

# The Leader In You!

March 2006

## How to Identify a Problem Solver

By Harry Joiner, reprinted with permission.

### CSSI's Clever Tips:

- **Tap into staff personal motivators:** Ask team members to complete this sentence: "The one thing that makes coming to work worthwhile is \_\_\_\_\_."

-Adapted from *Teams That Click*, Harvard Business School Press, www.hbspres.org.

- **Increase Your Influence:** Use inclusive language, replacing "me" with "we." Instead of telling co-workers "I think ..."; say, "I believe ..."; "I know ..."; and "I feel ...," tell them "We can ..."; "Our challenge is ..."; and "Let's look at ...". - Revised from "How Leaders Can Command, Not Demand, Respect," Christine W. Zust, www.emergingleader.com.
- **Create a Positive Impression:** Limit your voicemail messages to one minute or less. If you feel you need more time to deliver your message, send an e-mail or speak directly to the person.

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While most candidates find a way to look good on paper, their resumes don't always reveal how good of a problem solver they are. Yet most companies want to hire problem solvers—people who can walk into their operation and make their problems go away. Naturally, hiring managers who fail to understand the nature of their business problems will find it difficult to hire someone who can solve them.

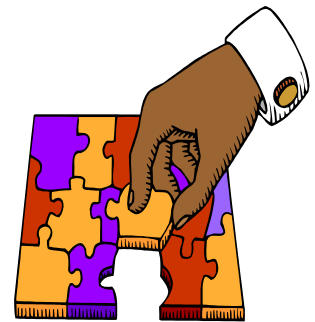
**7 Steps to Successful Problem Solving.** When solving problems—whether in real life or in a job interview—it's important to follow a logical process. Therefore, the strength of a job applicant's problem solving ability can be seen by walking them through the following seven step framework while getting them to describe how they solved in a previous job, the applicant should demonstrate an ability to:

1. **Define the problem.** Have the candidate identify what went wrong by including both a cause and an effect in the definition in the problem they solved..
2. **Define the objectives.** Have the candidate explain the outcome he wanted to achieve as a result of solving the problem.
3. **Generate alternatives.** How many alternatives did the candidate generate? Did the quality of the alternatives vary greatly? This is the area in which the candidate can demonstrate their creativity and resourcefulness as a problem solver.
4. **Develop an action plan.** Have the candidates recap their detailed action plan. Most action plans for tough problems involve taking several steps over a period of time. In his recap, does the candidate specify who did what? And by what dates? Detailed problem solvers are usually more effective than generalists.

5. **Troubleshoot.** This is where the candidate can recap the worst case scenarios. What could have gone wrong in his plan? What might have been the side effects? How did the candidate ensure this plan would work? Were there any unintended consequences?

6. **Communicate.** Getting information to the right people is key for getting the buy-in to make it a success. Have the candidate address which individuals or groups affected the success of his action plan. Does he explain who was impacted by it and who needed to be informed about it? How did he communicate with relevant parties? The most effective executives are those who can leverage their time and talents by getting things done through other people. This is your opportunity to build your company's management bench.

7. **Implement.** Have the candidate address who carried out the plan and monitor its implementation. Who was accountable for each part of the solution? Determine: As a manager, will the candidate be "hard on the issues and soft on the people?"



**Discovering how a candidate has solved past problems will give you an idea as to how they will solve problems in the future!**

*During the interview, you must get the candidate to be specific about their problem solving experience. Ask, "Why?" or "How?" to everything they say. If you don't challenge them during the interview process, you may pay a steep price later for your lack of persistence.*

## Use References to Hire the Best!

Understanding individual personalities contributes to great team performance. That's why hiring smart is critical to team success. The references candidates provide will help you make smart choices for your team.

Dan Bent, a private consultant and lawyer who spent more than 17 years managing attorneys in a handful of U.S. district attorneys' offices before leaving in the mid-1990s, always held in-dept interviews with potential candidates and thoroughly involved their references before making his selection. If any one of the references raised the slightest question, he would take the information and call back those he had already interviewed for elaboration.

**Example:** Early in Bent's career, he found an outstanding candidate with sterling references—except for the comments from one former supervisor. That person said that the candidate couldn't see the forest for the trees, often becoming mired in minutiae rather than focusing on the question at hand. When Bent investigated further with the candidate's other references, several of them reluctantly agreed that the candidate would likely not work out in the demanding world of a district attorney's office.

**Note:** Don't rely only on human resources to make

calls to references for you. You're the best person to discuss team needs and candidates' qualifications.

- "Communication Briefings—Hiring the Best", Vol.25, No.5, March 2006, (703)518-2343, [www.briefings.com](http://www.briefings.com).



