

TALENT TERRITORY

# How to Hire for Potential

Employing a wild-card job candidate can elevate a veterinary practice if done correctly.

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**E**mployee recruitment and hiring aren't easy, even under the best circumstances. Too many factors and variables are involved in choosing team members, and the degree of difficulty increases when qualified candidates are scarce and the talent market is tight. That is why hiring for potential can give a veterinary practice an edge over competing clinics. However, before I get too deep, let me explain employee potential.

## Identifying Potential

Potential reflects a person's capacity for growth, development and achievement. At its core, it encompasses:

- **Innate abilities:** They are the foundational skills and qualities that individuals possess from birth, such as cognitive powers, creativity, problem-solving skills and emotional intelligence. While some people naturally excel in certain areas, others develop the ability through learning, practice and experience.
- **Personality traits:** They play a significant role in determining an individual's potential for success. Traits such as resilience, curiosity, openness to feedback and a growth mindset indicate a capacity to thrive and overcome challenges. Candidates who exhibit those qualities are more likely to adapt to new



situations, learn from their experiences and continuously improve.

- **Motivation and drive:** Highly motivated individuals with a strong desire to succeed are likelier to invest time and effort into their personal and professional development. A sense of purpose drives

them, and they are willing to take on new challenges and responsibilities to achieve their goals. Motivation fuels continuous learning, growth and innovation. It's a key determinant of future success.

## Evaluating Potential

Gauging a job candidate's promise during the hiring process requires considering a range of factors, from past achievements to personality traits to cultural fit. By leveraging a combination of assessment methods and evaluation criteria, employers can identify candidates with the highest potential for success. For example:

### PERFORMANCE PREDICTORS

Past performance is often a strong indicator of potential. Employers should look at a person's achievements, demonstrated leadership abilities, adaptability to change, and track record of continuous learning and development. Candidates who consistently do well in previous roles are more likely to succeed in a new environment and with additional responsibilities.

### CULTURAL FIT

This attribute is essential in assessing a candidate's potential for success within a practice. Individuals who align with the business's mission, vision and values are more likely to thrive and contribute to the workplace environment. Employers should evaluate a candidate's cultural fit during the interview process and assess the person's compatibility with the clinic's culture and values.

### LEARNING AGILITY

The ability to quickly acquire skills and knowledge is critical in determining an individual's growth potential. Employers should look for evidence of continuous learning and development in the person's career trajectory, indicating a capacity to adapt and excel in

## CHAMPS

The National Football League implemented a wild-card playoff system in 1970. Seven wild-card teams have gone on to win the Super Bowl, the last of which was Tampa Bay in 2021.

new environments. Candidates willing to learn, grow and take on new challenges are more likely to succeed in dynamic, rapidly changing industries.

### FEEDBACK

References provide valuable insights into a candidate's past performance, strengths, areas for development and growth potential. Employers should contact candidate-provided references to understand the person's potential comprehensively. Supervisors, colleagues and mentors can shed light on a person's abilities, work ethic and interpersonal skills.

### 4 Key Principles

Businesses must adhere to four principles to hire for potential effectively. By focusing on the tenets below, practice leaders can identify a candidate who meets their current needs and has the capacity to thrive and grow.

#### 1 Core Competencies

Rather than focusing on experience and qualifications, management must define the core competencies required to succeed in a role. They might vary depending on the nature of the job but often include problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptability, communication and leadership potential.

#### 2 Look Beyond the Resume

Resumes provide valuable information about a candidate's experiences, skills and qualifications but might not fully capture the person's potential for success. Employers should look beyond the resume to assess the candidate's achievements, extracurricular activities, volunteer work and ongoing learning initiatives. These additional data points provide insight into someone's motivations, interests and growth potential.

#### 3 Behavioral Interviewing

Unlike traditional sit-downs focusing on hypothetical scenarios and

theoretical questions, behavioral interviews require a candidate to provide specific examples of past behavior and experiences. Employers can learn about a candidate's potential for growth and success by asking probing questions that elicit responses showcasing problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills and the capacity to handle challenges.

#### 4 Assessment Tools

Incorporating assessment tools into the hiring process can provide additional insight into a candidate's potential. Psychometric assessments, cognitive ability tests and personality evaluations offer valuable data on someone's innate abilities, temperament and motivations. These tools help employers make informed hiring decisions by providing objective data points that complement traditional evaluation methods.

I call hiring for potential the wild card for successful talent acquisition. In professional sports, wild-card playoff teams might not be revered during the regular season, but they often succeed in ways observers could not have imagined.

When it comes to recruiting and hiring in the current job market, practice leaders need every arrow in their recruiting quiver and every card up their hiring sleeve. **TVB**



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