



Meet Your Match: Five Traits To Look For When Hiring Marketers

By Tom Van Wie

First, I'd like to start by putting forth an expression of gratitude to my colleagues and peers in the HR profession. You are the soldiers on the front lines of the battles and victories we in the media profession face every day. Particularly in this modern world where mediums evolve and behaviors shift on what seems like an almost daily basis. Nothing we set out to do would be possible without you. You are the masterminds behind the masterminds!

I've been so fortunate in my 20 year career to have had the opportunity to work with some of the best and brightest in the HR field both as a Marketing Executive at various cable networks and now as an independent Marketing Consultant traversing the uncertain waters of the digital media landscape. And as I got to know each of my past colleagues as people, I was fortunate to gain insight into this often times rewarding but many times challenging career path. So, it is my intention in this article to give back in some small way.

I LOVE the business of branding! It is fun, creative, and at times frustrating. But the constant of change truly serves marketing and marketing professionals. It keeps those of us whose passion is ignited by ideas on our toes and always looking forward. And that is great for ourselves, our businesses, and our audiences! But if I'm to be real here, it is sometimes accompanied by a "cult of personality" that can be a little tricky to figure out. Especially if you are on the periphery of the inner circle.

And as a recruiter, staffer, or coach, it can be confusing not only to fully align with an amorphous vision, but difficult to fully grasp as well.

So what does it take to meet the demands and mind of a modern marketer? The singular answer is VISIONARY. That is the WHAT, HOW, AND WHY answer all marketers seek when building their teams and creating an internal culture. And there are five key qualities or core competencies that may be helpful to be mindful of as you partner with marketers search for your doers, thinkers and creators:

1. Dirty Hands - Even in the most sterile of corporate environments, the Marketing Dept. has a tendency to be subject to the expectancy of miracle working; making the impossible possible at the very last minute. Search for signs in your candidate's resume that they were comfortable and performed well in an environment that often asked them to switch lanes, roll-up their sleeves, and do what was necessary for flawless delivery amidst a background of chaos. All done with the ability to rapidly problem solve with the seeming slightest of ease. I've often found that working with someone with less experience but committed to making things happen was a much more successful approach than hiring based on pedigree.
2. Thick Skin - Creativity is the cousin of emotionality. Often, senior level marketers, reared in a different time in our industry, tend to take the point of view that an "Executive" title awards them with the ability to overly express their emotional response beyond what is appropriate in this modern (okay, I'll say it) millennial world. Kings of their kingdom so to speak. To find a candidate with the ability to connect with the professional, respect their experience, but not see any sort of rebuke or disappointment as a personal affront will be a BIG PLUS!
3. Media Junkie - To be clear here, I am DEFINITELY NOT referring to social media. Although I am a lover of the various platforms, they can be hazardous to productivity and harmful to anyone's long-term professional goals. It's a challenge in today's day in age when most people have sacrificed POTENTIAL for the sake of living up to the online persona they've created. A knowledge of the science and strategy of modern media is essential, but what I am talking about here is passion for the entertainment industry. It can't be faked. A quality candidate will be excited to be meeting with you about the opportunity alone because it fills a heart-felt desire to be part of an age old, time honored industry that, for all intents and purposes, serves to make people happy.
4. Hungry YET Satisfied - This trait is the perfect complement to the previously mentioned. It is critical for the good of the hiring manager as well as the company to place a candidate who wants to do, be, and achieve more. To identify a marketing candidate who shows promise of evolving in ideation and hard skills is the gold for which we all mine. But in today's day in age, far too often performance review time is met with an expectation of a raise and promotion. Do what you must to uncover one's ability to have sight of a bigger picture with an attitude of gratitude that each day in their role is part of the journey.
5. Gear Grinder - At the end of the day, the primary function of a marketer is idea generation (with varying levels of expertise) and the basic fundamental skill is brainstorming. To place someone in marketing without these abilities is not only doing the marketing department of your company, and your company as a whole, a disservice, it is not helpful to the candidate either. It is a set-up to fail. Now, it can be argued as to whether these traits are natured or nurtured but it is unquestionable that your success in finding the ideal candidate for marketing, no matter what position or level, will be more easily achieved by placing an individual who can cultivate ideas on their own and in concert with others!

I always say that the success or failure of a brand begins within its own four walls. It also extends far beyond the marketing department. It is brought to life by the people who commit to their jobs each day with an unwavering level of passion and a commitment to the company culture. In the entertainment industry, that tends to be a mosaic of personalities, skills, and backgrounds. All of which have to be, at some point or another, filtered through the lens of Human Resources.

So, in appreciation to my HR peers and colleagues, I hope I've been able to offer some truthful yet light-hearted guidance combined with helpful information as we venture into this new age in entertainment TOGETHER!

Tom Van Wie is a bona fide brand passionate with 20 years experience in entertainment marketing. He currently provides consultation and coaching services to clients in the media, entertainment, and corporate culture industries. [Click here for credentials and more information on services.](#)



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