

# Tips to identifying talent, no matter the location

By [William Kuan](#)

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I have interviewed many candidates for different roles in my time in management positions. In fact, as you are reading this, there is a good chance I may even have conducted one today. While there is no magical formula for identifying talent that will add value to your team, there are certain primary attributes that are fundamental to observe in a candidate.



William Kuan, head of Marketing and Communications, Roche Diagnostics

The first is attitude. Yes, this is a broad term and ultimately, the ones that stand out to me are positive, constructive and proactive attitudes. Those three characteristics come together to form the 'Holy Grail' in identifying a suitable candidate. Having the right qualifications is key but without the right attitude, no one can deliver to their full potential. People with the right attitude will always have the potential to further develop skills and knowledge because there is the willingness to learn and contribute to the bigger picture. That can be more valuable than a degree alone.

With your Grail in mind, finding the right talent is possible, even in different geographies, because in any interview – be it remote or in person – a truly engaging interaction with the right probing questions will reveal whether the person you are talking to is a good fit. The determining factors for whether a positive attitude is present become more apparent when you delve into the candidate's experiences; challenges they have faced, opportunities they have embraced or missed, their education – both worldly and formal – and a touch of personal background.

## Scenario tactic

The 'scenario tactic' can, in my experience, be quite useful when you are posing your key questions. The scenario tactic involves asking questions that don't necessarily have a single right or wrong answer. It poses a dilemma to the candidate that requires careful consideration, and the response is always quite telling.

These types of questions examine critical thinking capacity and the candidate's ability to ask pertinent questions back at the interviewer. You might ask something along the lines of, 'If you were to choose between saving the lives of a thousand people or significantly improving the lives of a million people in misery, what would you do?' This is a question that requires a lot of unpacking. The candidate may want to know who exactly the thousand are; why they might be important versus the million, etc. It's an open question and any answer gives the opportunity for the candidates to showcase their logical

thinking, innate problem-solving ability and empathy with the situation.

## Red flags

On the flipside, there are obviously a few red flags that one should always be on the lookout for when vetting a candidate. First, anyone who doesn't listen and engage is generally not a good bet. Working in a team requires high ability to collaborate with others. Secondly, the willingness to take responsibility and ownership when posed with a relevant business scenario is key. In my experience, successful team members are usually those that want to be part of a solution and proactively accept the challenges. And finally, ethics is a must-have. This can be hard to gauge in initial meetings but with a dilemma question or two, scenarios can be quite revealing. If integrity is truly present, they will likely embrace the question and elaborate on the answer.

Any interview is just a subset of potentially upcoming normal interactions, and if the interview is going well for both parties, it should be a taste of positive interactions to come. No matter where your candidates are – whether they are in front of you or on the other side of a computer screen – if the Holy Grail is there, it will reveal itself. One just needs to encourage it to come out.”

## ABOUT WILLIAM KUAN

William aims to instil true passion about Roche Diagnostic's solutions and products, which filters through to all aspects of the organisation so that in turn, the organisation can collectively translate that "contagious" passion through to patients and customers. It falls to marketing and communications to build strategic imperatives and make them a reality, both internally and externally, so that the ultimate result is achieved: to bring positive impact to patients and customers.

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