



PETRA PEOPLE

**FROM BISCUITS TO THE BOARDROOM:
A RECIPE FOR HIRING SUCCESS**



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

Summer is an amazing time of the year. No, not because of the heat and humidity. It's the time of year I get to gather with some of the greatest thought leaders in business strategy, leadership, and improvement at the Gazelles ScaleUp Summit in Atlanta. Needless to say, great ideas abound and I always come away from the summit energized and ready to share what I've learned.

This year, one speaker who resonated with me was Ari Weinzweig, co-founder of Zingerman's Deli in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He began by talking about making biscuits.

Now, if you're from the South like me, you probably grew up around a kitchen where someone made handmade biscuits, or maybe you even made them yourself. If so, then you're undoubtedly aware of an ingredient called "baking powder." And it's likely that at some point in your biscuit-making career, you found yourself unexpectedly out of baking powder while in the middle of your biscuit-making process.

Based on the small amount that's needed of this ingredient, you probably thought there would be no real impact if you left it out, right? Well, I've made this fatal error myself and I assure you: it does make an impact. The lack of baking powder renders your biscuits flavorless and pretty much inedible. It's not a good situation. Of course, I can't tell you what baking powder actually does, but I know for sure that I won't skip that step again.

This lesson is also true in business and in hiring. I've coached hundreds of companies to create a process for interviewing potential employees that's practically foolproof and results in a near 90 percent "A-player" hire rate. That kind of success record is astounding when you realize that the average rate of hiring A-players is around 50 percent.

But still, people tend to go "off recipe," using their own "voodoo method" and working off of gut feel or intuition, rather than following a proven path. They skip a crucial ingredient and mess up the biscuits. And, these biscuits are expensive and hard to get rid of once they are yours.

So, what's the recipe? How do you find those A-players? Here are some step-by-step instructions:

Be specific. Do you have a structured process for hiring or are you just winging it? To find the best people, begin with a clearly defined job description that outlines the exact tasks of the role, the qualities necessary to complete the tasks, and the experience that's necessary to succeed in the position. Like a bad recipe, a vague job profile will only make it more difficult to predict a successful outcome and whether a candidate will excel.

Shake out the lumps. Sift the flour before you add it to your mixture. Once you've started receiving applicants for your new position, set up screening processes to identify less-qualified candidates. Have applicants complete skills tests related to the necessary job tasks and conduct phone interviews to prescreen applicants before scheduling in-person interviews. This will save you time and resources.

Double up and take notes. Now that you know what the job is and whom you don't want to hire, arrange in-person interviews and have two people at your company conduct the interviews. If you partner up, you're more likely to catch any inconsistencies. And even more important, when you're in deliberations about applicants, you'll have two sets of notes to reference.

Make a connection. No doubt, candidates in job interviews are going to be anxious. Open the conversation with lower-stakes topics to ease the tension and allow the interviewee to relax. You'll get more of an idea of who the person really is, and insight into how that person might fit into your company.

Reference the references. Remind the applicant early and often that you're planning to check their references. This will ensure honest answers and weed out underperformers.

Ask for stories and follow up. Anyone can recite a list of accomplishments, but you've already read the resume. Now's the time to hear actual stories that demonstrate their victories and challenges along the way. You want to know how an applicant tackles problems and finds solutions. Once you've heard answers, don't just move on. Follow up with additional questions.

Answer questions thoroughly. Interviews are two-way streets. If applicants are top performers, they will use the interview as an opportunity to determine whether your company is a match for them. Be prepared to answer questions about any challenges they might face in the position and to speak about the role in depth.

The interview process can be a lengthy one, but each and every step—every ingredient—is key to a positive outcome. If you put in the time and attention that the process demands, your new hire will take your company to the next level. If not, you'll likely end up with a flavorless biscuit.

Get it? When something works, don't short the process. Now, go find your next A-player.

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THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

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