

Hiring Contract and Permanent Technical Employees with an emphasis on Culture Fit.

By Adam Kooperman, Principal Staffing Consultant at CultureFit Technology Staffing

When hiring a new technology resource do you consider Culture Fit indicators or just focus on matching the technical skills of the candidate to the environment?

This is a burning question among recruiters and staffing consultants at CultureFit Technology Staffing, a Chicago based Technical Staffing firm focused on contract and permanent employment in the IT field.

My staff and I have polled clients and candidates alike to see if cultural attributes of Company's environments or Candidate's past employer environmental factors are really explored during the interview process.

The answer is always "kind of" or "maybe" or "we just discussed my technical skills".

The reason these answers are so common is the sense of urgency and quick decisions typically made by hiring managers in a typically IT department. The need for technical resources seems to be so reactionary to a burning need or pain that some of the most important questions are ignored during the interview process.

Here's a question, if you are hiring for a small technology firm that develops solutions with J2EE, Linux, and Web Sphere, and a candidate has previous experience with 2 out of 3 skills but worked at another startup or SMB in the technology space, wouldn't be a better fit than an individual with experience in all the skill sets but past employment was only in Enterprise Environments consisting of 100's IT employees. We would suggest **YES**, but the answer from most hiring managers or HR managers is **NO**. The reason given is that most companies don't have time to wait for someone to ramp up on a missing skill from the candidates' technical summary. The real question should be is it worth having an employee that will succeed over the next 5 years or just in the initial project that they are hired on to complete. **Is it short sightedness or laziness or a broken hiring process?**

Here are some factors to consider when hiring your next technology candidate:

Company Size:

- Small business (1-20 employees)
- Medium Sized (21-100 employees)
- Large (100-300 employees)
- Large Corporation (300+)

Project Size/Type:

- Short Term (<90 days)
- Project Term (3months - 1year)
- Long Term (potential for permanent placement)

CultureFit Categories:

- Team Environment Certified
- Independent Certified

- Self-starter and motivator (figures things out on his own)
- Learns from Constructive
- Conversation Contributor (level 1-5)
- Needs 8-5pm job due to homelife
- Flexible/Accessible at all times

Culture Defined:

- Organizational values
 - Leadership – how do they interact with employees?
 - How do you communicate with employees? (face to face-large meetings vs. small groups/individually; email; newsletters; other)
 - How do you communicate interact with YOUR customers? (internal and external)
- How do you motivate your employees?
- How do you reward your employees?
- Describe your most successful employees/leaders in current environment? What characteristics do they possess? (OR What does it take for someone to be successful in your organization?)
- What kind of person would NOT succeed in your organization?
- What does YOUR organization have that others do not?
- Explain “day in the life” of job to be filled.
- How would you describe your organization to others?
- What type of culture does your organization actually have?
- What would you like to change about your organization?
- Why have YOU stayed with the company?
- Does your company have a stated set of cultural values?
- Do you need the candidate to go through a “training period” or be up and running on day 1?

Other Questions:

- What do you see as the cost of hiring the wrong person?
- Why have previous employees left your company? (exit interview?)
- What kind of sponsorships or philanthropic activities does the company participate in?
- What is your typical hiring process?
- Any specific questions that you want answered by the candidate?
 - What assessments do you administer when you hire?

** Culture Fit Questionare by Judi Huels and Adam Kooperman at CultureFit Technology Staffing.*