

Meghan M. Biro: Why is hiring so hard? Tell me everyone. I know, I've been there, done that, felt that pain. On this week's episode of #WorkTrends, we're talking about how to hire the right people with two hiring experts. Carol Quinn will tell us why we should be using motivation-based interviewing, and Nick Martin from AON will tell us how he's rethinking assessment and selection.

Meghan M. Biro: Welcome to the #WorkTrends podcast from TalentCulture. I'm your host, Meghan M. Biro. Every week we interview interesting people who are reimagining work, and join us on Twitter every Wednesday, 1:30 PM Eastern, using the hashtag #WorkTrends. I'm joined by my friend and cohost Kevin W. Grossman.

Kevin Grossman: Hello Megan M. Biro. I cannot believe it. Can you believe it? We're already halfway through January.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, I can believe it only because it's 20 degrees and windy out today. It's a reality check on my end. If we're not careful though, especially out there in Cali where you are and it's tough sometimes to tell those seasons, we're going to blink and it's going to be here.

Kevin Grossman: Absolutely, you are correct. Well, or at least earlier, right after the beginning of the year we started getting some good rains and there's still more coming, so that's good news for those of us in Cali.

Meghan M. Biro: No question.

Kevin Grossman: But we've got a lot of topics to cover between now and the end of the year, so we better not blink. Right?

Meghan M. Biro: Absolutely. And I am really excited about today's show, about interviewing and assessments. It's chock full of good info.

Kevin Grossman: Absolutely. And we got two really good guests that we're going to get to, but before we do that, let's get to the news first.

Kevin Grossman: Since we're talking about hiring today and some really important meaty subjects such as interviewing and assessments, I found some lighter fare that I thought it was kind of fun. It relates to interviews, it's from Money Magazine and it's talking about recommendations of what colors to wear for a job interview. Really, that's what the article is about. So Megan, what do you think? What color do you think hiring managers recommend not to wear?

Meghan M. Biro: Oh boy, is this a trick question? Come on.

Kevin Grossman: Not really, but kind of I guess. Sure.

Meghan M. Biro: Okay, well let's see. Probably something really brightened fluorescent.

Kevin Grossman: Yes, and this color that I'm going to share could be really bright and fluorescent, which would make it even probably worse, but the color is orange. Not one of my colors that I would wear on a regular basis, but as in orange you glad I wore this color to my interview today?

Meghan M. Biro: No, I'm not and could you please stop?

Kevin Grossman: That's what my kids would share, right? Exactly.

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah, there you go.

Kevin Grossman: Exactly. Okay, anyway, interview dress experts recommend more neutral colors, that makes sense, like navy, gray, cream and/or black. And if you do want a pop of color, the recommendation is to wear some color that matches your eye color. This is a real thing, absolutely.

Meghan M. Biro: Oh gosh.

Kevin Grossman: Right? But not if you have orange eyes, then don't wear the pop of color.

Meghan M. Biro: Okay, well I'm going to keep that in mind and all of you at home taking notes, you know what to do.

Kevin Grossman: Neutral colors, neutral colors, and match your eye color.

Meghan M. Biro: Maybe special contacts in that case, all right?

Kevin Grossman: Exactly, exactly.

Meghan M. Biro: Let's get to our first guest, shall we?

Meghan M. Biro: Carol Quinn is the queen of motivation-based interviewing. For more than 20 years she has helped companies hire high performers. Welcome to #WorkTrends, Carol.

Carol Quinn: Thank you very much. Meghan.

Meghan M. Biro: Carol, some of our listeners out there are chanting, can you hear them? And they're saying M-B-I, M-B-I, and some of them are totally confused. Can you break this down for us? What is motivation-based interviewing? Because you are the queen, after all.

Carol Quinn: Absolutely. and it's a great question and the chant is getting louder and louder, especially since the motivation-based interviewing book on Amazon hit the bestseller list for HR books, so let me tell you, for your listeners who do not know what motivation-based interviewing or MBI is, for short. First of all, it's fast replacing behavior-based interviewing. For those diehard behavior-based

interviewing lovers who think it's the be all end all of interviewing, there's a new methodology in town that's now well-proven to improve quality of hire.

