



Persuasion in recruitment

...The ability to influence and persuade others is not gifted to a chosen few. Persuasion can be learned!

by Kathryn FitzGerald

You have the perfect candidate in front of you and you're ready to make that job offer. So now is the time to fine tune your expertise in persuasion if you want to have your job offer accepted! Used effectively, you can foster a positive outcome and assist the prospective employee during their decision making process.

Positive vs negative persuasion

There is a fine line between positive persuasion and negative persuasion. When used for good purposes, good results typically occur. Though the opposite can also be true.

Positive persuasion is honest, truthful and principle-based. Negative persuasion is where a person will say and do practically anything, including misrepresenting the truth (lie) in order to shift someone over to their side of an issue. Typically, negative persuasion may foster short term wins but will ultimately result in both parties dissatisfied with the long term outcome.

Persuasion involves making both a logical and emotional appeal to influence the other person to see your view. Effective persuasion involves overcoming resistance and having honest justifications for what you want them to do.

Using persuasion effectively in the recruitment process

I believe we have a tremendous responsibility to develop positive persuasion skills because we have a major impact on the lives of new employees.

Throughout the interview process the interviewer needs to be careful that the candidate does not feel you are trying to control or force their decisions. They don't mind being positively persuaded if they feel you have their best interests in mind.

Developing rapport with the candidate, based on trust, is extremely effective. It is when you have built this rapport that you can effectively assist and persuade the candidate during their decision making process.

The hiring manager should also maintain their awareness of 'being persuaded'. Candidates can be so focused on obtaining the role that they tend to justify what they say as not really lying. Listen carefully for any truth that appears 'stretched', even if you're leaning towards that particular candidate.

Be conscious about what the candidate says, how they say it and if it meshes with other things they've said.

*Using positive persuasion
can have substantial
benefits in the recruitment
process*

How to be persuasive

There are the lucky few who possess the natural ability to convince others. As we watch these individuals almost effortlessly charm their way to getting what they want, when you break it down you realise that they are no more talented in their job than all of us. However, they are still getting what they want! So what's the secret?

Learning persuasion techniques

Researchers who study persuasion have found a set of rules for improving your powers of persuasion and moving people in your direction. Learning about these rules and employing them (and using them for good, not evil!) will generally increase your influence at work long term.

Tip 1: Give first and receive later!

Be the first to give. Look to help others and build obligations that could lead to them helping you in return.

Tip 2: Admit your Weaknesses!

Be prepared to admit small weaknesses to build credibility.

Tip 3: Highlight the loss, not just the gain!

Never forget to point out to potential candidates what your organisation/the role has to offer and what will be lost if they don't consider the role.

Tip 4: Use the testimony of others

People will often look to what others are doing or saying when deciding what decision to make. Offer testimonials and recommendations and share those that are most similarly matched to the requirements of potential employees.

Tip 5: Seek common ground

Look for areas of genuine similarity and build them into the interview. People prefer to say yes to others that they like. Studies show that one of the most important factors that influences one person's liking of another is how many similarities they share.

Effective persuaders take time to seek out similarities they share with others. A couple of well-placed questions about an individual's interests, or even a quick internet search so that you can demonstrate genuine similarities, really could make all the difference.



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