*"It has come to my attention, Pickarell, that you may have been somewhat less than forthcoming in your résumé."*

## Time Management: Stop Unwanted E-mails



**Stop  
Unwanted  
E-mails**

**Stop wasting time reading unwanted e-mail messages. Follow the example of one busy manager. He decided to respond to every e-mail for a week with a note on its appropriateness. He responded with one of three comments:**

- 1) Keep sending this sort of critical information. It is appreciated.
- 2) Send this to .....(person's name and e-mail address).... who is a responsible party on my team. He/she will be your contact person from this point forward. Thank you.
- 3) Don't send me this kind of information.

**After one week his e-mail load dropped significantly.**

- Adapted from Harvard Management Update, [www.harvardbusinessonline.com](http://www.harvardbusinessonline.com).

## Staffing – We Can Lessen Your Workload!

As a Manager or Supervisor, do you find yourself spending way too much time recruiting for your openings? From the time spent posting a job ad, to screening resumes received, to leaving messages for candidates, most managers are exhausted by the time the interview is to be conducted. What are your options?

**Call CSSI at (714) 648-0031!**

CSSI provides interim staffing during your peak workloads and direct hire staffing for your permanent openings. We specialize in a wide-realm of staffing. Common positions that are fill tend to be (but not limited to):

- **Administrative/Reception**
- **Accounting/Finance-all levels**
- **Human Resources-all levels**
- **Workers' Compensation-all levels**

Our clients save time and money by utilizing our services to identify candidates for both permanent and temporary hire. Cost savings are realized in the following areas:

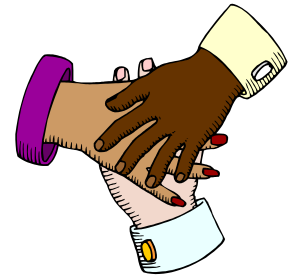
### Hiring & Development Costs

- Advertising & Recruiting
- Training
- Background Checks (we conduct criminal and social security checks on all employees)

### Employee-Related Costs

- State & Federal Taxes
- Employee Benefits
- Unemployment
- Workers' compensation & liability insurance

**Call us, we will be happy to work with your team and within your budget!**



*We'll get you through the Crunch!*

Our seasoned recruiters are here to help you save time and money!

**Call CSSI  
(714) 648-0031**

## Motivation: Keep Productivity High!

Leaders often call meetings when productivity is down. But think how much more useful it would be to call a meeting when your team's operating at its peak. Instead of the demoralizing questions posed at most productivity meetings—such as, “What went wrong?”; “Why are our numbers so low?” - instead ask these energizing questions:

- **“What are we doing that’s allowed us to increase productivity so much?”**
- **“What can we do to continue this trend?”**
- **“What can I do, as your manager, to help you continue this trend?”**

- “Team Management Briefings”, Preview Issue, (703)518-2343, [www.briefings.com](http://www.briefings.com).



*“The most exhausting thing in life, I have discovered, is insincerity.” - Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

## CSSI

203 N. Golden Circle, Suite 100  
Santa Ana, CA 92705  
www.cssistaffing.com

Phone: 714-648-0031  
Fax: 714-648-0796  
Email: christina.martins@cssistaffing.com

**We have a new website!**  
[www.cssistaffing.com](http://www.cssistaffing.com)

*CSSI is proud to bring your way, **The Leader In You!** newsletter tailored specifically for Management staff. Keep an eye out for our upcoming articles.*



**Your objectives are our objectives, every step of the way!**

***"Partnering with You to Meet Your Staffing Needs"***

## A Quick Guide to CSSI Recruiting Techniques

### Be Serious About Recruiting

We treat our client recruiting efforts as seriously as we would any other business related transaction. A new hire, whether temporary or permanent, is a major investment for our clients. To avoid turnover costs, is our main objective when searching for that "ideal fit".

### Network, Network, and Network More!

We firmly believe, and research has shown, that the best hires come from personal recommendations. CSSI will solicit referrals for each of your openings by contacting industry managers, colleagues, current candidates, past hires, and professionals not posting their resumes, in addition to cold-calling efforts.

### Advertisement

You will see us on multiple specific industry related sites, as we invest thousands of dollars annually to make sure our clients' openings are viewed by as many qualified candidates as possible. We are also featured in select newspapers in CA, TX, AZ, and CO.

### Candidate Presentation

CSSI presents candidate resumes with a thorough background summary high-

lighting specific strengths pertaining to the job opening, career history, current hourly/salary earnings, and hourly/salary requirement, along with other important data. We will not waste anyone's time submitting unqualified candidates, above our client's budgeted range of pay.

### Relax, While we Coordinate the Interview and/or Start Date

Give us a date/time and we'll make sure the candidate is there and is fully prepared.

### Background/Security Checks

All temporary CSSI personnel undergo a criminal and social security check. We conduct background checks on permanent hires in accordance with our clients' specifications.