Carol Quinn: One of the reasons MBI was born was because of the many holes in behavior-based interviewing that allows otherwise candidates who interview great and seem like great hires, to actually be mistaken as good hires when they're only marginal job performers. There's a few reasons for this, which is the holes and behavior-based interviewing, and it helps to tell you a little bit about that to tell you what MBI is, at least the top two holes of behavior-based interviewing.

Carol Quinn: First of all, it's so skill-focused. Somewhere along the line we got told, as HR professionals and hiring managers and recruiters, that if you hire the most skilled candidate you will have the highest performer. And we know that the high performers, people who go above and beyond in their job, have great skills. But it's also possible that you could have somebody with great jobs skills who's only an average job performer, or even worse, a poor performer or somebody who is unmotivated, disengaged and a bad hire. Skill level alone does not determine future performance. If it was all about skill, we could just hire anyone, not interview them, teach them the skill and everybody would be high performers.

Meghan M. Biro: Carol, how is this kind of interviewing different than what most companies are doing now?

Carol Quinn: Well, a lot of companies, there's almost unfortunately an anything goes when it comes to interviewing and hiring. Meaning a lot of organizations don't really know if their interviewers, their hiring managers or recruiters have ever been formally trained on how to interview to identify the top performer, and a key part of that is assessing motivation.

Carol Quinn: What's different is a lot of organizations are going beyond just skill assessment alone, and looking at how can they improve quality of hire? How can they hire more highly motivated people who achieve the best results? The direction really is organizations, even though there's great advancements in technology, it's still not a replacement for the people or the people aspects, or one of the hot topics that are out there is highly motivated, engaged employees, which starts with the hiring process. Organizations are looking at how they're hiring, the process and the criteria, and how can they make it better to improve the overall success of the entire organization?

Meghan M. Biro: Are there certain kinds of companies in your research that you're finding are more in tuned with this kind of hiring and interviewing?

Carol Quinn: I'm not sure if it's in tune, I think once an organization has had enough of the woes of bad hires, especially when it comes from the top down and it becomes mandated that we're going to improve quality of hire, you're seeing it in all

types of fields, all types of companies, and not just domestically, it's a universal issue of we have to get the best people on the bus.

Meghan M. Biro: Mm-hmm (affirmative), so it's just about feeling pain, and I think so many organizations of all sizes feel that and can relate to that, you know?

Carol Quinn: Unfortunately, yes.

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah. I'm curious, as somebody who spent many years as a recruiter, and doing a whole lot of recruiting and hiring myself in business, how did you get interested in this small angle, which is very, very important of motivation-based interviewing? 'Cause it's really a niche within a larger context.

Carol Quinn: I've, too, been in recruiting and the hiring world, both on the corporate side and on the recruiter side, and I'm somebody who is passionate about interviewing and hiring. I used to attend all the classes and workshops, and back in the day when it was behavior-based interviewing, it promised if you follow these steps as an interviewer you will hire the best people. I would go back to the workplace and I would follow those steps, and sure I would hire some great people, but I'd also, using those same steps, hire some average people and again, hire some people I wish I hadn't hired. The question that begged to be asked Meghan, was, "If I'm using the same process and I really want to hire the best person every time, what is it that I'm missing when I hire somebody great one time, and don't hire somebody great the next time? What is it that I'm seeing with a great hire?"

Carol Quinn: That became the what's missing in the interview process, and the what's missing is the motivation piece and how we assess it. The fact that hiring highly-motivated people is not a new concept. We know that's important, hiring self-motivated people. The problem is how we think or how we are going about assessing motivation, it's what's becoming alive again. Behavior-based interviewing will not allow an interviewer to accurately assess a candidate's motivation. It falls short in that area, and that's where motivation-based interviewing, or MBI was born, was to close these holes that allow the marginal performers to be mistaken as good hires, and to more consistently hire high performers by assessing the three components all high performers share in common.

