

Talentcare

Seeing Things Clearly:

How to Hire the Best Opticians



AUTHORS

Elle Aldridge, EVP of Client Services

Frankie Drennan, Marketing Specialist





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Introduction



JOHN PINTO

President of J. Pinto & Associates,
San Diego and ophthalmic
practice management consultant

“We spend about thirty cents of every dollar we take in on staffing costs, so there’s a lot at stake. Getting it right can make big, positive differences in profitability, and doing it poorly can really kill a practice’s financial performance. It’s really impossible to place too much importance on what you’re doing in this area.”¹

¹ Leonard, C. (Ed.). (2019, October 07). *The Ophthalmic Staffing Shortage*. Retrieved October 02, 2020, from <https://www.reviewofophthalmology.com/article/the-ophthalmic-staffing-shortage>



As you are aware, there have been a ton of employment changes during the pandemic.

There's some good news for you, though. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Post-pandemic, your practice is going to be given a rare opportunity that you *must* take advantage of. There is about to be an influx of candidates applying to your practices' open positions. You will be given the opportunity to select the best of the best, but it is going to require that you know how exactly to hone in on these highly desirable candidates.

You need to understand where these high performers are job searching, why they are taking positions, what they value and in what types of environments they excel.

Once you have a grasp on the criteria for high performers, you can ensure your recruiting processes align with where these applicants are applying and ensure your working environment supports the highest talent.

Talentcare works with hundreds of optometry practices across the country and has a strong grasp on what entails a good optician. Our research, experience and conversations with clients have taught us a thing or two. Take note - high performing opticians are all about communication, the details, and teamwork. Keep reading for the scoop on what you can do as a company to identify these criteria throughout the interview process and keep them on your team for the long haul.



CHECKOUT OUR ARTICLE ON POST-PANDEMIC HIRING:

