

INTERVIEWS II: THEORIES AND TECHNIQUES

4. INTUITION

4.1 What is intuition?

Intuition is different things to different people and is described very differently from person to person. How it is described is very individual. Some people feel it by interpreting body signs. Some people describe it as instant knowing. Some people get it in a dream. Everyone has a different intuitive language and it is important to know how it speaks to you. Call it whatever you want, a sixth sense, or a gut feeling. Call it your instincts or just plain intuition. Our mind picks up on things that can't easily be defined. Whenever we interact with people, we are picking up on imperceptible messages that give us a feeling that isn't necessarily based on fact. Did you ever have a conversation with someone who drained you of your energy? For reasons that you can't explain, being around that person felt heavy and tiring? Have you ever been near a person that gives you the opposite feeling? You walk away with a feeling of lightness, like they just took some of their happy mood and added it to you?

Intuition is something that way too many people ignore. We often look back at decisions that we have made and say, "I had a bad feeling about that person but I ignored it. If only I had listened to my instincts." When we make a bad hiring decision, we have very often ignored that little voice that tells us we shouldn't be choosing that person. Hiring managers can access their intuition by tuning out distractions, by getting present, by getting out of their head (meaning all the mental chatter that goes on that blocks reception of intuitive guidance and messages) and essentially access the information that they are picking up that is below the surface.

4.2. Using Intuition in Interviews

Intuition is not a psychic thing that comes from a different frequency. It isn't "out there". It is an important part of the analysis of a candidate and although not concrete, is actually based on the feelings we get from the expertise we have developed in life. How do you differentiate between intuition and your own internal baggage? You need to ask yourself if it is you or them. You need to know

your trigger points. Is this coming from me or from them? Am I projecting or is it them that is making me not feel good about it? Very often we react to something that is in fact our own baggage. A person says something that gives us a reaction in our bodies, our stomach muscles tighten, we get anxious, we feel our blood pressure rise. The good interviewer will take the time to make sure where the feelings are coming from and recognize what is their own stuff and what is the actual intuitive feeling that they are getting from the situation.

Does intuition have a place in an interview? The business world is a place of logic and cold hard facts. We measure productivity, output, and sales. We look at numbers, and dates. We have targets and deliverables. In the land of hiring, we look at years of experience, levels of achievement and number of years of schooling. We go into an interview with a job candidate with a list of questions that need to be answered and very often we make our hiring decisions based on criteria that are concrete. If we are not consciously paying attention to our intuition when we interview, we are leaving out one of the essential pieces of picking the right person. Intuition is that gut feeling that we have that often has no basis in fact. We pick up on something that we often can't explain that the other person is giving off and it gives us an impression, or idea of how to proceed that isn't necessarily logical. A person could look like the perfect candidate. They have all the right qualities. They answer all the questions exactly like you think they should, yet something tells you that you don't like them or that they aren't right. This is a key element to making the right hiring choice.

Is there any way to use intuition to prepare for an interview? Take the resume' of the candidate and read it. What is your gut telling you? Are you getting any intuitive sense from it? Record that feeling and check it against what you pick up on during the interview. Intuition is useful even before the person is in the room. There is no substitute for a very good conversation with a prospective job candidate. There is no getting away from asking the questions that you believe need to be answered during the interview process. Using intuition as part of your bag of tricks needs to be an essential component of the selection process. If you feel it, it is probably worth paying attention to.

How do you teach people to use it in the workplace? Tapping into your intuition leads to out the box thinking and opens you up to possibilities. It opens the channels to nonlinear thinking. People often call that using your right brain. A lot of people, especially entrepreneurs and decision makers use intuition to make decisions when they don't have all the facts. It is often something that people are

using daily but are not aware of when they are. The more aware people are of the conscious use of intuition, the greater the skill at using it.

How do you use it during the interview process? Firstly, you have to be conscious that you want to use it and that you want to call on it. People need to look at it as one of the skills that you will be using when you interview. They need to ask good questions, pay attention to body language, be good listeners, and pay attention to what their intuition is telling them. It is a skill that you can master to get better at interviewing candidates.