Carol Quinn: They certainly do have the skill to do the job, or they're taught the skill after they're hired. They have a certain type of attitude of a high performer attitude, and it's one that takes on challenges, and seek solutions, and overcomes and conquers obstacles that get in a way to achieving goals better than low performers and average performers do. It's a type of attitude that you can assess in the interview process. The other component common to the high performer is the passion, they love the work they do. So, the latter to that attitude and that passion, it's not something that we can change after the hire, it's only the skill that we can alter after we hire someone, so it makes those

attitude and passion components, which are tied to motivation, critical in the hiring process.

Meghan M. Biro: What if you get somebody who's just a really good actor? I bet you that's happened to you before, huh?

Carol Quinn: Oh, but you know, that's what it's all about. This is the job, the word of interviewing and hiring about seeing through that polished interview-savvy candidate who has all the information at their fingertips now with the Internet on how to ace an interview, and that's what MB is all about. You can't fake passion or an effective attitude, and MBI is built that people who have the high performer attitude answer effective interview questions very differently than somebody who is trying to fake it. And when interviewers become educated on this, when they become effective interviewers, they really can see this difference quite easily, it's kind of like a night and day difference. MBI doesn't take any extra interviewing time, it just uses the time you have to get information that is a reliable predictor of future performance, and motivation and job success. The faking part is not a problem with MBI because really that's what the whole goal is, is to see the difference between the true high performers and the pretenders.

Meghan M. Biro: Carol, break it down for us. What's the first step? How does somebody who wants to try this out get started?

Carol Quinn: Well, first of all, you have to learn MBI. there's no shortcuts to that. MBI isn't complex, a lot of it is common sense. First you have to understand what makes the high performer tick, and then you have to build your interview process with effective questions that gather the information that is a reliable predictor of future performance. And then you know how to score and assess. Scoring and assessing skill is easy for most interviewers, but it's understanding the types of questions you asked to assess attitude and passion so you don't just get a courtesy answer, a fluffy answer from a candidate who's trying to give you the answer that they think you want to hear. But you have to learn how to score and assess attitude, and now you're making a hiring decision with three components, not one.

Carol Quinn: First you have to learn MBI, and there's a variety of ways to learn it. You can read a book, take an online course, and instructor-led course, so become a certified trainer or take a class open to the public. You have to learn it and you have to follow it, because you can't just go rogue and do your own thing. Interviewers, no matter how long they've been interviewing, 20, 30 years, they have to be open to learning a more effective way.

Meghan M. Biro: You talk a lot about attitude, and I agree with you, I think attitude is more of a long haul attribute that keeps people in the game, so to speak. Why is attitude so important from your perspective?

Carol Quinn: You know attitude, we're talking ... it's one of those ambiguous words. You have an attitude, is that good or bad? MBI puts some definition around what it is, and the definition really is a person's response to adversity and difficulty, and on the job challenges and obstacles. Unless you have an effective attitude for overcoming obstacles, you're not going to overcome those obstacles. Instead you're going to make excuses, you're going to complain, you're gonna blame, all things that are not effective for getting to a goal. You need to hire people who have this effective attitude and what you said, it's for the long haul.

Carol Quinn: It's quite interesting that research has found that attitude is 80% formed by age seven. Now, it's not that attitude can't change in adult employees in an organization, but if somebody's attitude is gonna change it's because they're gonna change it, not 'cause their employer hired wrong and now it's going to change their attitude to one that's more effective. So attitude is critical in the hiring process, not only for quality of hire but for the organization's success. Imagine hiring a bunch of people who are just skilled but don't have the right kind of attitude, and instead you create a culture of disengaged employees, and blamers, and complainers and everybody's sitting around whining instead of moving forward?

Meghan M. Biro: And that's out there. That happens all the time.

Carol Quinn: It is.

Meghan M. Biro: Carol, you've helped companies hire for more than 20 years. What's the biggest change you've seen in the way we're hiring?

