

Guaranteeing Hiring Success

Tips on Recruiting, Screening, Interviewing, Testing and Reference Checking.

Time is the most critical factor in hiring today. Spend too long on your hiring process, and you'll lose top candidates. Spend too little time, and you may make the most costly mistake of all—a bad hire. The secret is to spend enough time, while using the proper tools, to make the right fit between the candidate and the company.

This article highlights the benefits of improving your hiring process, and gives you an assortment of tools to help you make your hiring decisions. Once you've set up a process to recruit, assess, and interview potential job candidates, you can guarantee your hiring success.

Recruiting

In today's tight labor market, just finding the right people to interview can be a major challenge. You should seek every opportunity to locate potential applicants. While print advertising has remained the primary recruiting medium for most organizations, an analysis of costs has led many companies to seek additional methods. The following practices are some of the most popular and effective recruiting methods companies are using today:

- Recruit applicants even when you're not hiring.
- Develop a contact database of people you're interested in.
- Partner with a skilled staffing service to recruit for you.
- Redesign jobs to take advantage of available talent.
- Encourage referrals—make your company the best place to work.
- Use temp-to-hire options with a staffing service to "test out" before you commit to hiring.
- Go global: can your work be done by someone across town, across the country, or across the world?
- Use on-line career fairs to gain exposure to more applicants.
- Post job openings on your company's web site.
- Fill in with temporary clerical, technical, professional, or executive staff while you look.

Recruiting is a sales job—why would a top quality applicant buy your firm? Once you answer this question, you'll be better prepared to face the challenges involved in finding good candidates.

Candidate Assessment

Once you've selected the people you want to interview, the real challenge begins. Interviewing should be thought of as a process. Take your time getting to know the candidate—through screening, interviewing, testing, and reference checking. Your goal is to get an understanding of a person's behavior—and the more chances you have to learn about the person, the more likely you are to get a true sense of their personality, ability, and behavior.

Screening

Once you've found a way to locate applicants, you need to screen resumes to make sure you interview the right candidates for your open positions. How many good people have you passed over because nothing on their resume caught your eye? Unfortunately, the answer is you'll never know-unless you catch them working for your competition because they saw potential where you didn't! Use the following techniques to improve your screening process:

- Work in teams to gain more insight into a candidate's strengths and weaknesses.
- Use a resume scoring system to compare candidates.
- Telephone pre-screen-don't rely solely on resumes.

Interviewing

Dr. Pierre Mornell, author of *Hiring Smart*, states three basic assumptions about interviewing: 1. Interviews test how well someone interviews; 2. A good con artist can fool you every time; and 3. Interviews in which you induce stress seldom work. Additionally, he offers a few strategies to improve your interviewing technique.

First, he suggests asking a series of initial questions at once, then allowing the candidate to answer them all. The reason is, it forces you to listen, and it relaxes you. Once you know your part is over for a while, you can focus on the candidate's answers more intently. He also suggests you announce when the interview will end-by saying something like, "we've got five more minutes." This usually prompts the candidate to say the most important thing about him or herself-Mornell calls these "last minute revelations."

Finally, Mornell suggests throwing in a curveball at the end of the interview by doing something unexpected. He often walks people to their cars. He observes the make, model, interior, or anything else which shows something about the candidate's personal side. One candidate he did this with had left his wife in the car-for the whole two-hour interview. This action spoke volumes to Mornell, who did not recommend the candidate for a position. The company hired him anyway, only to have to let him go less than a year later because of his poor relationships with female coworkers.

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