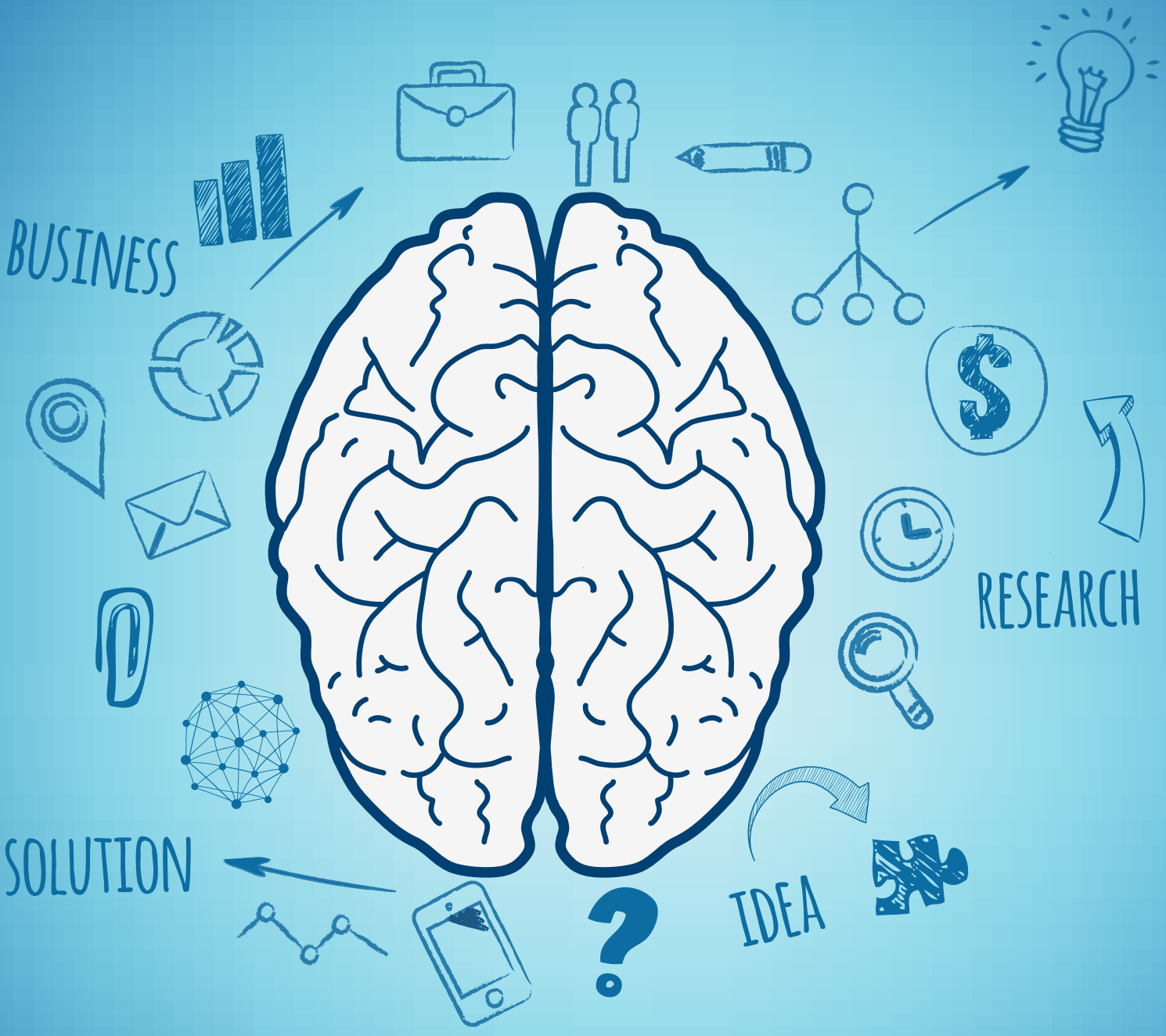
· THE UX HIRING HANDBOOK ·

RECRUIT THE RIGHT UX SPECIALIST FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT



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Intro

If you're a startup founder, or if you're just not that familiar with designers, it's easy to take the wrong steps when hiring a UX Designer.

This is probably because of the word Designer in their title. This can be misleading, as the "design" aspect of a UX'ers responsibilities can be very minimal.

An experienced UX Designer will focus more on understanding your target users wants, needs, desires, surroundings and limitations.

Having someone who understands this is vital, since every decision made while developing the project must keep the end user's experience in mind.

This makes it extremely important to know what to look for when hiring a UX Designer, to ensure that you find one with the right experience, and not someone who has focused mainly on visual design aspects.

This handbook will explore ten important things to consider when interviewing a UX Designer, and help you find the right one to ensure the success of your product.

1

Know What You’re Looking For

Think about it, if you go into the process of hiring a UX Designer, without actually knowing what makes a good UX Designer, how will you know when you have one sitting in front of you?

What makes up a good UX'er varies based on the project and workplace, so a lot of these qualities are going to be determined by you.

Are you going to give this person a lot of direction, or do you want them to operate on their own?

Most UX'ers will be self driven, and so if you're looking to hire a UX'er that you're planning on micromanaging, you might want to look for one who can handle that type of workplace.

Map out the ideal candidate on paper beforehand, taking into account all the aspect of what makes up a good UX Designer from the rest of this handbook.

2

Find Someone That Fits in With Your Team

An important part of hiring for any position is making sure the candidate will fit in with your team and your work culture.

This is especially true with UX Designers since they will be likely involved in communicating with every person involved in the development of your product.

Because this may include challenging team members ideas to preserve a positive UX, it can be confrontational at times.