Carol Quinn: I think that's what we're doing is we're really taking a look at how well we are doing at hiring, and we're not doing as well as we think when it gets down to it. People are realizing, organizations are realizing, and C-level and hiring managers that it really does take more than just skill to succeed, so they're aligning their hiring process with a process that aligns with how success comes about. They're understanding of waking up to the reality of the power of an individual attitude, and that the effect it can have on the organization and how important it is to hire the right attitude and hire that passion.

Carol Quinn: I think the evolution is, even though behavior-based interviewing was good in its time, it brought us forward from hypothetical questions and purely gut instinct, but we've evolved to understand how we can be more successful as an organization by improving our quality of hire. That's what MBI does.

Meghan M. Biro: We're at the beginning of a fresh new year, 2019. What's your best advice for leaders this year?

Carol Quinn: Treat every job opening as an opportunity to fill it with a high performer. Many of the bad hires that are happening are needless, they're avoidable. You need properly trained interviewers who asked effective interview questions, who are

committed to hiring high performers, and that's gonna have the biggest quantum leap in an organization's success than anything else right there. Get that part right.

Meghan M. Biro: Carol Quinn, the queen of motivation-based interviewing. Thanks for stopping by.

Carol Quinn: Thank you for having me Meghan.

Kevin Grossman: Loved hearing your conversation with Carol, Meghan. Now, as we know, the subject today is interviewing and assessments, and assessments have actually been more and more utilized, especially even the past few years. I had a call with Nick Martin at AON and, in his work, he's also focused on helping companies hire the right employees.

Kevin Grossman: Nick, thank you so much for being on #WorkTrends. Tell us today why is hiring the right people so hard?

Nick Martin: It's a great question Kevin, and I think it depends on the hats you're wearing, right? It might help explain the difficulty. I'm going to try and just take a step back from the overall, and look at it more from an overall perspective, as opposed to getting really maybe nuanced or too dug in from one perspective. But I think a lot of it comes down to that there's a lot of factors that go into hiring somebody, from how good is your recruiting strategy, to how well are you actually assessing people, if you're assessing at all. How well does your hiring manager, your organization actually understand what does it take to be successful on the job, and translating all that into some coherent strategy that you put into place, and get support over time, and you monitor it over time to make sure it's doing the right thing.

Nick Martin: That's a lot of moving parts that equate to success at the end of the day, the end of the year, whatever your timeframe evaluation is. I think a lot of those things have to be taken into consideration because it's not just one piece, you can't just necessarily fix one piece of it, which in my role and what we do a lot for organizations is really focused on the assessment piece. So making sure that the right assessments are in place for that particular job or role that align with the company, the organization's culture and the brand that they want to put out there from that candidate experience perspective, and making sure that we have the right metrics in place to ensure that those that we're hiring actually are leading to increase it in those key performance indicators. Or, more broadly, to return on the investment that's been put into place.

Nick Martin: For me there's not just one thing that comes into it because it's an orchestrated dance, and a lot of those pieces have to align. I think you would say, "Okay, well why is that hard?" Even from the assessment piece, and a lot of that has to do with the buy-in, making sure you have alignment and you have good partnership internally within your organization. Hopefully you've got good

vendors in place to support those areas where you are either not doing it internally and/or you need a little help there, but also keeping them organized and on the same page is not an easy task. But those, to me, have been very broad at high level signs of success. When you can start to achieve that cohesion and that adoption of that perspective that you all think will lead to success, to me is where you really find the greatest return.

Kevin Grossman: Agreed, and one of the things I always like to talk about tongue-in-cheek, but I think it's also a reality that modern neuroscience has also shown us that we're just not very good decision makers as human beings either. And no offense as humans, right?

Nick Martin: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kevin Grossman: But that, because of that though is why we do need guideposts, we need technology, we need assessments to potentially to help us make better decisions. That said, what are then some of the new assessments today that companies are using to really understand the people before they hire them? Can you share some examples?

Nick Martin: Of course, yeah. No, it's a good question. Some of the newer things that we're seeing come out, whether it's something that we're putting out there, or we're seeing it in the field in general, having to do with really any, and you said this, leveraging technology, because we need those efficiencies and we also need to be able to reach those candidates on their time, reach them at their point of interest in where they had the opportunity to interact with your assessments.

