

Why Hire An Autodidact?

By Martin Coleman © 2011.

Date: 2011.08.23. Permanent ID of this document: 28e16c301e1931c327c85d5db0137b2cc2a05aab

What is an autodidact? Auto comes from "self" and didactic comes from "regarding education", so autodidactic means "self educated". An autodidact is someone who knows a lot, most or practically all of a chosen field or subject and who has gained that knowledge by themselves without any formal training or schooling in the subject whatsoever.

Everyone is an autodidact to an extent. People teach themselves a few things about a lot of subjects for various reasons, whether it be from necessity, or as part of a hobby or for any other reason that might lead to needing to learn more about something. But there are others that rely on that form of learning entirely for their livelihood, profession or career. They do not necessarily learn "just enough" to accomplish what they want, they sometimes learn everything they can as a sort of obsession, an ingrained desire to learn everything they can, as thoroughly as possible, for sake of interest and to gain more knowledge. This is what is sometimes referred to as a "real" autodidact.

A real autodidact is very rare in the population and are almost always disadvantaged in formal learning as they consider it too slow, tedious and boring. To them, all they need to be taught is reading, writing, arithmetic and be given a library card. Within a few months they will have been able to give themselves the equivalent of a Masters or even Ph.D in any subject that they throw themselves at.

Their learning needs cannot be accommodated by universities as they can learn a years worth of information in just a very few months, and can be taught logic, reasoning and critical thinking in far less time than some biased and conditioned university lecturers and course creators would want to believe. This along with how quick they can learn, means that many Universities don't want them around either because there is not much money to be made from an autodidact.

What can an autodidact do for you?

- Provide a unique perspective and line of experience on any given problem.
- Digest difficult theoretical information and material quickly and produce results from it.
- Take the time and effort to explore new areas, concepts and paradigms and invent solutions.
- Soak up new technologies and ideas and pool them with existing resources to generate insightful connections between what may seem to be unrelated topics. (i.e.: Can think outside the box.)

For the above reasons, an autodidact will almost never have a degree in their chosen field and depend on an extensive portfolio and pro-active resume to convince hiring managers to consider them for a job. They almost always have extensive experience which they combine with their book smarts to give an employer the equivalent of a high end degree.

So remember to give an autodidact a try when you are next considering someone for a position or contract. They are practically always suitable for the position, they love challenges and learning new things, are very hard workers and thrive on intellectually stimulating work. Pretend they have the degree you are looking for and if need be, give them a theoretical and/or practical test. They will love and appreciate the opportunity and you may find that they are just the right fit for the role they are applying for.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.