Finding someone who can connect on a personal level as well as a professional one can save a lot of frustration and wasted time.

Try asking them some questions about funny or interesting things they've seen online in the past month, outside of a work context. What's a hilarious video they watched? What's a fact they picked up that they find interesting.

If you have a team full of pranksters and jokers but you hire a workplace safety activist who spends their time launching online petitions, it could cause some unwanted friction.

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Ask About a Time They Failed Miserably

Ask them to describe a project they worked on that failed. The ability to describe failures, and accept responsibility for at least a part of that failure, will be proof of lessons learned through experience.

It will also help you determine their understanding of the UX process. If they can walk you through what was wrong with the project, and how they would have corrected it, you can gain a lot of insight into how much they understand about the process from top to bottom.

Watch for defensiveness or unwillingness to accept responsibility. These can spell disaster and lead to "passing the buck" of mistakes onto other team members.

A good UX should be at peace with their failures and understand that not everything can be a success.

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Find What Motivates Them

What gets a person out of bed in the morning can say a lot about them.

It's important to find someone who has a bigger motivation than just paying the bills.

But if you ask them what motivates them, all you're going to get back is what they think you want to hear.

You want to understand what truly motivates someone. Instead, try asking them some indirect questions, like, what stops you from hitting the snooze button and just going back to sleep?

Or, why do you get on that crowded subway each morning? Why not just stay home and eat cheetos all day?

Make this question casual and light hearted in order to get the most honest answer from your candidate.

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Check Out Their Online Presence

UX is kind of a strange area to specialize in. There's a certain passion that exists in UX Designers. They love to know what makes people tic, and they want to please those people.

What this means is that most UX'ers are passionate about what they do, and along with that they should have a decent online presence.

A great UX'er ail have more than just an online portfolio, and with a little digging, you might be able to find them participating in some discussions on UX.

Even better, find out if they have written any blogs on the topic of UX or produced an eBook or video tutorial.

A UX'er who teaches is sure to be an experience professional and asset to your team.

6

Ask Them to Improve a Mockup

This test will immediately show you the way the candidate formulates a solution to a problem.

Show the candidate a site, or a mockup, and ask how they would improve it.

The type of UX Designer you want is one who see's things from the user's perspective and not his own. It's important their response to this answer takes centres around user based questions.

Who are they? What is their demographic? Why are they using the product?

If the candidate begins by offering advice and solutions based on their own experiences, then they aren't showing a user-centric approach to problem solving.

This could lead to decisions being made on future projects that are centred more on the designs point of view rather than the users.

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Find Passion, Curiosity, and a Love of Learning

I touched a bit on passion when checking for their online presence, but beyond that, you want to find someone who is constantly expanding their skill set.

There's a difference difference between a person who goes to school, gets a degree and never touches a book again, versus someone who is self taught.

Self taught individuals tend to be far more passionate about the industry, and that transfers through to their motivation and success.

I'm not saying you need to hire someone who is self taught, but try to find out what the person invests their time in learning.

Even if it isn't about UX, a good sign is someone who understand the importance of being able to learn as they need to.

Try asking them the latest skill they learned and how they learned about it.

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Ask About a Project They're Proud Of

Most people will have a lot to say about their favourite project. Once they get talking, they'll usually open up and tell you all the details.

This can put both their amount of passion, and knowledge of the UX process on display.

Ask them about why they think it was so successful.

Get them to explain all the people involved in the project, and they types of stuff they collaborated on to make such a successful product.

Ask them what they enjoyed the most about it.

This will also give you a good insight into how well they will mesh with the other members of your team.

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Focus on Process, not Portfolio

The traditional way to hire a designer is to ask them for a portfolio. But a UX Designer is different, because you can't see the UX Process by looking at a website.

The visuals of a website could shave been designed, and directed by any number of people. This could have been outside of the UX Designers control, so seeing a visual representation of their work doesn't help much.

You want to focus on having them explain their process to you.

Pick an item from their portfolio and have them walk you through a brief overview of all the steps taken to go from concept to execution.

Have them explain about the users. Who they are, why they use the product. Ask them how they drew those conclusions.

10

Watch Out for Big Egos

There is nothing worse than a designer who thinks they are an "artist".

Great design is about communication. This means the end user benefits from a great understanding of the product.

As I mentioned above, the UX Designer's roll involves communicating with many different people, including other members of your team, senior people and even clients.

Having someone with a large ego who gets upset when someone has questions or even criticisms of their work is simply a waste of time and resources.

UX Design is about research, everything should be backed up by data. If a UX'er has a problem with some feedback, but can't back it up, then it's probably coming from an egotistical standpoint.

Watch for a big ego when asking them about failed projects, favourite projects and improvements on layouts as I mentioned above.

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Conclusion

There are a lot of "UX Designers" out there, so making sure you find the right one with the right experience is vital.

When interviewing, make sure you keep in mind the points mentioned above.

To keep it simple, look for someone whose answers are user focused and analytical.

Make sure they are motivated, humble and easy to collaborate with.

For more articles on improving the User Experience of your product, check out my blog at UsabilityHour.com

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Hi, I'm Craig, the Author

I'm here to help people **grow** their online business through positive user experiences.

When was the last time you went to a restaurant and were incredibly let down by your experience there?

Did you recommend that place to any of your friends?

No, of course not.

The growth, and success of whatever you're building, whether it's an app, blog or online store, is directly related to how people feel when they use it.

The goal is to create such a simple, seamless and valuable experience that people can't wait to tell others about you.

The benefits? **You grow**. More sales, more users, more repeat customers.

I publish a private newsletter each week. Join to get exclusive access to all tips on how to grow with UX.

Join newsletter here: www.usabilityhour.com/hey-im-craig