Nick Martin: With that frame in mind, some of the things that I think are really innovative and are really novel for the good reasons, are things like digital interviews. Digital interviews, it's been around, and it's moved from, hey, using Skype as a way to see each other and asking questions, to much more of an automated process where the candidate is able to interact with your interview be it with the recruiter and/or just on their own, a solo-administered situation.

Nick Martin: And what's cool about that is again, my perspective and the perspective where I work is that candidate's experiences is essential to make sure you get that an optimized that. You want to meet them, as I said earlier, on their time and in their space. Digital interviews allow you to do that, and it doesn't remove the human because you can still have an in-person or phone-based interview as a followup that allows you to get some of those critical questions that will give you good insight into whether should that candidate proceed? Because that's their time, and it's also your organization's time and money as they proceed through your hiring process.

Nick Martin: That is something that's been really cool to evolve over time. And now the artificial intelligence hype, it's huge and it's both exciting and, I think a little scary for people. It's been around for many, many years, the technology and the

algorithms that underlie, but it's starting to find its way into things like digital interviews. You're doing automated scoring on the fly, so you're moving very quickly and it keeps the candidates going and it keeps your process moving.

Nick Martin: Some of the other things that I'm seeing that are out there are very immersive simulations. These used to be in-person assessment centers, and that was just maybe 10 years ago, and those are still used and they're still very viable. I happen to enjoy being part of those assessment centers, playing the role player at times. It's kind of fun, but it's very cost heavy. So you're starting to see these immersive simulations, lots of different technologies underlying these, where the candidate goes through sort of a day in that role that they're in, you're able to integrate psychometric assessments into the process, not only get a sense of how they would react to different situations, but also measure cognitive abilities, different personality constructs of interest.

Nick Martin: You're essentially putting it into a little movie, either going through this scene that you have determined that is appropriate for the job, and the role, and representative of the organization, you're getting a lot of rich data as a result. And the candidate is actually getting to do something interactive, they're not just filling in bubbles on a Scantron sheet or a multiple choice item. That is a pretty cool piece of technology enhanced assessment that's coming out.

Nick Martin: One of the other neat things that I'm seeing is that we're also starting to understand, and it very much aligns with the candidate experience, that the way people interact and communicate has been, and very much will continue to be technology-driven, so why not make our assessments align with the technologies that we're seeing people use a lot, like texting and instant messaging? I'm starting to see some sort of text-based, instant message-based looking assessments that, at the end of the day, they're situational judgment tests which you get through even those high fidelity simulations. But in this context they're getting you to do it in a way that is very familiar to them.

Nick Martin: Some folks would say, "Whoa, wait a minute. Is there generational concerns and differences there?" And it's a good question, but a lot of research is showing that people are pretty familiar with that regardless of their age. And so we're finding a lot of success and seeing a lot of neat applications of these more text-based applications, so I think those are some really cool things.

Nick Martin: The last one I would mention is the gamification of assessment. This is taking ... There's many different ways to approach it, but the way that I define gamification is taking a tried and true assessment that you know what it measures, how well it performs and building in gamified elements to make it more engaging. And again, you can see I'm a little biased towards those assessments and those processes that have the candidate front of mind, because I do think that experiences is essential to your organization's success.

Nick Martin: But gamifying these assessments really does increase the engagement, and increases a little bit of even some people say they actually enjoy taking an assessment, which hey, I develop assessments for a living and even I sometimes don't want to take assessments. That's a win. From that perspective, I think there's a lot of cool things that are meeting the candidate and enhancing that experience that still provide you with a lot of rich data that helps you make those right decisions.

Kevin Grossman: One of the things that we have found in talent work research that we do is that the candidates don't really care about what your technology stack looks like and what systems ... I mean we don't care. What we care about is how we're being engaged and communicated with, and setting expectations and the perceived fairness in the process, and all the things that you outlined that I've also seen, like jobs simulations have definitely been on the rise in our data that we see, on an annual basis of more companies investing in those types of gamification again.

