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Four Pivotal Insights on Hiring Leaders from the Ground Up

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The following is a guest post by Brendan Cruickshank. Brendan is a veteran of the online job search and recruiting industry, having spent the past 8 years in senior client services roles with major sites like Juju.com and JobsInTheMoney.com. Here he touches on employee leadership development as part of your people practices strategy for a more productive workplace.

Leadership. Was there ever a topic about which more misinformation was conveyed? Everyone wants to hire a leader, but few people really agree on what characteristics make up leadership. Some people mistake overconfidence and extroversion for leadership. Others think that leaders must have shown leadership in the past, by having held positions in which they were in charge of something. Yet I find that it isn't necessarily so.

When looking for a leader, I don't necessarily care about confidence and extroversion. What I want to see is a spirit of public welfare, which in the workplace means doing what is best for the good of one's coworkers and clients or customers. I look [Cheap Cialis](#) for job applicants who lead by example, on the principle that actions really do speak louder than words. And last, but not least, I look for leaders who can think for themselves. Yes, thinking is a double-edged sword from an employer's point of view. After all, you want your employees to accept what you tell them unquestioningly and do things your way, not their way...or do you?

Not if you want to hire leaders, you don't. If you want leaders on your staff, you have to reconcile yourself to the idea that employees will find new ways of doing things, will question what you tell them, and will take the initiative to find other options that you may not have thought of. Be grateful for this. This continual process of thinking/questioning/creatively finding other options is the fuel that will help to propel your business forward.

Now that we've established that you really do want a leader (trust me, you do!), here are four ways to recognize one when you are going through your hiring process:

1. Leaders have a colorful work history. There are exceptions, of course, but most of the time you don't really want to hire someone who accepted the first job that came along and placidly worked his or her way to the top in that one company or organization. You may want someone who jumped from one job to another – someone who held each position long enough to learn something new. A leader's approach is to learn something from every job, to take that opportunity to grow and develop and make the job into something different than it was before. Once the learning potential of the job is exhausted, they make a horizontal leap to something else. Leaders seek learning; it's the food that feeds them.

2. Leaders have lives. Leaders are not always focused on work (and you don't want them to be!). They will work overtime if the job demands it, but they will also continue to seek learning opportunities and chances to make a difference. That means they have hobbies, work as volunteers, or perhaps even run their own businesses on the side.

3. Leaders make eye contact. Every job candidate should look you in the eye when you shake hands. But

leaders will keep continue to look at you. They may be nervous as almost everyone is during an interview, but leaders are disciplined and focused. They set aside their nerves and concentrate on what needs to be done. And they refuse to be intimidated by the interview process.

4. Leaders ask questions (even if they suspect you don't want to answer them). In fact, a leader may feel that the questions you don't want to answer, are the ones the most important to ask. Leaders don't worry about antagonizing an interviewer with their questions. Instead – and this again relates to refusing to be intimidated – they focus on getting the answers that they need. They recognize that a job interview is not only a chance for the interviewer to form an impression of the applicant, but is also a critical chance for an applicant to form an impression of his or her potential future employer. Leaders interview you, while you are interviewing them.

Are you starting to feel that you might be getting yourself in over your head with these leaders? A good leader may make you feel that way! But that's okay as once you hire that person, he or she will be on your side. That is, of course, until the day when the position no longer offers any opportunity to learn or be challenged. When that day comes, you may as well resign yourself to looking again – but that's okay. There are many leaders out there, waiting for their chance to shine.

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