*The Onslaught is Coming:
Will You Be Ready to Catch a Wave?*

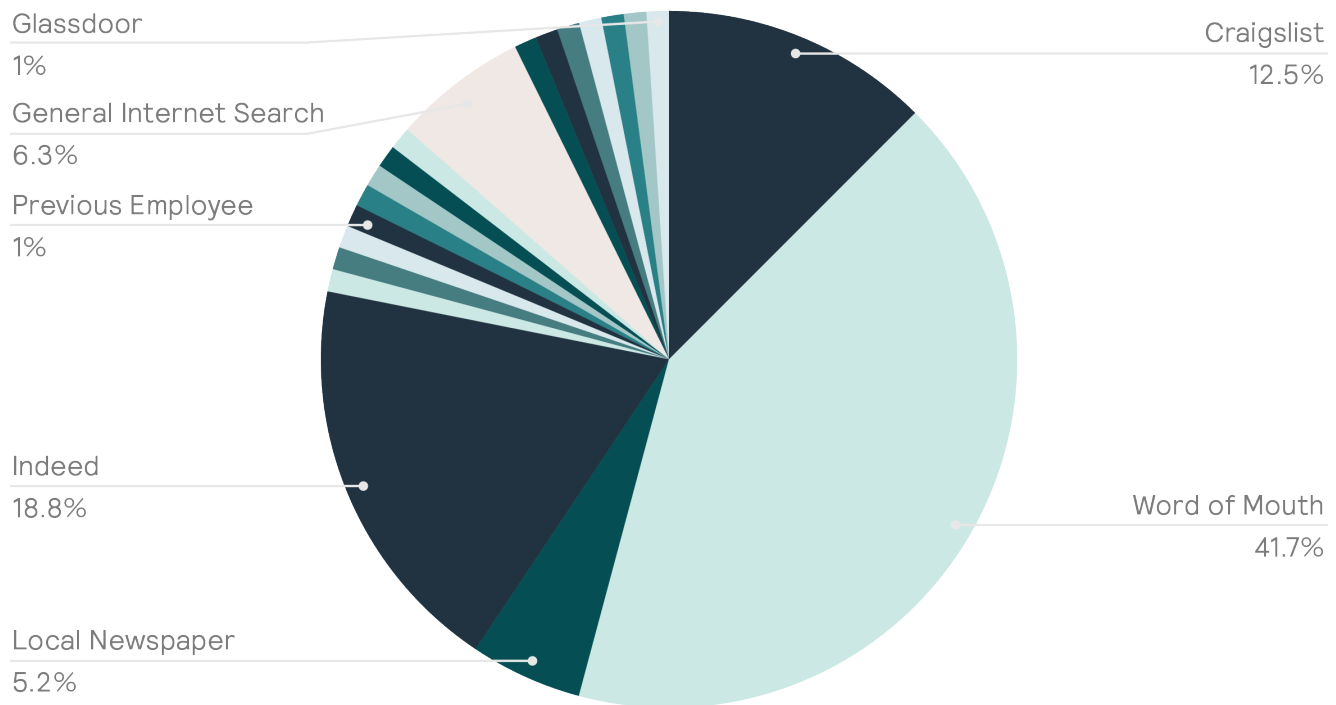


HIDE AND SEEK:

The Unexpected Places Ideal Candidates Are Job-Seeking

*Where are these high performers looking for employment?
Where should I be promoting my open positions to ensure
that these candidates are seeing them?*

How did you find your current employer?



Only about 1 in 5 top performers found their current position on Glassdoor or Indeed.

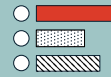
Talentcare conducted a survey and reached out to 349 Opticians who were either nominated by their practices as top performers, or were actively investing in their career through continued learning.



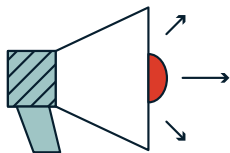
141
RESPONDED



92
COMPLETED THE
OPTICIAN SURVEY



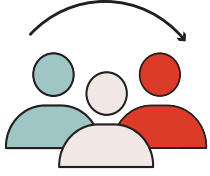
55
COMPLETED THE
ASSESSMENT



Top performers are leaning on word-of-mouth recommendations

as well as online job postings. In order to even be considered by these top candidates, you need to have your open positions posted on your website and on job boards where they are searching; but, most importantly, they need to be attractive and entice the candidates to actually apply.

Make sure your postings and career site are easy to navigate, feature impactful company reviews and give the candidate a glimpse into what it is like to work for you. Your current employees stick around for a reason, so take the time to ask them why and make sure all potential candidates will want to, too!



PEEL BACK THE LAYERS:

The Core Competencies to Seek

Now that the top performers have a good understanding of what it is like to work for my company and have applied, how can I identify them out of all the candidates?

Before you dedicate time to interview hundreds of candidates, it's important to have an understanding of what makes a top performer a top performer. Good news for you! We've learned in our work with optometry offices across North America what exactly it takes. These are things you need to be aware of when you are reviewing candidates and interviewing them. Having a grasp on these criteria will allow you to look for specific skills and personalities that will work with your team.

Communication is Key:

This group's highest cognitive strengths relate to vocabulary and verbal reasoning. This group can analyze information using both concrete and abstract information and exhibits advanced verbal fluency.

- Interestingly, top performing Opticians do not perceive themselves as influential. They are typically more concerned with communication than persuasion.
- They are straightforward and upfront, preferring honesty regardless of their own goals.

It's in the Details:

This group perceives value in orderliness, and are likely to spend time keeping their workspace clean and tidy.

- They prefer an environment where attention to detail is critical and will work hard to avoid mistakes.
- Instinctive decision-making, often relying on their "gut"

We're All in This Together:

This group enjoys contributing their skills to the success of the team and following through on the plans and vision of others.

- They prefer to be active participants in decision-making.
- This group prefers to work in a culture where it is the norm to be critical or to question.



DON'T BE NICE:

How to Avoid the Most Common Mistakes

Because opticians are the primary salespeople in an optical practice, many believe that searching for someone that is “nice” is the number one quality of a well-fitting optician. Listen, opticians are NOT naturally gentle people. They have a bite. They are competitive and desire group-oriented success. When their coworkers don't have the same enthusiasm for one another or don't want to help each other achieve goals, they get really temperamental about it. When unexpected, this type of go-getter personality can cause some issues in the team dynamic and practices end up firing the highest performing opticians.

With this in mind, stay focused on the list of qualities mentioned above vs. focusing on all the “nice” candidates.



Rather than reshaping the profile of an optician – one of your revenue-generating roles – consider reshaping the profile of the team around them to people who are equally as motivated to create mutual success. This will remove the most common tension point between opticians and their coworkers.



YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

How Do You Find It?