Kevin Grossman: It's a term that's come back again, but I've seen many providers that are some pretty cool stuff that's out there and the tech space too, as well that you mentioned, of actually initiating them that way. All these things do make a difference in the candidate experience, and if I feel like I'm engaged and this is gonna help me show myself in the hopefully in the best light, then that's a win for me.

Kevin Grossman: Now what, just really, really quickly, what about personality traits? I mean, is there a way that we're measuring those still today that it's a fair and a meaningful way, or is that really not part of better hiring assessment process these days? If that makes sense?

Nick Martin: It does, and it is very much essential to ensuring you're hiring the right people for your job. I mean, I sometimes personality can feel hard to get your hand on, it's one of those things. We all know it when we see it, you hear that phrase said quite often, but we also know the impact that it has. It's just like any assessment, there are essential steps from a development perspective that you need to take and you should take to ensure that, as you asked, that it's being assessed, whatever those constructs, those traits may be and in a fair way.

Nick Martin: Really, for me, my response to that hasn't changed from when I first got into this business many years ago, is you have to establish the ground research. You have to establish that you're measuring the constructs, the traits that you purport to measure, you have to be able to show that. As a consumer you should make sure that whoever's providing that assessment so you can show you those things, because you need to see the construct validation. Even if you don't know what it means necessarily, they need to be able to explain to you that, "Hey, we say we're measuring extroversion and here's the research that shows we've been able to actually zero in on that," given whatever

methodology that they may employ to do that, 'cause there's a lot of different ways to get a personality.

Nick Martin: For me, from that fairness perspective, it's making sure you've got assessment expertise that's guiding the development of that assessment, and the implementation of it as well. From a meaningful perspective, and I'm taking a shot at what you might mean by meaningful, but for me when I hear that it's got to be meaningful because it actually does measure what I need it to, 'cause I've established that that trait is important. That's one of pieces of internal research as a consumer you would want to do, is to say however you define it.

Nick Martin: I mean, we call the term conscientiousness or extroversion, those basic, big five personality traits, so many different labels. That's fine. Hey, go crazy with the labels and how you want to redefine those as you implement it within your organization, but you need to establish what's important, right?

Kevin Grossman: Right.

Nick Martin: And, in doing that, you're coupling it with a sound and well developed assessment, you're going to achieve that meaningfulness as I'm defining it, which is again, that's that return on your investment. You're seeing the increases in whatever the key performance metrics of interest are, whether it's sales performance or it's just reducing turnover or increasing teamwork cohesion, those are things that personality can definitely help drive, and lots of empirical research shows that.

Nick Martin: It's a two part research-based dance, and if the term research scares you, then it's just doing your due diligence to make sure that what you're buying does what it says it's going to do, and that you've done the groundwork, either yourself or with some consultancy of sorts that can tell you, "These are the things that are important for this job within your organization."

Kevin Grossman: Right, absolutely. Couldn't agree more. Let's broaden this out a little bit, just in the context of when we're assessing people, maybe regionally around the world. We're hiring people in EMEA and APAC and Latin America and specific countries even, for that matter. How do we account for cultural differences and when should we account for them in assessments?

Nick Martin: Very good question, and I appreciate the question 'cause a lot of folks don't think to even ask that question, even in global organizations. Personality, maybe using that as a carry over from the prior question, doesn't always manifest itself in the same way. There are cultural differences in how our behaviors are dictated in the social norms that we've grown up and come up in that will impact how, for instance, our extroversion versus introversion have manifested itself in those day-to-day behaviors. It's essential that you take culture into account when you're doing that.

Nick Martin: One of the ways we do it, in thinking of it from a personality perspective, is looking at the sort of down at the item level, if you will, not to get too technical, but the item level of those things that tap into and let's keep it easy, like extroversion, and looking at how those, the people who are in those different cultures, how they would respond to different items. The way we look at it from a socially desirable perspective, 'cause some behaviors are more desirable than others. You can even see that in organizations. Some behaviors lead to success and are socially acceptable, and others are not. On a cultural, from a geographical or regional perspective, even more so.

