

# Connections

Insights from LIMRA and LOMA



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## Don't Overlook “Overqualified” Applicants

By Malcolm C. McCulloch, Ph.D., LIMRA and LOMA

Imagine you need to fill a job opening for an entry-level position and you receive two applications. The first, Joe, is a 25-year-old who has a few years of work experience and completed course work in a community college. The other applicant, Susan, has a four-year degree and 20 years of related experience ending as a senior supervisor. What is your initial reaction to the second applicant?

If you are like many managers, you might avoid Susan, the “overqualified” applicant. Traditionally, overqualified applicants have been perceived as a poor hiring choice because they are believed to be a flight risk, expected to leave as soon as a job more aligned with their experience and prior compensation appears. Further, overqualified hires may not be considered team players: With expectations for moving onward and upward, they might hold themselves apart rather than become a member of the team. And they may be a threat to a supervisor's sense of competence and authority.

All of these counterproductive possibilities — drawn from the experiences of a different economy — create a bias against overqualified applicants.

### Take A Fresh Look

There have been significant changes in many job markets and, consequently, in the character of their labor pools. More overqualified applicants are looking for work than previously — and you can expect this to continue.

Don't automatically reject Susan, the overqualified applicant: You may be overlooking an employment treasure. Despite her differences from the usual applicant profile, the best strategy is to evaluate overqualified applicants with the same process you use for any other applicant, including Joe.

## Enhance Results for Your “Virtual Worker” Program

If you would like to enhance the return on your investment in offsite staffing, we encourage you to register for an in-depth preview of our *Virtual Worker System*<sup>™</sup>. The webinar, being held on January 31, will help you understand how the system is helping organizations

- Determine which staff and job applicants are suited for remote work
- Equip their staff with tools and techniques to thrive as offsite workers
- Foster skills for leading and managing virtual team members

Register today for this free preview.

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- Data entry speed and accuracy
- Composition skills
- Keyboarding speed and accuracy

To view sample questions and a candidate report, please visit us here.

## Benefits Of Considering Overqualified Applicants

*More overqualified applicants are knocking on your door.* The current economy has changed many job markets, increasing the

number of “overqualified” job applicants. The demand for workers in North America, for example, is decreasing because of factors such as:

- The increasing use of robotics in more industries and in more ways, reducing the number of employees needed to produce goods
- The increasing use of customer self-service, reducing the need for retail cashiers, call center service reps, etc.
- Greater use of offshore labor markets

Further, companies are reducing costs by doing the same work with fewer employees. The common example is when a person retires or quits and, rather than hiring a replacement, the workload is shifted to a current employee.

These business realities have left many seasoned employees without jobs. Additionally, many Baby Boomers who expected to retire by now have found that they must stay in the workforce to meet their financial needs. People with years of experience, knowledge, and a mature outlook are seeking employment to fill the financial gap left by dwindling pensions and cost increases. These applicants may be willing to work for less than they once earned.

*You will receive more “bang for your buck.”* Looking back at our two applicants, Susan has some distinct advantages: her knowledge and skills far exceed Joe’s and she has a “big picture” business perspective that Joe lacks. If you can hire an overqualified applicant for the same salary as a “newbie,” isn’t it worth considering?

## The Importance Of Strategy

Given that more overqualified individuals are likely to apply to your organization, and their potential to be valuable employees, you need to be prepared. Your assessment strategy for overqualified applicants should be the same as with any other applicant.

- Don’t rely on stereotypes.
- Don’t make snap judgments.
- Systematically assess for job-relevant information on whether the applicant will succeed, fit in your work environment, and function as a valuable contributor.

View [this list](#) of assessment steps for evaluating overqualified applicants.

Without question, today’s economy is creating an unusual hiring environment. Organizations that adjust their mindset and open themselves to hidden opportunities — including overqualified applicants — are best-positioned for future success.

## McCulloch to Speak at LOMA Customer Service Conference

Malcolm C. McCulloch, Ph.D., is among the speakers who will address today’s top-of-mind issues at [The LOMA Customer Service Conference](#) for insurance and financial services companies.

The conference, being held March 14-16 in Las Vegas, will feature pre- and post-conference tours of Zappos, plus presentations by Joseph Mitchell and Brad Cleveland.

To learn conference details, [please visit us online](#).

## Effectively Recruit and Lead A Multi-Generational Team

If you are like many managers today, your team comprises people from up to four generations. We can help you bridge the generation gaps in your team to create a powerful advantage for your organization.

*Managing and Training Across Generations* will equip you with strategies and tactics for successfully recruiting, managing, training, and retaining people from all generations. You and your colleagues will come away with the tools to promote respect between generations and strengthen collaboration.

**To learn more about this program**, please contact either of our lead advisors:



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