*How can I ensure that these candidates have these skills?
What can I do to make sure they will fit before hiring them?*

STEP 1

SCREEN AND TEST

Optical practices have limited time for interviewing. Deploying the latest in screening and psychometric testing helps ease the number of interviews practices actually have to do. Practices who screen and test before ever speaking to a candidate save an enormous amount of time vs. interviewing each and every candidate that applies. They can continue on with their daily

activities and dedicate the time they do have for hiring, to only interview the best fit candidates.

Along with saving time, this process also allows the interviewer to get a deep understanding of cognitive strengths and work style preferences that might not be so easily identifiable with strictly verbal interview questions.

Beyond the Basics

	Experience & Requirements	Skills & Requirements	Learning Strengths	Work Style	Cultural Fit
Preferred Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years experience • Prior employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifications • Education • Specific skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Learning capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job fit • Role appeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company fit • Team fit
Assess for Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviews & References 				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills Tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online Assessments 		

STEP 2

COMPARE

With our *TalentAssess* methodology, we develop a Top Performer Preferred Profile for each open position and compare it to the candidates test results to see if they are a good fit. These profiles are based on the hiring managers' assessment of important characteristics, and the employees' assessment which measures learning strengths, work style, and cultural fit.

Once candidates fill out the test and assessments, you can compare their results to the preferred profile and instantly know if it is worth your time to pursue the candidate further. Candidates' results either fall to the left or the right of the desired Preferred Profile range, which then allows you to see what skills and values they have and compare it to exactly what you are looking for.

What we measure with a Preferred Profile

Cognitive Strengths

Logic, Deduction, & Reasoning

BASIC

Individuals prefer to work with concrete situations and information to draw conclusions. They like to use familiar or existing information to solve problems.



COMPLEX

Individuals prefer to incorporate both concrete and abstract information to draw conclusions. They are comfortable developing new information to solve problems.

Numeric Problem Solving

BASIC

Individuals possess the ability to perform basic mathematical operations in response to routine problems or concrete work situations.



COMPLEX

Individuals possess the ability to perform complex mathematical operations that can be applied to complex or novel problems and situations.

Vocabulary & Verbal Reasoning

BASIC

Individuals exhibit a fundamental level of verbal fluency, which is useful for everyday communication of routine or concrete issues.



COMPLEX

Individuals exhibit an advanced level of verbal fluency, which is useful for communicating abstract ideas and complex problem solving.

Work Style Preferences

Conforming

LESS CONFORMING

Individuals prefer situations in which rules and authority are flexible. They believe that certain rules should not be followed in all circumstances and tend not to rely on the opinions of others to guide rule-following behavior.



MORE CONFORMING

Individuals prefer situations in which rules and authority are strictly adhered to. They believe that rules should always be followed, and tend to be more concerned with the opinions of others in guiding rule-following behavior.

Conscientiousness

SPONTANEOUS – UNPLANNED

Individuals prefer to approach their work in an unstructured manner, choosing to act rather than plan. They prefer environments that allow them to move from task to task and that do not require a lot of preparation for activities or work.



DELIBERATE – PLANNED

Individuals prefer to approach their work in a structured manner, choosing to create a plan prior to acting. They prefer environments that allow them time to create and enact detailed plans and that require attention to detail or preparation for work.

Decision-Making

INTUITIVE

Individuals prefer a more instinctive, 'gut feeling' approach to work. They are comfortable forming decision based on incomplete information or after considering only a few options. They tend to rely more on their existing knowledge or expertise of the situation.



OBJECTIVE

Individuals prefer a more deliberate, fact-gathering approach to work. They are more comfortable forming decisions after collecting and considering many facts and thinking things through. They tend to prefer work that allows a lengthier decision-making process.

Work Style Preferences, (continued)

Enthusiasm & Stamina

DELIBERATE – MEASURED

Individuals prefer to go about their work in a calm and measured fashion. As a result, they tend to be more deliberate in their actions; they take breaks to recharge.



ENERGETIC – LIVELY

Individuals prefer to go about their work in an energetic and active fashion. As a result, they tend to quickly engage in new tasks and work for longer periods of time without taking a break.

Leadership

TEAM MEMBER

Individuals prefer to serve the best interest of the group by serving in a supportive role. They enjoy contributing their skills and knowledge to the group's success and following through on the plans and vision of others.



TEAM LEADER

Individuals prefer to serve the best interest of the group by taking charge, planning, and leading. They enjoy bringing people together around a collective goal and communicating their vision and plans for the organization.

