

Watch Out for Eddie Haskell

If you're old enough to remember *Leave It To Beaver*, or if you've caught a re-run on "Nick at Nite," you know who Eddie Haskell is. He's Wally's smooth talking friend, and no matter what trouble he may have caused, he was always able to charm his way past Mrs. Cleaver.

Now before you say, "what does this have to do with me," consider this: There are a lot of "Eddie Haskell's" out there... and they're trying to get a job with you!

CAN YOU SPOT EDDIE?

The problem with Eddie Haskell's is that they're hard to spot. Often they come disguised as perfect candidates. They have the right experience. They say the right things. They offer polished responses to all your questions. And they can present impeccable references. Just one problem... they're still troublemakers! And in the worst cases, they actually misrepresent their skills and abilities. Take a look at the top performers in your organization. No doubt, they're talented, hard-working team players. They are customer focused and eager to solve problems.



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But, were they great interviewees? Some may have been, but many more probably were not. Here's why: great employees don't change jobs all that often, and therefore, many don't interview that well. They may be apprehensive about the process or just plain inexperienced in job hunting. Then there's good old Eddie, he loves to job hop – and he's an expert at the process. He knows how to make a very good first impression and position himself as a perfect job candidate. He's sort of a chameleon who only shows his true colors after being hired.

Now take a look at your candidate evaluation process. Can Eddie Haskell beat your system? Do you rely on subjective judgments made primarily through interview questions? Or do you have more objective measures in place to validate a candidate's skills and abilities? These measures could include assessment testing, reference checking, and even work simulations.

AVOID EDDIE BY ATTRACTING REAL TALENT

1. Recruitment Advertising

The next time your local newspaper prints the employment section, take a quick read. If you can keep your eyes open long enough to get past the first few ads, you'll see a disturbing trend. Most recruitment ads are horrid. They're dull. They're little more than a list of re-

quirements, and they offer almost nothing to attract real talent. Online job posts are no better. Sometimes they're longer, but again, most say little more than "this is what we need." Remember, Eddie's out there reading these, and he's looking for the next new thing to pique his interest. Recruitment advertising, whether online or off, is marketing. To make your marketing successful, and attract real talent, you need to create compelling copy. You need to sell. And you need to give candidates a strong reason to take action...now! Make ads and position descriptions visibly attractive with intriguing titles and graphics that capture the attention of the best candidates. Include detailed information about the benefits of working for your company, the positive aspects of your corporate culture, and even the highlights of living in your local community.

2. Resume Screening

Many online recruiting methods are great resume generators. To separate the gems from the masses, most companies employ some sort of resume screening process. Typically, these processes focus on making sure a candidate's skills and experience meet or exceed posted job requirements. Eddie knows this, and he knows how to beat your process by carefully "beefing-up" his resume. He may "puff-up" his responsibilities or load-up on key words for your resume scanning system to find. While the solution is not to abandon the resume screening process, you may need to devise a new scoring system...one that emphasizes past records of accomplishment, success trends, job longevity, and participation in activities or associations that are relevant to your products or markets and consistent with the profile of your ideal job candidate.

3. Candidate Sourcing

Eddie Haskell is easy to find. He'll come running to you. But your ideal job candidate is probably happily employed somewhere else right now. He's doing well in his current role, getting praise

and recognition, and receiving bonuses and incentives. In other words, he's not actively looking for a change. To avoid hiring Eddie, you need to find creative ways to capture the attention and interest of these passive candidates.

The two best methods for attracting passive job seekers are through referrals and direct recruiting. Start with your current exceptional employees. Create incentives for referrals. Get them involved in brainstorming recruiting ideas. If that fails to produce the results you want, or if time is a critical concern, get a professional executive search firm involved. Challenge them to cull their database and use their network to uncover the best available talent.

4. Hiring Process

Here are a few other ways to improve your recruiting process to avoid Eddie: Prepare "success profiles" each containing a standard job description as well as information and measurement criteria to help determine the traits needed and the achievements expected from each employee in your organization. Include this profile information on your website, and in your recruitment advertising. Great candidates, who will make great employees, want to review information about what it takes to be successful and what they need to "fit well" and succeed in your company.

Be proactive. Create a process that will push the best people responding to your recruitment efforts to the top of the list. Contact those people immediately or you will lose them to someone else.

Create a custom application or skills survey centered around behavior-based interview questions. Ask candidates to provide specific examples of instances where they demonstrated the types of behaviors you seek in an ideal candidate.

Train your staff to work with the best people. The best candidates need extra effort. They want to know more about the companies they are going to approach for career opportunities. They also need to be actively "courted."

Train your hiring managers how to appropriately nurture relationships with those select few individuals who appear to be most valuable to your organization – if you're not doing it, your competitors are.

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

Keep in mind that the process for locating the best personnel is very different from the process used to eliminate bad candidates. Take a good look at your hiring process. See where Eddie might be able to slip past the cracks. Spend the resources needed to attract the best people, and make sure you know how to spot...and get rid of Eddie when he shows up at your door!