



It's All In the Mindset...

Profile of a Top Producer

You know who they are. It's those Agents who are always at or near the top of the President's or Honor Clubs month after month. They've developed the key to success and are able to turn the key, no matter what the economic climate or the obstacles that are thrown into their path.

What are the characteristics you should look for when trying to hire a great producer? Here's a few tips:*

Look outside the industry. Many of the best Agents started as teachers, social service workers, or sales people from other professions. Look for candidates with a "leader" mindset, rather than a "follower" mindset. Candidates with a follower mindset are better at following directions than giving them. But those with a leader mindset are self-starters and take initiative. It's more important initially that they have an entrepreneurial outlook and the drive to be insurance professionals than a current working knowledge of the insurance industry.

Use clarifying questions interviewing your non-industry candidates. Clarifying questions are open-ended questions that require more than just a "yes or no" response. An example is: You've had a great career with the X industry. Why would you want to leave it? This type of question helps you separate the dynamo from the dud!

If hiring an existing Agent, carefully review the Agent's most recent production. Some Agents become complacent after they've built their block of business and are more interested in servicing existing accounts than generating new business. Make sure your candidate wants to do both!

Most of all, trust your instincts! No matter how good a candidate looks on paper, if something about him or her doesn't ring true or just doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

The Profile of a Successful Producer? Look for the following:

- * Hand always extended to greet a new policyholder or ring a new doorbell
- * Well groomed, professionally-dressed
- * Slightly stiff neck from being on the phone setting appointments
- * Briefcase in hand with at least two policies ready for delivery each day
- * A bulging wallet from all that commission and residual income
- * A big smile on his or her face because the Agent loves the job

If you're an Agent who doesn't have a "leader" mindset, are you destined to be a dud rather than a dynamo? Absolutely not! Whatever your personality type and mindset, you have the potential to become a top producer. You only need to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. Know the areas of expertise in which you're good and become better. If you're lacking in other areas, make it a priority to improve in those areas. Be learning all the time, whether it's sales technique or product information. The most important step you take toward becoming a top producer is to believe in yourself.

Attitude is everything!!

* Source: Beck, Michael J., "Targeting the Right Producers: How to Focus Your Recruiting Strategy," *Insurance Marketing* September 2003: 12-14