



THE 6 KEYS TO HIRING SERVICE-MINDED EMPLOYEES

The following information is meant for reference purposes only. Check with your Human Resources department, state and Federal guidelines and laws regarding hiring practices.

If you have ever hired someone, you understand the challenge of employing service-minded employees. Some prospects interview well and turn out to be difficult employees, other new recruits can seem unimpressive and turn out to be rock stars.

THE FOLLOWING 6 TIPS WILL HELP YOU DISCOVER DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH AS WELL AS KEEP YOU FROM ONBOARDING PEOPLE THAT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE GOALS.

1. ASK THE WRONG QUESTIONS.

You read that right. While most written and oral portions of interviews create opportunities for candidates to answer questions like, “share how you have solved a customer service problem before”, consider getting a more honest answer by asking questions like,

- “What’s the worst experience you’ve ever had with a customer?”
- “What is one thing that customers do that can test your patience?”
- “As a customer, who gives you consistently exceptional service and what are the key things they do for you/don’t do?”

2. THE MAGIC PILL.

Contrary to popular belief, there is a magic pill. The Magic pill is called, “training.” More specifically, consistent and strategic customer service training. Here are a few questions to help you determine if you’re training is on-point or in need of more help.

- Do we have a clear customer training plan?
- Do our employees know the top three customer service/experience goals?
- Have we identified the top issues with our customer service/experience in each department and have a clear strategy to address the deficiencies?

3. VOLUNTEER? YES, PLEASE.

When you are looking through applicants, it would be wise to notice when a candidate mentions that they volunteer. Volunteering means they are giving up their personal time to invest in someone or something else. Whether it’s a church, animal shelter, Veteran’s group, or soup kitchen, volunteering requires empathy and commitment.

4. CRACK THE CHARACTER CODE.

Most customer service disciplines can be taught but finding employees with strong moral character can solve many of your customer service issues. Not all issues, but many. Determining someone's character through a few interviews and reference follow-ups is not easy (okay, it's impossible). So here are a few ways to help crack the character code and find a customer-minded employee in a sea of choices.

- "What is the greatest position of responsibility to you have held?"
- "Define what it means to be a customer-centric employee."
- "When was it difficult to be completely honest with a co-worker, supervisor or customer?"

5. HEADHUNTING.

There are many great websites and tools to hire the right employees, but there is nothing like finding an employee when you are on the receiving end of great customer service. You can find great customer-minded employees right in front of you.

- Look for great customer service where you eat, shop, play, workout and other places you interact. Can you think of some great service you have received this week?

6. THE EXTROVERT-INTROVERT TRAP.

There are multiple considerations when it comes to personalities and hiring; here are two. First, decision makers can sometimes hire personalities just like them rather than the right personality for the position. Second, although it is important to note that engagement and connection with customers is vital, it is easy to mistake an outgoing personality for a customer-centric employee. Many businesses have hired a "great" personality only to regret it later. Here are a few tips:

- Create a personality avatar that describes the ideal candidate
- Regardless of personality you should find a way to identify empathy in potential employees
- Be sure your current leadership that will be making the final hiring decisions are comprised of introverts, extroverts and ambiverts