What advice can you give to new interviewers? We process so much during the interview that the brand new interviewer is typically just as nervous as the job candidate. They worry about making mistakes. This can make them forget that their intuition is a key component to picking the right candidate. One of the best pieces of advice for all interviewers is to leave judgments at the door. Neutrality makes you really aware of what your little voice is telling you. That takes a lot of practice and will only develop if you focus on the skill.

In the workplace, intuition is especially useful for making all important employee hiring decisions, or for choosing a business partner. For example, during the interviewing process some people are polished interviewers and present themselves well, but then turn out to be much less impressive when they're on the job. Others are less polished, but you have an inexplicable sense they will be great contributors on a day to day basis. Often it all comes down to your intuition. Here is an example of how to hone your intuition during the process and pay attention to gut feelings. You can use what's called the "my lower left corner" strategy during the interviewing process. Take notes throughout the interview and record the answers to the interview questions on a sheet of paper in front of you for future reference. However, in the lower left corner record your "impressions", whatever struck you during the interview. For example, you might be interviewing a perfectly polished individual and get the feeling that he is "cocky" and that would go in the corner. Or you might be interviewing someone who says all the right things but can't make eye contact with certain questions and you would record that as a warning sign.

On the other hand, you may be interviewing someone who is a little nervous, but who you can tell has high integrity and a strong work ethic. You record that in the lower left corner too. After the interview, you weigh your intuition along with the candidate's answers and experience. If you suspect a possible flaw, you ask myself if it is something you could live with. For example, you may get the feeling that someone will be nervous giving a presentation and then decide that it is okay in

this position because someone else will be the public face. Often that is a livable weakness. If the flaw that you suspect is of someone's character or integrity, however, you will not overlook it, no matter what the qualifications or how urgently you need to fill the position. It always comes back to bite you. When you have gone back and compared your "lower left corner" notes to your perceptions of people six months after they are hired, you will most likely find them to be almost always accurate. In fact, the only unpredictable variable may seem to be your judgment of how much, or how little, that weakness would impact the person's performance in that particular role.

When interviewing, it's important to ask questions to understand a person's nature, not just focus on their experiences. How do they operate? How do they think? How do they deal with adversity? Do they strike you as honest? Yes, you want someone who has job experience, but you also want someone you trust and want to be around. Honing your intuition can help you find the perfect match.

Does intuition play a role in today's workplace? According to a new OfficeTeam study, it can. In fact, 88% of administrative professionals surveyed recently said they often make decisions based on gut instinct. Various researchers and authors have developed quizzes to help workers identify their intuition style. The research guide contains data from a study developed by OfficeTeam and the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) that includes responses from more than 3,500 administrative professionals and 1,300 senior managers in the United States and Canada. Their key findings are outlined below;

- 88% percent of administrative professionals said they often make decisions based on gut instinct.
- Nearly all (97% of support staff believe anticipating their manager's needs is important to their career growth, and 94% of executives agree.
- When asked about the most effective way to anticipate the needs of someone at work without directly asking him/her, 32% of administrative professionals said they use deductive reasoning (e.g., moving conflicting appointments when a supervisor's meeting is rescheduled). One in four, 25 % of those polled look for behavioral patterns when making decisions (e.g., printing out a flight boarding pass in advance for the boss because he is typically running late).

By drawing on their powers of perception, professionals can often identify potential workplace dilemmas and address them before they become serious issues.

Any manager will tell you that having an assistant who anticipates his or her needs and offers solutions without being asked is virtually indispensable. To conclude, review table below of the five intuition styles and tips for maximizing each one at work:

Intuition type	Advice for this intuition style
Analysts make decisions based on careful research and past experience.	Don't discount your gut feelings. Combining your critical-thinking abilities with what your instincts tell you can be beneficial.
Observers depend most heavily on visual cues to guess what others may want without being told.	Gather additional clues by going beyond what meets the eye. Talk to coworkers to get more information.
Questioners rely mainly on posing direct inquiries to determine their next move.	Tune into nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions for additional insight.
Empathizers are able to identify with colleagues' problems and help them find solutions.	Be careful not to rely completely on emotions when making decisions. Back up your assumptions with research and analysis.
Adapters employ multiple intuition strategies, sometimes using their powers of observation while other times asking direct questions.	Don't expect coworkers to read your mind just because you're good at anticipating the needs of others. Communicate with colleagues openly and often.