Organization

UNSTRUCTURED

Individuals tend to be less concerned about clutter and tidiness, to the extent they perceive other tasks to be more valuable or worthy of their time. As a result, although they may appreciate order, they may not be inclined to expend the effort required to keep things neat when there are other things to be done.



STRUCTURED

Individuals tend to be more concerned about clutter and tidiness, to the extent they perceive keeping order to be as valuable a task as other work tasks. As a result, they will make an effort to keep their workspace tidy, put things away in their proper place, and be more likely to spend time to keep things clean.

Work Style Preferences, (continued)

Persuasiveness

UNINFLUENTIAL

Individuals prefer situations that allow them to remain in the background and are less concerned with persuading others to accept their point of view. Although they may talk less than others, they are typically more concerned with communication than with persuasion.



INFLUENTIAL

Individuals prefer situations that allow them to take center stage; they value their ability to persuade others. They tend to express their thoughts and feelings in a way that will influence others to embrace their points of view and perspectives.

Reactiveness

CALM

Individuals tend to exhibit relatively stable demeanors and are infrequently affected by events going on around them. They are less likely to respond to difficulties with frustration or anger.



EXCITABLE

Individuals tend to exhibit more variability in their demeanors as a result of events going on around them. They are more likely to be overwhelmed or frustrated by difficulties.

Resourcefulness

ROUTINE

Individuals tend to prefer familiar or routine situations. They are most comfortable with established processes and procedures and enjoy dealing with a discrete set of matters.



ADAPTABLE

Individuals tend to prefer situations that present some novel aspect or issue. They are comfortable handling difficult or unusual situations with the opportunity to adapt and develop their own solutions.

Work Style Preferences, (continued)

Self-Reliance

EXTERNAL ORIENTATION

Individuals tend to believe that their successes and failures are attributed to factors outside of their control. They tend to see these factors as presenting more difficulties and challenges to their success than opportunities.



INTERNAL ORIENTATION

Individuals tend to attribute their own successes and failures to personal factors within their control. They see their own role in creating opportunities and overcoming challenges; they are often prepared to take advantage of them to influence their success.

Sociableness

RESERVED

Individuals prefer situations that allow them to work alone or in small familiar groups. They are comfortable staying in the background, keeping to themselves, and limiting interactions with large groups of people. They prefer to contribute ideas after periods of internal processing, rather than speaking spontaneously.



OUTGOING

Individuals prefer situations that offer opportunities for socializing and interacting with many others. They are comfortable being the center of attention, making friends quickly, and seeking out larger gatherings of people. They prefer to contribute ideas by talking things through.

Straightforwardness

EQUIVOCAL

Individuals prefer environments that may require them to spin or manage information. They are comfortable bending the truth or overstating issues to achieve their goals.



STRAIGHTFORWARD

Individuals prefer environments that require candidness and being upfront about information. They are comfortable sticking to the truth, regardless of their own goals.

Cultural Preferences

Competitive

GROUP-ORIENTED

Individuals generally prefer a culture that rewards people and groups for helping others. They generally prefer a culture in which they get noticed when they spend as much energy helping others achieve goals as they do achieving their own goals.



INDIVIDUAL-ORIENTED

Individuals who generally prefer a culture that rewards individuals for surpassing others and who may believe that winning is everything. They prefer a culture in which their individual achievements are noticed; they may view others as competitors.

Oppositional

AGREEABLE

Individuals generally prefer working in a culture where people are non-confrontational. They are not inclined to argue an issue unless they think it is important. They generally do not point out errors when they think others are wrong. They are likely to value getting along with people and are less likely to speak up at the risk of appearing confrontational or critical.



CRITICAL

Individuals generally prefer working in a culture where the norm is to be critical, to question, or to oppose the ideas of others. They may be inclined to argue issues and point out errors when they think others are wrong. They may not like to be contradicted and are not likely to be as concerned about getting along with everyone.

Perfectionism

LESS ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Individuals generally prefer working in a culture where people are non-confrontational. They are not inclined to argue an issue unless they think it is important. They generally do not point out errors when they think others are wrong. They are likely to value getting along with people and are less likely to speak up at the risk of appearing confrontational or critical.



MORE ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Individuals generally prefer working in a culture where the norm is to be critical, to question, or to oppose the ideas of others. They may be inclined to argue issues and point out errors when they think others are wrong. They may not like to be contradicted and are not likely to be as concerned about getting along with everyone.

