

We had a group of 36 men and women from a large manufacturing company participate in a Time Management Program. Our discussion towards the end of the session was about the characteristics that we look for in hiring, thinking that personal productivity and “good time manager” would certainly be on the list. I asked the group to give me the characteristics they thought were important and they indicated the following:

Proactive
Honest
Dependable
Flexible
Trustworthy
Good Communication
Follows through on commitments
Reliable
Respectful
Customer Focused
Energetic

Then I gave them the three characteristic areas that I think are important:

Knowledge
Skills
Attitude

Knowledge. A plumber knows that a 4” pipe is required by code to connect from a certain drain. He has passed the tests, he knows the code. He has knowledge.

Skill. A plumber can take that 4” steel pipe and blowtorch and he can make it work.

Attitude. The plumber is willing to go anywhere, at any time, under any conditions to perform his work.

Then I asked the group to put a K, S, or A beside each one of the characteristics they said were important.

I will ask you to go back to the list and do the same thing. What do you think? It is pretty obvious what’s most important. And yet we spend too much time and place too much importance on the K and the S at the expense of **attitude**. I believe we can take someone with normal intelligence and teach them the knowledge and skills needed. The million dollar question is “can we teach attitude?”.

One exciting thing about these characteristics is that they don’t depend on the person’s parents, education, background or intellect. We can’t blame a lack of these on anyone else.

One more point: these are the characteristics that we all would like to have in someone we hire. Is it safe to say that the person we hire would like to see these characteristics in us? Something to think about.

HIRE FOR ATTITUDE, TRAIN FOR SKILLS

Some questions to ponder

- How can we determine attitude in the interview process?
- Can you change someone’s attitude?
- Can people change their own attitude?
- How important is attitude vs. knowledge and skills?
- What % of terminations are due to attitude vs. knowledge and skills?

I encourage your response to these thoughts. farlgroup@aol.com

Have a great day!

Please forward this on or send us the e-mail addresses of co-workers, friends or family members who might enjoy a monthly leadership thought.

If you would like to see past *Leadership Insights*, please [click here](#).