES AND CANDIDATES

I have talked previously about how baseball teams keep detailed stats of how each of their players is performing. This lets the managers see at a glance just how each one is meeting expectations – and whether they are improving or getting worse. In accordance with the data over a period of time, team members will either be moved up or down in position and rank. The stats are also used to determine whether the individual player needs to be moved to a different position where they can be developed further, reconditioned, or even replaced altogether. The keeping of stats and basing the movement – pro-

gression or demotion – of each player is key to an industry that bases its success on the sales of tickets. This includes industries such as sports, music, various forms of entertainment – even TV newscasters fall into this category. Since this type of action concerning players and performers occurs all the time because money is involved, shouldn't companies also use similar policies to get rid of low performers that are continually costing them money?

There is little doubt that low performers definitely affect the team they are on. They decrease the organization's morale, lower overall performance, and may even affect stockholders' opinions. It is probably affecting the low performer too, and it is even possible that the best thing that could happen to them is that they be let go, see room for improvement, and then seek to improve themselves and become better performers, as a result, for someone else's team.