My Top 5 Prospective Hiring Deal-Breakers

Recent data suggests that, with unemployment rates down, it's getting harder and harder for companies to find the right candidates. According to the *2017 Survey of Small Business Hiring Challenges*:

- 93 percent of hiring professionals surveyed said that the availability of candidates in the labor market made it difficult for them to fill an open job.
- 91 percent found maintaining a pool of candidates challenging.
- 88 percent found it challenging to identify and filter candidates with the required skill set.

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Throughout my career, I've interviewed thousands of marketers – the good, the bad and the very bad – and hired about 100. As we get further into 2018, here are the top five deal-breakers I expect to influence how I personally find and filter job candidates this year.

1. Do I want to hang out with this candidate?

Obviously, when I'm reviewing resumes, I'm looking for strong experiences, proven successes and glowing references.

But, in the interview, my No. 1 deal-breaker is whether or not I want to hang out with these candidates after hours. If I don't, I don't care how strong their background is – they're

done.

There’s a business reason behind this, in addition to personal preferences. When I bring on a new employee, my interactions with this person are only going to get harder and more immersive over time. If I don’t want to hang out with him or her in the *interview,* that issue is not going to get better over time.

Simply put, I have to want to hang out with the candidate at 2 a.m. on a Friday night. That’s when the crazy ideas come out — the good and the bad. All it takes is one crazy idea to make this or any other company soar.

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2. Can this person work on a team?

I speak with plenty of people who are really good on their own, but when you put them together with a team, they don’t play nice. They don’t divvy up tasks. Tthey don’t give up control when they need to.

That’s a problem, because effective marketing is a team effort. If you’re a marketer and you’re working with a developer, you need to be able to have everything researched and keyed up so that the developer can scope out the project. A team effort requires working within a process and within a group of people. If a candidate can’t do that, he or she won’t get the job.

3. What kind of results has he or she achieved?

When candidates’ results aren’t impressive, they’re out; I don’t have time to motivate underperformers. Candidates I hire

need to have results that stand out in order for them to be successful.

4. How much of their results are their own, versus their company's?

Having results is important, but it isn't enough. I interview people all the time who trot out big, impressive numbers. My challenge is to figure out how much of those results they were personally responsible for. As an example, just because Facebook's net revenue doubled over 2016 doesn't mean an individual marketer can put "Increased revenue by 100 percent" on his or her resume. That's the result of work done by many people, over many years.

So, how do you tell? Use the "5 Whys" to dig deeper. What's that mean? It means that I ask candidates, "Tell me what you did," and I keep digging until they don't have an answer.

That's why when applicants say to me things like, "I helped grow leads by 5X," I want them to walk me through their process. I want to know where they started, what they did and who helped them with it.

This practice also tells me if they're good team players or not. Someone who knows how to work on teams will emphasize the roles other people played – maybe it was a developer who built the landing page, a copywriter who wrote the copy, etc. Candidates may suggest that they led the strategy, but if they take *full* credit, I know they're not the type who can work effectively on a team.

5. What does the candidate's network look like?

I don't need candidates to be the best-connected people in the

industry. But, if I ask, “What would other people say about you?” and they don’t have an answer, I know these people haven’t invested in their network. And if they haven’t done that, I know they aren’t that hungry.

At the end of the day, I only want to work with people who are so hungry for success that they’re out there pounding the pavement and hustling to make connections. Having no network means having no job with me.

What are your top deal-breakers?

Obviously, these are *my* deal-breakers. Yours might look very different, depending on what your company needs and what kind of people you like to work with.

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Just be sure you know what your deal-breakers are. If you aren’t clear on what you are — and aren’t — looking for, you’ll never be able to find the right people needed to grow your company.

What are your hiring dealbreakers? Leave me a note in the comments below with your thoughts:

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