



The Exact Expertise to
Ignite and Sustain Performance™

LSA Global | White Paper



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Recruiting: Donald Trump and the Ultimate Job Interview

Donald Trump's new reality show, *The Apprentice*, is the surprise hit of the season. In case you're not among the 18 million who tune in each week, the basic premise is simple: two opposing teams compete on a series of entrepreneurial tasks that range from hawking lemonade and bottled water to renovating and renting apartments.

Trump likes to refer to his show as the "ultimate interview." That's because the winner is rewarded with a lucrative job with The Donald himself. Meanwhile, in his ersatz corporate boardroom, Trump eliminates one losing team member each week with the now-iconic words, "You're fired!"

Trump claims to have seven rules of business success, which are played out in one way or another each week on the show. Candidates who don't "follow the rules" generally do badly, which isn't surprising, because the rules make good common sense. But what we've noticed is that our interviewing method is just as successful at revealing problems with prospective job candidates as Trump's show is.

First, let's look at his rules.

Rule number 1: To begin with, Trump says you have to be "born with enough brainpower." Presumably he means intellectual capacity—something hard to measure in an interview. Short of using standardized IQ tests, you can at least get a sense of how a candidate thinks by using specific case studies or problem situation questions. The answers can reveal whether a candidate is analytical, decisive, and innovative or has good judgment.

Rule number 2: "Love what you do." When one of the show's contestants announces that he would "sell widgets by the side of the road with [Trump]", you just know he means it. But it's harder to judge sincerity in an interview. To assess the amount of passion and motivation a candidate has, avoid all the obvious questions such as "Why do you want this job?" Instead, consider asking, "If you joined us, what would it take to pull you out of here a year from now?" If the answer is more money or a bigger title, you know that love of the job isn't a priority.

Rule number 3: "Never give up." It's easy to see persistence—or the lack thereof—on *Apprentice*. One contestant, for instance, takes a nap at a critical juncture. Because no candidate is likely to be so obliging during an interview, look for ways a candidate has demonstrated persistence and commitment over a long period of time. And learn how their personal convictions help sustain that commitment.

Rule number 4: Self-confidence is number four on Trump's list. One thing you can say for the contestants on Trump's show: they've got moxie. You can assess self-confidence during an interview by eliciting examples of past behavior in challenging situations. This is more reliable than a candidate's bold demeanor, which may last only as long as the interview does.

Rule number 5: In true Roman gladiator fashion, Trump advocates pitting people against each other and then watching what happens. You can't do this in an interview, but you can draw out examples of past behavior that reveal interactions with others. These should reveal qualities such as ambition, competitiveness, empathy and collaboration. But be cautious about any seen in the extreme—they could become limitations.

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Rule number 6: “Stay cool under fire.” Few things are more important in today’s lean organizations and pressure-cooker work situations. But don’t use “stress interviews” to measure this quality—they don’t work simply because you can’t replicate real-world stress in an interview. Instead, ask candidates to describe how they handled the most intensely stressful situation they’ve ever encountered.

Rule number 7: “You must work well with others and be loyal to your team.” For Trump, disloyalty is “the worst of all traits.” To weed out potential turncoats, avoid those who knock others, and look instead for past patterns of behavior that show a candidate is collaborative and a good team player.

The above questions request specific examples of past behavior. This is an important part of the process, yet it’s not enough for interviewers to simply string together a series of such questions. The problem with this method is that candidates tend to remember personal experiences and events in their lives rather than the specific competencies interviewers are interested in. That’s why candidates may come up blank when asked for examples of competencies. Or, because the question telegraphs the expected answer, they may simply fabricate a response.

We actually recommend a more engaging and revealing method of interviewing that parallels the Apprentice, but at much less cost.

The Film-Clip Interview

We all know the selection process would be a lot easier if interviewers could follow candidates around with a camera, catching their every business-related move on tape. Yet it’s possible to do something similar in a real-world interview, without invading anyone’s privacy. In fact, you can conduct an interview so that you actually compile a series of “film clips” spanning years of a candidate’s professional life.

To reveal the most about the candidate, select several broad topics or time periods that you want to cover in detail during the interview. Possible topics include a candidate’s educational background, a prior job, and current position. When multiple topics are covered throughout the interview, true patterns of behavior emerge, and the interviewer begins to get an accurate picture of the candidate over an extended period of time.

Good interview techniques reveal who candidates are and how they behave. When you have that kind of information, the “ultimate job interview” takes place where it should—in the selection process, not after a new hire fails to successfully complete a project. After all, no one wants to hear the words, “You’re fired.”

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Since 1995, LSA has helped leading organizations create and maintain competitive advantages through people. We work with a select group of clients to help them “move the needle” - from simple awareness of best practices through actual adoption of new skills on-the-job to measurable performance that truly impacts the business.

Over 85% of our business comes from repeat clients and our customer satisfaction rating is 97.5%. Our clients tell us that we are different. Our clients tell us that we save them both time and money. Our clients tell us that they appreciate access to certified best-in-class experts across many areas.

How Far Do You Want



To Move the Needle?

- Our **Sales** clients confirm that they have grown sales by 40%, increased units sold by 42%, increased average pricing by 12%, and closed over 50% of their pipeline.
- Our **Customer Loyalty** clients confirm that their customer revenue per household increased by 18%, repeat calls decreased by 48.4%, single contact resolution increased by 6.1% and their overall customer satisfaction increased by 10%.
- Our **Leadership and Management** clients report that we decrease their costs by up to 50%, while helping increase speed-to-productivity by 60% and decrease unwanted attrition by up to 40%.
- Our **Project Management** clients inform us that, by regularly completing projects that meet or exceed expectations, they have become an anomaly in the world where most projects disappoint or fail.

Our clients succeed in the marketplace through increased revenue, decreased costs, and higher productivity. They maintain that our rigorous assessment, implementation, and measurement capabilities bring them tangible results. As an organization, we are fiercely devoted to supporting their success.

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