

Do you know how to spot a good manager?



Do you know how to spot a good manager? Good managers often share several traits in common. As you have heard said many times, the most talented workers are not always the best manager, as a result it can be difficult to determine the balance between selecting a skilled and qualified performer over the candidate who would make a good manager.

There are many different types of managers, some who focus on process, product, operations, procedures and others who focus more on teams, motivation, mentoring, training and relationship building. To find a manager who can excel in all things can be a challenge. The more you understand what you need in a role the more able you are to select the right person for the right opportunity.

Managers who will be managing people need to balance getting the job done and ensuring people are well considered. If you are seeking a manager who can work well as a manager of people there are some common characteristics you may want to screen for. If you can spot these traits in a job candidate or find them in an employee you might find your next great manager.

6 Traits To Look For When Hiring A Manager of People

1) They like people and people like them

A good manager cannot be a good manager if he/she is unable to motivate people to get the job done on an ongoing and consistent basis. Managers who generally like people are better able to give people the benefit of the doubt while still holding them accountable. This encourages those who work for them to be more open to feedback and change because they can feel their manager is trying to elevate them, not cut them down

This does not mean a manager is weak or a push over. You do not want a manager who likes people at the cost of getting the job done. However, by coming from a place of liking people generally a good manager starts each day and every conversation by valuing the person with whom he/she is working, which in turn

can motivate others to want to meet the expectations of their manager.

How Do You Spot It?

Look for people who are involved in people connected activities in their workplaces or in their communities. People who volunteer (not just with children or youth, but with adults), join committees, have acted as mentors or are part of organizations including professional organizations may be more inclined to enjoy working with people.

You can also ask candidates about their views on subordinates generally, ask them questions to assess if they believe most people are hard workers, skilled, and willing to put forth their best efforts.

2) They Have a High Tolerance for Annoyance

The ability to tolerate other people's exaggerations and excuses can be a useful trait in a good manager. While listening to questionable information or conflicts between people a good manager is able to cut through the noise and focus on the issues at hand and not the pettiness of people. This is what allows them to remain objective when emotions and frustrations are involved. They do not focus on their annoyance but instead on working with people to address the issues. These people are often good at 'holding their tongue' while gathering the information.

How Do You Spot It?

Look for people who have a history of managing their emotional reactions, avoid personal clashes and remain objective during disagreements. They are often able to call out an inaccuracy or lie without calling the person a liar. Look for a candidate who thinks before speaking and does not respond with sarcasm when faced with a challenging person or situation.

Ask candidates how they would address an employee who was not 100% accurate in providing information or how they would deal with a co-worker who has an annoying habit such as showing up late or handing in work late, talking too much and so on. See if the candidate focuses on his/her own reaction and annoyance or on how he/she would solve the problem and move forward.

3) They are Quick to Engage

Everyone has a bad day now and then but the ability to quickly engage or re-engage at work and help others engage is important in your manager.

How Do You Spot It?

Look for someone who is willing to step in when there is a shortfall or challenge in the workplace, especially to complete tasks that may not be glamorous or high profile.

Ask candidates questions about what tasks they would be willing to take on and see how they respond if they were asked about who they would assign to complete junior or lower profile tasks when in a pinch. A good manager has to delegate but often understands the need to lead by example.

4) They Manage Conflict Well

Good managers do not need to shy away from conflict instead they are able to focus on learning from and moving through the conflict. Being good at addressing conflict as a manager isn't about winning arguments. It's about being able to accept that people will not always agree with you or your actions and finding a way to work well with another person when this happens.

How Do You Spot It?

A quick wit and sarcastic manner can be entertaining and may be traits you spot among highly skilled candidates, but within the workplaces you do not want to see these traits among your managers or people. If a candidate is able to keep sarcasm and wit outside the workplace he/she may make a good manager but if you see sarcasm in a candidate you may find the candidate does not always manage conflict effectively.

Ask candidates questions that include conflict scenarios and focus on how they approach the resolution process not on how they resolved the conflict. Include questions that allow you to understand how the candidate responds when he/she is on the losing side of a decision.

5) They Give Good Feedback and Like Giving Feedback

A good manager can also offer and accept constructive criticism at work. The ability to offer useful, constructive criticism that makes a person feel valued not criticized is an important trait of a good manager.

A good manager also looks for and finds time to offer feedback on an ongoing and regular basis such that it is part of their working relationships with their co-workers and employees. Understanding that feedback should be presented as a conversation not a directive the majority of the time is a trait of a good manager.

How Do You Spot It?

Look for a candidate who takes opportunities to frequently learn themselves, whether through formal or informal learning, as a person who constantly is learning recognizes the need to evaluate their own abilities. This can include learning both work related skills and a range of other skills including self-management skills, leadership, emotional intelligence and so on.

Ask the candidate about their approach to providing feedback, where, when and how. Look for that candidate who talks about organic opportunities for feedback and who talks about offering feedback along with offering tangible support and ideas to those who are receiving the feedback.

6) Good Managers Share

A good manager of people shares information, credit and resources not only within their team but across the organization. A good manager also demonstrates trust and shares responsibilities with others. A manager who can communicate to others that he/she trusts them to be responsible in carrying out their responsibilities can build a more self-reliant and engaged team.

How Do You Spot It?

In the interview process interviews want candidates to talk about their achievements and that is fair, but assess how often a candidate talks about working in collaboration and listening to others. Check out their LinkedIn profile and see how often they were involved in projects and how many of their colleagues have endorsed them for skills. LinkedIn is not perfect but it can provide some interesting information.

If a candidate was invited to join other teams, has participated in projects and committees this can be an example of a person who likes to get involved and share.

Also ask the candidate questions about responsibility and delegating responsibility to others. Listen for how often they talk about sharing ideas, resources and information as a means to help the organization or others in their team succeed.

It is not always easy spotting a great manager, but if you consider the key traits beyond qualifications, skills and experience and look at the ability to lead, motivate, mentor and share with others you might find the candidate you need to lead your team or organization.