

# Improving Results

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*By Facing Our Challenges, We Discover Our Potential*

**STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS 510-432-7596**

## *The Interview Process is a Two-Way Street*

While marketing your company during a recession is just as important as doing so during good economic times, so is taking the correct approach to the interview process.

At no time is the interview process a one-way street. In other words, at no time should a candidate's time be considered less valuable than yours, especially if the candidates you seek are the best in the industry. Remember, the candidate is interviewing the company at the same time that company officials are interviewing the candidate.



### *Making a connection*

A common mistake in a down economy is to assume that there's urgency on the part of the candidate, that they'll be grateful for whatever time you can give them. That might be true of those candidates who are unemployed. However, the true superstars—the candidates you're **really** seeking—are more than likely gainfully employed at the moment, no doubt because of the very skills that you covet.

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## **FREE COMPUTER ASSESSMENT FOR SALES PEOPLE**

**Limited Time Only!**

Would you like to know the strengths and weaknesses of a sales person on your staff or someone you are considering for hire? Thousands of people have taken the assessments being offered by Strategic Solutions. The results allow you to objectively evaluate the skills of the individual. Is the person the right fit? Do they possess the skills necessary to do the job? What skills need to be improved to help them become successful?

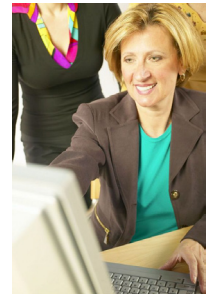
The people are compared to national benchmarks which provides excellent accuracy in the results.

This is a limited offer! Contact Hank Sullivan at 510-432-7596 to learn how you can get a free assessment.

## *Providing Opportunities for Employee Engagement*

Employees who have a passion for what they do are practically self-engaging. In other words, they seek out reasons to stay engaged in their job and with the company. But what about those employees who aren't quite as passionate, for whatever reason? The fact of the matter is that you can lead them down the road to engagement just by providing *opportunities* for them to do so.

Many times, employees don't need a reason to become engaged. What they really need is the chance to become engaged. Below are five ways in which you can provide opportunities to do just that.



- **Recognize the accomplishments of employees and celebrate them** – Both parts of this initiative are important. By both recognizing *and* celebrating, you not only increase engagement and retention, you also build a greater sense of camaraderie among the members of your team.
- **Celebrate traditions within the organization** – This is another way in which to increase both engagement and camaraderie. This could be an annual awards dinner, or it might be something as simple as a summer picnic or Christmas party.
- **Initiate a mentoring program** – Once again, you're accomplishing two goals at the same time. With this initiative, you're facilitating a knowledge transfer between employees, in addition to bolstering engagement and retention.
- **Create a cross-training program** – Most employees want to sharpen their skill set and increase their abilities.

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# One Minute Ideas

## QUALITY BASHING

Here are three keys to effective quality management programs:

- 1) **Customize the program to your specific situation.** Descriptions of the successes of others don't cover the small key changes which often make a difference in culture, morale, and procedures. Don't clone somebody else's program.
- 2) **Tie your program to your vision.** Your organization must have a strategic objective and the organization's strategies must be accepted by the employees who have to implement the quality vision.
- 3) **Start carefully.** Initial projects should be simple and easy to achieve. This builds success momentum for a program. If you start in an unfocused way with unmanageable projects, people will become frustrated and disillusioned.

Source: Ralph Rosati, Joiner Associates, Madison, WI



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They also want to know that they have room for advancement within the company. This will accomplish both objectives.

- **Involve employees in decisions (whenever possible)** – Of course, this might not be feasible in all situations. However, by involving them in the decision-making process, they'll feel more a part of the company.

Evaluate your company and the culture that it offers. Are you providing opportunities like the ones listed above? Are there areas in which you should improve or make a more concerted effort? By simply providing opportunities for your employees to become engaged, you might be surprised by how readily and easily they do so—with no further prompting from you.

If you have any questions about this article, or about how we can help you with your current performance, leadership, and/or hiring needs, please email us at [hsullivan@stratsolutions.net](mailto:hsullivan@stratsolutions.net).

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Remember that in times such as these, candidates (including superstars) assume a “hunker down” mentality. That is, they become more adverse to risk, and this mentality most certainly applies to their employment situation and their career. That's why attention to the interview process is crucial to securing the talent of the very best employees.

When you interview a superstar candidate, you should strive to do more than just accurately assess their skill set and their potential for fitting into the company culture. You should also strive to **make a connection** with the candidate and build a sort of camaraderie or rapport with them. The reason? The candidate needs a *very good reason* to make the jump to a new company.

### Giving them a good reason

As mentioned above, all candidates – including superstars – are avoiding risk at the moment. There's a mental block that exists, no matter how good the opportunity is or might seem to them. Candidates are looking for reasons **not** to make a move. That's why it's critical for companies seeking to stock their teams with the best talent available to give that talent a **good reason** for doing so.

Analyze your interview process. Are you marketing yourself to each person interviewed? Are you giving tours of your facility to those candidates who stand out from the rest? What reasons are you giving to superstar candidates to convince them to take advantage of your opportunity?

Your answers to these questions might just be the deciding factor in how prepared you are to take advantage of the good times that ultimately lie beyond today's challenging economic environment.

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*"Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots."*

– Frank A. Clark

