

## HIRING TOP RETAIL EMPLOYEES: TOP 5 PERSONALITY TRAITS TO LOOK FOR WHEN SCREENING

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Madly staffing up for the Christmas season ahead, many retailers struggle with not just having enough of the right **products** in stock but also enough **employees** on hand to service customers. Employees are literally the face of a retailer. But how do you find the **right** employees who fit your brand experience **AND** build your business?

Retail strategy consultant [David Ian Gray](#), Founder of [DIG360](#), advises retailers across North America. His DIG360 team works collaboratively with CEOs and senior leaders of retail organizations to help them find their healthy growth path and transform in changing times. When we asked him how he addresses these hiring challenges for his clients, David agreed that "fit" is absolutely crucial for front-line employees in retail stores.

"When the person is not the right fit, they're not engaged. And when they're not engaged, it hurts the customer experience, the brand and the business. But 'fit' is often hard to define, often used as a catchall for the hiring whims of longstanding employees who want to bring in others 'who seem like me'. That is risky and can lead to staleness and uniformity in a maturing chain. The retailer must ensure they can capture and telegraph to all what "the right fit means", articulating the internal brand. A bad hire or employee turnover, both voluntary and involuntary, puts a strain on hiring managers trying to hit their sales targets and to build customer loyalty."

We couldn't agree more.

Employee turnover (both resignations and terminations) can most often be traced to "**a simple mismatch in the hiring process between a candidate's work values, attitude, and capabilities, and what it takes to be successful on the job,**" says [Stephen Race](#), an occupational psychologist and one of North American's leading

experts in psychometrics for hiring. "Getting a deep understanding of a candidate's hard wiring and default settings greatly increases the likelihood that they will be energized by the job and stay engaged long term," says Race.

Knowing this, what should retail employers be looking for in new front-line hires to reduce turnover?

## **(1) Achievement Focus: 25% of the overall weighting/importance**

- A person with a high need for achievement demonstrates a strong work ethic through a consistently high level of energy and focus.
- Thrives in a fast-paced environment, seeks challenge and is self-motivated.
- Keeps a clear focus on achieving targets.
- Is comfortable performing demanding tasks.
- Stays enthusiastic, optimistic and committed to reaching goals by 'following the system'.
- Recovers quickly from rejection or disappointment and starts each new opportunity with renewed energy.

## **(2) Open Communication, Integrity and Responsibility: 20%**

- Sociable, open, approachable, and outgoing when interacting with customers.
- Works to establish immediate credibility and build long-lasting relationships with customers.
- Demonstrates an honest desire to provide friendly, efficient, quality service to the customer.
- Resolves customer complaints and issues quickly by listening, expressing understanding, and taking the appropriate actions.
- Builds trust by behaving in a manner that builds the company's reputation for honest dealings.

### **(3) Positive Attitude & Product Passion: 20%**

- Shows a passion for the company's products and encourages team members to share this passion.
- Displays a personal sense of style that fits the image and values of the company.
- Applies product knowledge, training, and experience to enhance the team's performance.
- Stays informed of developments in the industry and knowledge of competitors' practices and uses such information in day-to-day work.

### **(4) Coachability: 20%**

- Is open to learning new skills, knowledge and better ways to perform tasks.
- Is open to change and responds positively to suggestions for improvement and constructive criticism.
- Shows the ability to learn and apply new skills on the job.
- Quickly learns new skills and product knowledge and applies them to on the job situations.
- Actively seeks out job-related skill development and product knowledge.

### **(5) Empathy & Aggression Control: 15%**

- Works effectively with team members by being cooperative and committed to meeting team goals.
- Displays warmth and sense of humor.
- Shows genuine interest in and sensitivity to others.
- Listens well and values the opinions and perspectives of others.
- Shows flexibility and team spirit by 'pitching in' to help co-workers without being asked.
- Is helpful and patient with new team members.
- Shows appreciation for the contributions of co-workers.
- Stays optimistic and avoids involvement in gossip, negative talk and unhealthy competition between team members.

Identifying which team members have what it takes to survive and thrive in a busy retail setting will prevent unwanted staff shortages, culture disruptions, and customer dissatisfaction. This should be done as early as possible in the hiring process, ideally in the pre-employment screening process when applicants apply. It can be conducted with validated personality assessments which contain tailored behavioral-interview questions about how the candidate has handled past situations.

A retail team should run like a well-oiled machine all year round. To do this, you'll need to have all team members aligned in their values and attitude, which helps create happier workplaces and more profitable operations.

**Author:** [Greg Ford](#) is the CEO of TalentClick Workforce Solutions Inc. In over 40 countries worldwide, leading companies (including big retailers) use TalentClick's behavioral-risk personality assessments to hire and train better employees and create happier, safer, and more productive workplaces.

To see the assessment and report that was used for this article (Workstyle & Performance Profile, and Work Values & Attitude), [visit this page](#).

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