Power

INFORMAL

Individuals prefer a culture of authority that is informal. They prefer authority that is based on respect and expertise rather than power associated with formal roles and titles. They are comfortable with cultures that emphasize discussion and communication and encourage participative decision-making.

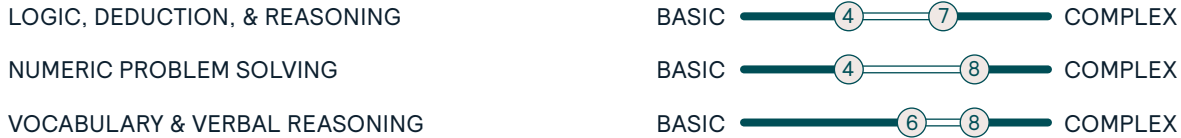


FORMAL

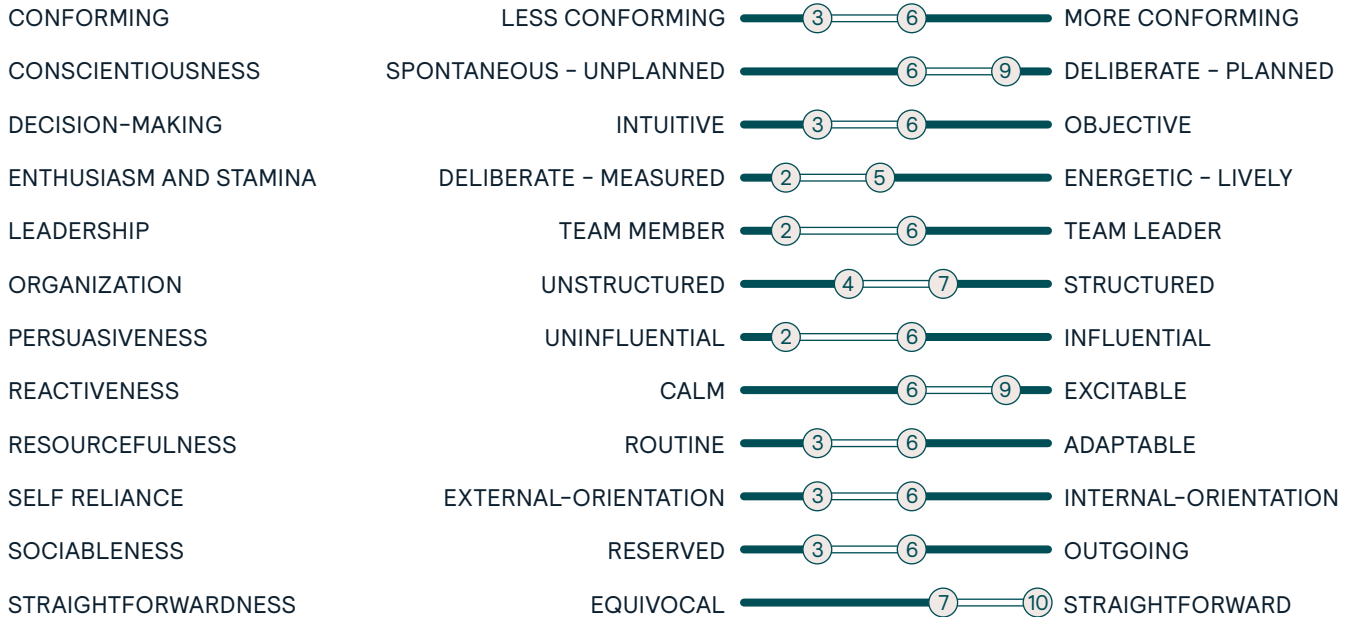
Individuals prefer a culture of authority that is formal. They prefer authority that is based in formal roles and titles and is supported by a clear hierarchy. They are comfortable with cultures that emphasize control, directive styles of communication, and top-down decision-making.

