



TOOLS

10 Tips TO QUICKLY

**Assess someone's
REAL personality in
an Interview**

How to assess someone's REAL personality in an interview



The single most important activity you perform as a leader or manager is hiring the right people.

Do this well (and then support, develop and hold them accountable properly), and everything else will become so much easier ... do it wrong and every day will be filled with problems and herding cats!

There are, of course, many important steps you need to take in order to attract and recruit positive and engaged people – and for brevity's sake, we suggest you follow the 4 key principles of 'Slow Selling' in order to create the type of organisation that the most positive, 'can do' people will be queueing up to work for...

(Indeed, in companies I work with, one of the key 'lead measures' we aim to substantially improve is ease of recruiting the best people ... do we have to go and find them, or are they constantly trying to get in touch with us?)

But here are 10 simple observations and processes to quickly assess the REAL character of the person you're talking with: be it at interview or any other situation!

1. **The way they treat service people** — The way someone treats people who work in retail, food service, etc can tell you a lot of what you need to know about them. In fact, the way they treat these people tells you the way they treat people in general. Why? Because when they're dealing with service staff, they're in the ultimate position of power. If they treat these people poorly, yet they treat people they consider at their level or above much better, it shows they may have low integrity, empathy, and even self-respect.
2. **How they act depending on who they're around** — A corollary of the above. There's a saying, "Treat the CEO the same way you would treat a janitor." Do this because all people are inherently valuable regardless of their profession or lot in life. Also, smart people know that you never know what type of person you're dealing with. One many occasions, I believe I have won customers because of the chat and relationship I've had with reception and secretarial people (and this relationship helps constantly throughout the work!) These differences in the way people behave and treat people are subtle, but if you catch them, they say a lot about the person you're dealing with.
3. **Manners** — When I see someone who has a basic level of politeness and says 'please' and 'thank you' often, I know I'm dealing with a socially intelligent person. You don't have to do much to overcome that bar, yet many people don't have basic

manners. If they don't have basic manners, what impact will they have in your workplace and with your customers?

4. **How well prepared they are** – After all, this meeting has massive stakes for them, personally. How much research have they done: into your organisation, into your customers' needs, into the real role of the job? Are they desperate for any job, or do they have real interest in what you do and some cool ideas for enhancing that: remember, you don't pay people to 'do a job', you pay people to 'deliver value': the best way to deliver value is to be well prepared (at everything). Preparation is a habit that some people cultivate and some don't: which type of person would you rather have working with you?
5. **How they respond to pressure** — By pressure I mean: when you ask them an awkward question (to which there can never be a 'right' answer), how do they respond to it. The way they respond is much more valuable than what they actually say. If they're relaxed and positive, if they can easily say something like 'I have no idea how to answer that properly, but here are some thoughts', if they respond with something like 'before I try and answer that, could I ask something to clarify', you know they have an inner confidence, and will keep calm under pressure. How valuable will this be every day at work!
6. **How they respond to the good fortune of others** — In a tennis match, you can tell a LOT about the personality of the player from how they accept defeat, and how positive and gracious they are to the winner. Do you want someone in your team who only cares about their own glory, or will work together selflessly with others for the glory of the team? Ask them about how they've dealt with failures in the past and who they look up to...
7. **How they frame their responsibilities and challenges** — When you hear people talk, especially about challenges and obstacles, you'll get a sense of whether or not they view life through a lens of victimhood or agency. The goal isn't to become some perfect human being who never has any problems or situations worth complaining about, but rather how you perceive and talk about those challenges in your life. Language is powerful. Do they use the phrase 'have to' or 'get to', do they talk about things 'making them feel' some way or do they use phrases like 'I felt that way, so this is what I did about it'. You want 'go getters' ... not victims.
8. **How they respond to the phrase "How are you?"** — Many people have the default response of 'same old same old' or 'good.' You want to start to look for and spend more time with people who always seem to be up to something. When you ask them what they've been up to they have a multiple sentence answer — They have a side project going, cool hobbies, recent events or travels they've enjoyed, etc. Of course, this doesn't apply every single time you talk to someone. Sometimes people are short just because they're short that day. But look for the general pattern. The more people you have around you who light up when you ask that question, the better.

9. **How much time they spend talking about other people** — I pay attention to the ratio between how much someone talks about what's going on in their life, or the life of the person they're talking to, versus how much they talk about people who aren't present. The most obvious one is gossip — if they talk about other people to you when they're not around, what are they saying about you when you're not around? Other forms are more subtle though. For example, they may spend time talking about the accomplishments of other people like celebrities, TV shows and sports teams. You can enjoy these things, but some people tend to create entire personalities based on what other people do and it's easy to tell when you spend enough time talking to them. Do you want someone who works on the her and now or someone who gossips or bases their success on something that's happening outside of their circle of influence?
10. **How many open questions they ask of you.** Open questions are the key tool to 'peeling the onion' and finding out the truth from a person or situation. Some people use them naturally and brilliantly (and some people have learned to use them well): is this person aware of the power of open questions and are they using them well: after all, this meeting has much more at stake for them personally than for you!

All of these rules are subtle. And, the rules aren't one hundred percent applicable all of the time — not even close. The point is to be cognizant of them and look for patterns in the people — both people you interact with routinely and in interviews.

The key is to take the focus off of yourself and observe them under the layer of conversation and information, to look for the 'real' person inside from the key body language and types of words phrases and intonation they use. You'll gain a wealth of information and you can use these tips to ensure you get the best and most engaged people working with you ... and that will make all the difference!

After all: it's MUCH easier to teach people new skills than to try and change beliefs, mindsets and attitudes!

And one more thing:

- **The way they walk** — Do they stand up straight or do they slouch their shoulders? Do they walk with a bit of pep in their step or are do they drag their feet? How fast do they walk? Do they seem lazy, in a rush, or moving at a pace with intention and patience at the same time? How will their 'default' moving style impact in their work over the long term?