Nick Martin: You want to understand, from a cultural perspective, how socially desirable something is, for instance, to make sure that you're taking that into account from a presentation of subsequent items, and also from a scoring perspective, to make sure that you're taking those cultural influences into account and making sure that your norms are adjusted accordingly. It also makes a lot of sense to make sure that, beyond the people participating, just to get that cultural influence from a desirability perspective, making sure the language makes sense.

Nick Martin: I mean, even an English term, if you want to focus on just English as the language of business for the most part around the globe, it can manifest itself very differently. It means one thing in one in one country, one region of that country, and a very different thing in a different country. So you want to make sure that the language contained within your assessments is culturally appropriate. The last thing you want to do is offend someone taking your assessment because you're using a term that's insensitive. You need to be able to take those things into account as you're developing your assessment.

Kevin Grossman: When we're talking about looking ahead now, since gosh, we're already into 2019, just how time flies, right? Wow. What should employers be paying attention to as it relates to assessments, and specifically particular traits? Now I know that's going to vary depending on what kinds of roles we're assessing for, and the type of people were looking for, but if there was a one-two punch that you could share with the employers that'll be listening to this podcast when it comes to assessments and hiring in 2019, what should they be paying attention to?

Nick Martin: That's a great question, and I think one of the things that I've seen over time that persist, and will continue to persist, especially ... To me, it doesn't matter if you're hiring more professionals, so not more knowledge workers, or you know more hands-on, more manual workers, people have to make good decisions day in, day out. You can think of it as small L leadership, and even in formal leadership roles, you're still making decisions to get throughout your day to solve the problems that have been presented to you, or happened to pop up.

Nick Martin: I think making sure that you're assessing problem solving, decision making, those are key, core ... I will say competencies, if you will, skills however you

want to put it, that are essential. If you have good decision makers, you can train people from a technical perspective, so a lot of those soft skills become what can unhone your performance, it can tear a team apart if you don't have people who are willing to collaborate and open to new ideas. You just can't achieve that cohesion that you've found to be needed for success.

Nick Martin: I think a lot of those softer skills are essential. I would throw oral communication in there, being able to express your ideas to help explain those decisions that you're making, to garner buy-in, to get no more support to move forward, another one of those soft skills that's probably essential.

Nick Martin: I'd, like you said, without jumping into a particular job or role, I would say problem solving, decision making, oral communication and collaboration are probably some of the top skills that employers, in hiring officials, should probably keep an eye out for. 'Cause, at the end of the day, if you've got good problem solvers, you've got people who can be tossed in any sort of situation and figure it out because you're going to be providing them that training that they need to do the technical aspects of their job, more than likely.

Kevin Grossman: Agreed, and I should make that a little asterisk in a caveat to what I said earlier, that even though modern neuroscience shows that we're not the greatest decision makers, we can be good decision makers, and we can train ourselves to be better problem solvers. I'd better get that caveat out there, right Nick?

Nick Martin: That's a good one, and I would agree with you that we are not as humans, the best decision makers. We're full of biases, but yeah, yeah.

Kevin Grossman: But that's all right. But this was great information. Thank you so much for sharing it our #WorkTrends community, and I appreciate you being on the show.

Nick Martin: Thank you, Kevin. Thanks for having me.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, thank you for that great information. Kevin. I think Nick really helped to highlight how important assessments are to the hiring process. Let's keep the conversation going. Join us for our #WorkTrends Twitter chat. We're going to be onto the Twitters with Carol Quinn and Nick Martin on Wednesday, January 16th, at 1:30 PM Eastern, 10:30 AM Pacific. Join us and tell us what you've learned about hiring. I want to hear from you because this is a really important topic. If you'd like to get our Twitter chat questions in advance, sign up for our newsletter at talenculture.com.

Meghan M. Biro: Thanks for listening to #WorkTrends from TalentCulture. Join us every Wednesday at 1:30 PM Eastern for a live Twitter chat with our podcast guest. To learn more about guests featured on today's show, visit the show notes for this episode at talenculture.com, and help us spread the word. Subscribe to #WorkTrends wherever you listen to podcasts, leave us a rating, review on

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