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Cheryl Oh

Why Would Anyone Hire YOU?

by Greg Lappin

Greg developed the Flagship Athletic Club, a 19 court multipurpose club in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. In 1993, he spearheaded development of the Rochester Athletic Club, a 270,000 square foot multipurpose club, also with 19 tennis courts. A minority owner, Greg served as the General Manager for 350 employees and 13,000 members. The tennis program produced a world junior champion, a Sports Illustrated National Athlete of the Year, numerous D1 scholarship recipients, multiple state champions, and the USTA Facility of the Year Award. Greg recently retired as National Tennis Director for Life Time Fitness in February, 2015. He oversaw the tennis operations for 21 clubs. He has received IHRSA's Distinguished Service Award, and several NOVA 7 Awards (the Oscars for the fitness industry). Greg wrote the book, Tennis Doubles, Winning Strategies for all Levels. A volunteer for the USTA at the national level for more than 15 years, Greg has served on many committees and chaired the Learning and Leadership Committee.

In my previous article (*The Purpose of a Business*, January/February 2015), I stated that the purpose of a business is to **stay in business**. This could be accomplished by seizing an opportunity or filling an unfulfilled need. To reiterate, you stay in business by solving someone's problem.

If we can meet the needs of enough customers, then we will reach a desired, and necessary, outcome - to make a profit. Although producing a profit is the ultimate goal, it is not the initial reason to start a business.

Why Would Anyone Hire YOU?

Now let's shift our attention to the purpose of a job. If the purpose of a business is to solve problems, then the business needs people who can solve those problems.

So, why would anyone hire you? People are hired to solve an existing problem - to achieve a result. Therefore, a business would hire you to fulfill a defined component toward its desired result. That is, if you have the qualifications and experience to solve their problem.

I define a problem as the difference - or gap - between what you want and what you receive. For example, if it is of value to have the area around the tennis courts clean and there is constantly trash on the ground - that is a problem. Hiring someone new, or adding maintenance or janitorial duties to a current employee, would alleviate the problem. Another example would be to launch a 10 & Under Program at your facility, only to find there is no one on staff qualified to fill the need. That's a problem! The need would be fulfilled by hiring someone to teach that age group who is knowledgeable, interested and experienced.

How can you make yourself more marketable - more desirable - so an employer will hire you over another candidate for the job?

Here is the secret. Determine the problems the business is facing. Be certain you possess the skill sets needed to solve those problems. Present yourself as *the best solution*. Be able to explain your performance skills with concrete behaviors.

There are two categories of skills. W. Edwards Deming, the American business leader who was charged with guiding the economic reconstruction of Japan after World War II, championed this idea of two categories of skills. He stated, "Every job is **people** focused or **process** focused." The language I use in my clubs is that all jobs are *interpersonal skills (people)* or *task knowledge/task skills (process)* in nature.

To the right a two column list has been compiled of skills that make up interpersonal interaction and essential task knowledge. First, let me explain the bicycle. I call interpersonal communication skills 'front wheel' skills and task skills 'back wheel' skills. I use the bicycle analogy, because in a bicycle each wheel has a distinct purpose.

The front wheel steers the bike. Similarly, interpersonal communication skills - front wheel skills - steer us through our jobs and all interactions. The back wheel has the chain and supplies the power. Task knowledge provides the expertise to power us to achieve a defined result. For example, if you understand the proper unit turn, the most effective grip, and how loading and unloading works, you have the knowledge base to teach that stroke - that task.



Front Wheel Relationships (people)

Interpersonal Communication Skills

- Non verbal
- Tone
- Words

Oral Communication Skills

- One on One
- Small Groups
- Large Groups
- Public Speaking
- Presentations

Listening

Written Communication Skills

Create a Healthy Climate

- Human Relation Skills
- Develop Teamwork
- Build Trust
- Understand Social Styles
- Conflict Management
- Develop Relationships
- Recognition/Reward
- Personal Integrity
- Live Mission & Values

Back Wheel Task, Task Knowledge (process)

Create Purpose

- Values/Mission
- Vision
- Visionary
- Strategic Planning
- Customer Service

Administrative Skills

- Preparation
- Priority Management
- Commitment
- Goal Setting
- Multitasking

Technical Knowledge

- MIS
- Social Media
- Computer skills
- Industry Knowledge

Supervisory

- Support & Develop
- Communication
- Delegation
- Role Model

Tennis

- Stringing
- Teach Sending Skills
- Teach Receiving Skills
- Teach Styles of Play
- Teach Mental Toughness
- Manage Tournaments
- Teach 10 & Under
- Teach High Performance

Let's examine front wheel skills. Interpersonal communication is accomplished through words, tone and non verbals (body language). A landmark study conducted at the University of Southern California concluded that in day to day communication, how we come across to another person is:

- 55% Body Language
- 38% Tone
- 7% Words

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This reveals that the most powerful form of interpersonal communication is through non verbals.

Professionals must ask themselves, "Do I look all my clients in the eye? Do I have a firm handshake? Do I nod when someone is speaking to demonstrate that I am listening?"

Are you aware how to use proximity of space to your advantage to be the most effective teacher? Hopefully, you don't often observe other pros standing against the fence clutching their racquet across their chest.

Everything we do, every move we make, tells a story. Non verbal communication screams whether or not we are engaged. According to a study conducted at Harvard University, during the first two minutes of meeting someone for the first time, communication is *80% non verbal*. This is demonstrative proof that you never get a second chance at a first impression.

Non verbal communication is only one component of the interpersonal communication category. Writing skills are another part. How are your writing skills? If you are in a leadership role, how well do you resolve conflict? How well do you create a motivating team environment? Are your values explained clearly on how you operate your department? These are also front wheel skills.

Next, let's address the list of back wheel skills. Can you string racquets? Can you perform necessary computer skills like Excel? Do you know how to assemble a budget? How good are you at priority management? Many back wheel skills are off court skills, or non tennis in nature. Every tennis department will need someone who is competent in these tasks. Back wheel skills power the program. How many have you mastered?

To answer to the question, "Why would anyone hire you?" ask yourself, "Do I have the skills necessary to achieve the defined result to fulfill the employer's needs and solve their problem?"

Using the bicycle example, complete the following exercise.

1. Circle the top two skills in each column you have mastered. Know how to promote those strengths.
2. Circle the top two skills in each column you would like to master.
3. Prioritize which is the most important skill to acquire that will give you the best opportunity for advancement.
4. Set up an action plan to go about mastering that skill. Have a long term goal. Use short term goals to allow for multiple successes. Use the SMART system. Each goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely.
5. Once you have mastered the first skill, prioritize and master the next one.

The bicycle visual is a helpful analogy. For a bike to work well, both wheels must be working; both tires must be filled with air; both are the same size and have equal importance. This means no one can give themselves a free pass by saying, "I have skills in one area, but not the other." An employee cannot say, "So what if I am jerk, I never make mistakes" or "So what if I am incompetent, I am the nicest person in the department." No manager can afford an employee who has one wheel that's fine, while the other has a flat.

You want that dream job? You want to be on the top of the list for that promotion? Study the front and back wheel skills and develop a plan to master the ones in which you are deficient. Think how much more marketable you would be if you could master two new skills every year. Five years from now, you would have 10 skills you don't have now.

Study and understand the problems (unmet opportunities) of the business where you are interviewing. Prepare yourself to show that you have the front and back wheel skills to meet their needs.

Gain the skills an employer needs from you to achieve a defined, desired result. Solve their problem, and you'll have no career advancement problems. Good luck!

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