Optician Preferred Profile

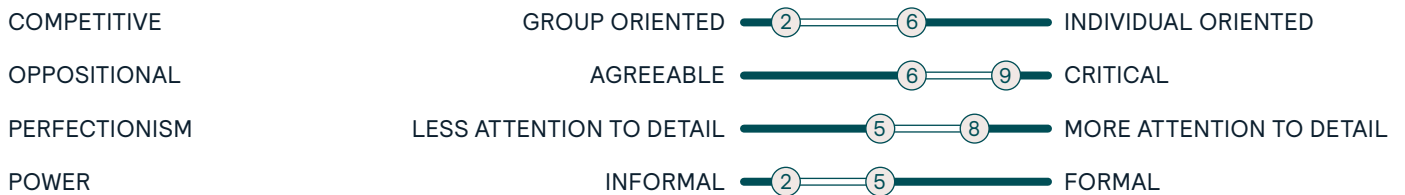
LEARNING STRENGTHS



WORK STYLE PREFERENCES



CULTURAL PREFERENCES



- The preferred optician profile shows that this is a group that can analyze information using both concrete and abstract information and is able to articulate ideas effectively.
- This group works well in situations when flexibility is permitted, and where not all things are planned or structured. They utilize concrete information to solve problems and take action, and they respond to their environments in a deliberate manner.
- This group is concerned about their environment being cluttered or organized, and they enjoy dealing with a discrete set of matters. Whereas their demeanor may be viewed as calm, they are more conscious of what is going on in their environment and are more likely to be overwhelmed or frustrated by difficulties. They are outgoing and are comfortable with new situations and large gatherings of people. They approach their environment with candor and stick to the facts.
- They prefer a culture which is team-based that rewards people and groups for helping others. Their preferred environment is tolerant of mistakes and authority is more informal—where authority is based more on expertise and respect and less on formal titles. They prefer that decision-making is participative and inclusive.



STEP 3

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

It sounds obvious, but you would be amazed at how many times we see interview questions that only cover the basics of job history and past experiences. It's important to dig deeper. Ask a variety of behavioral questions that give you an understanding of a candidate's values and a deeper explanation for their screening and test scores.

As part of our process, we developed an interview guide, which features a standard set of questions that go along with a preferred profile. If someone scores "left of range" or "right of range" there are recommended questions to ask to further qualify a candidate.

Here are a few examples:

Dimension: Persuasiveness

LEFT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Give an example of a time when you were able to get people who initially didn't agree with you to change their minds and go with your plan or suggestion.

RIGHT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Have you had a job that required you to keep your opinions and or thoughts to yourself more than you preferred? How did you cope and where there any difficulties that arose?

- Optician Preferred Profile Range: 2-6 (range of uninfluential to influential)
- What to look for? Opticians are the main sales people of your practice, so you do not want them to self-identify as too persuasive. They need to interact with customers without being "too salesy".



**CHECKOUT OUR VIDEO ON
HOW TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES:**

*Talentcare Survival Guide:
How to Change With the Times*

Dimension: Resourcefulness

LEFT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Talk about a specific instance in which you were required to manage a complex challenge at work. Describe the challenge, what you did, and the outcome.

RIGHT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Describe a job or task in which you were not required to address problems and create solutions. What was that like for you?

- Optician Preferred Profile Range: 3-6 (range of routine to adaptable)
- What to look for? High performing opticians work well in situations when flexibility is permitted, and where not all things are planned or structured. Focus on right of range. They like to follow someone else's vision, but contribute their own thinking into the process. Giving them an opportunity to buy in before you roll out a process, and ask how they could help make it successful, can make it easier for them to adapt to changes.

Dimension: Perfectionism

LEFT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Talk about a time when your work required a high level of attention to detail. What was the situation and how did you carry out your work?

RIGHT OF DESIRED RANGE

Q1: Because of work schedules and time demands, it is not always possible to produce work that is perfect. Tell me about a time when you were in this situation. How did you handle the work?

- Optician Preferred Profile Range: 5-8 (range of less attention to detail to more attention to detail)
- What to look for? Focus on the left of range – if a candidate scores low on perfectionism, you want to look for reasons they may have underreported it. Many times, these candidates have been coached about being too much of a perfectionist. This can skew their scores and report them on the left side of the desired range, when in reality they do pay attention to the details.





Conclusion



Remember, opticians are the primary salespeople in an optical practice, so it can be a struggle to attract and retain the best.

With a good understanding of who outperforms, you can identify the core skills during the interview process, save yourself time and onboard the best of the best.

KEY STEPS:

- 1** Make sure your job postings are enticing and where candidates are looking – job boards and your own career site
- 2** Look for candidates that will do the job well – high performers value communication, the details, and teamwork
- 3** Get to really know the candidate – screen & test, compare to a preferred profile and ask the right questions.

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Contact us to learn more.

We know talent for your optic practice, how to find them and recruit them.

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