

SKIP LEVEL

strategic leadership for leaders ready to think two levels up

EPISODE 140 · WORKSHEET

EPISODE 140

Hire the Mindset, Not the Resume

Colin, a director hiring a team lead, has two finalists — the perfect resume and the two-year gap. The resume won last time, and the hire lasted eight months. This episode shows you what to test instead of the history: the structured interview, the attitude you can name and score, and the forward-looking questions that reveal mindset and values — then the first ninety days, which are the only test that cannot be fooled.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

1. The Resume Won Last Time

Colin is a director hiring a team lead, and he has two finalists. One has the perfect resume — no gaps, every preferred skill, five years in the exact role. The other has a two-year gap and is missing one preferred skill. Colin's first instinct is obvious. Hire the perfect resume. It won the last time. The last time Colin hired the perfect resume, the hire lasted eight months. She could not take hard feedback, she would not learn the new system, and every miss was someone else's fault. The resume was perfect. The thinking was not.

2. Experience Barely Predicts

One study pulled together eighty-one samples and found that years of experience before the hire predicted job performance at point zero six — and predicted whether people stayed at zero. Basically nothing. The credentials are no better. A Harvard Business School analysis of twenty-six million job postings found that sixty-seven in a hundred postings for production supervisors demanded a bachelor's degree, while only sixteen in a hundred people already doing that job held one. And when companies dropped the degree requirement, fewer than one in seven hundred hires changed. The filter was never in the posting — it was in the hiring manager's head.

3. The Structured Interview

Two researchers, Frank Schmidt and John Hunter, pulled together eighty-five years of hiring research. The method that predicted performance best was the structured interview — the same questions for every candidate, scored against the same rubric. Better than an unstructured chat. Better than years of experience. Better than almost everything except a work sample. Structure is the method. But the questions are the content — and the content is where mindset and values get tested.

4. Hire for Attitude

Herb Kelleher did exactly that at Southwest. He said, "You don't hire for skills, you hire for attitude. You can always teach skills." And he could name the attitude — humour, warmth, people who like people. That is the thinking to borrow. Decide what you are hiring for before you interview, in words you could actually score. A leader who cannot name the attitude is just hiring people they like.

Joe Dutkiewicz

CRAYON LEADERSHIP

crayonleadership.com



SKIP LEVEL

strategic leadership for leaders ready to think two levels up

EPISODE 140 · WORKSHEET

5. The Questions That Test Mindset

A growth-mindset test can be fooled. Anyone who knows the expected answers just gives them. The right questions, asked one-to-one, give you a better read. Have you ever had to push for an idea your boss or team wasn't sure about? Describe a time you made a critical decision with incomplete information. Imagine you have three high-priority deadlines, but you can only meet one. Then listen for specifics, not slogans. And bring in an outsider — Amazon's Bar Raiser comes from outside the hiring team and can veto the hire. Netflix puts it this way: a value is real if you would fire someone for breaking it.

The picture: Colin hires the perfect resume — no gaps, every preferred skill — and eight months later the hire is gone. She could not take hard feedback, would not learn the new system, and every miss was someone else's fault. The resume was perfect. The thinking was not. The other finalist, the one with the gap, is the one he hires this time.

ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- [ ] **Step one — name the mindset and the values before you interview.** In plain words, on paper. What does the attitude look like here. What would you fire someone for breaking. If you cannot name it, you cannot score it — and you will hire the person you liked best.

The mindset:

The values:

- [ ] **Step two — ask the same questions.** The same behavioral or strategic questions for every candidate, scored against the same rubric. The push question, the critical decision, the three deadlines — same questions, same scoring, every candidate. That is what stops the interview drifting back to the gap.

Question one:

Question two:

Question three:

Joe Dutkiewicz

CRAYON LEADERSHIP

crayonleadership.com



SKIP LEVEL

strategic leadership for leaders ready to think two levels up

EPISODE 140 · WORKSHEET

☐ **Step three — score the values, and bring in an outsider's read.** Give someone outside your team the values questions and let them score them. Someone with no stake in filling the seat. And remember the test — a value is real if you would fire someone for breaking it.

My outsider:

☐ **Step four — watch the first ninety days.** The hire is a hypothesis until the work proves it. Watch what they do when they do not know. Watch how they take feedback that stings. Watch whether they learn in public or hide the miss. That is the only test that cannot be fooled — because it is not a test. It is the work.

What I will watch for:

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus

Joe Dutkiewicz

CRAYON LEADERSHIP

crayonleadership.com