



JEFFREY GITOMER

Want a winning employee? Hire an athlete

Everyone wants to hire the best person for the job. I do, too.

Here's a concept: hire an athlete.

It may help you as an employer to make the right choice, or at least a better choice. And it's a reality check if you're an individual striving for a career win.

Are you fit to be hired?

Are you fit to succeed?

Are you as physically fit as you are mentally fit?

Is physical fitness tied to mental fitness?

Do you think of yourself as a winner?

And why am I asking all these questions?

I went around my office and asked each person if he or she ever played sports on a team or competitively.

Many said yes.

Many had played competitive team sports in college, and most spoke about it enthusiastically and with fond memories.

What I found most interesting was that the people who had played sports were among my best employees.

Not just based on their job experience.

Equally based on their athletic experience, their team experience, their competitive experience, their coaching experience and their winning experience.

If you're an employer, you may want to look past job experience and read deeper into athletic experience.

It will give you greater insight as to the life skills of people, not just their job skills.

If you were a competitive athlete, you have qualities and a wealth of experience that most people don't.

You have the self-discipline and dedication to get in shape and stay in shape.

Your desire to win is high, and you're willing to give it everything you've got to play and win the game.

Think about that.

Employers are always looking for "experience" when they hire. What kind of experience?

Me?

I look for smart, self-starting, happy people who know how to win.

I'd rather have an eager athlete I can train (or should I say, willing to learn), than a know-it-all with 10 years of experience that already thinks he knows everything before he walks in the door.

An athlete knows he or she

has to warm up before playing the game and is therefore more likely to be prepared for the job, the customer and the sale.

Athletes love to compete. Athletes know there are skills that must be learned and mastered in order to win.

And athletes have the drive, determination and self discipline to learn them and master them.

Athletes know there are skills that must be learned and mastered in order to win.

There are other great, but subtle, qualities that athletes have:

■ They have made friends with many of their teammates, but even the ones they have not made friends with, they still know how to get along with and play with as a team.

■ They have made victory a habit. They know what winning feels like, and how to repeat it.

■ They have stamina, based on practice and desire.

■ They have superior hand-eye co-ordination, and are more observant of their surroundings.

■ They have the ability, interest and desire to learn "the game," not just "the job."

■ They play by the rules and have learned that there's a penalty or a price for not playing by the rules.

■ They visit their old coach. There's a pride in going back and telling your coach who and what you have become, often from the foundation that the coach helped create.

And they bring this set of skills that they have learned over their early years to the job. They bring winning and a winning attitude to the workplace.

Want a complete list of what an athlete brings to your business? Go to www.gitomer.com, register if you are a first time user, and enter the word "athlete" in the GitBit box. ◆

Jeffrey Gitomer (salesman@gitomer.com) is the author of The Little Red Book of Selling and The Little Red Book of Sales Answers. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings and conducts Internet training programs on selling and customer service at www.trainone.com.