How to Hire Employees Effectively

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Amity Perry and Brian H. Kleiner

Introduction

As we enter an age of increasing ethnic diversity in the United States and competition from abroad, it is essential that corporations implement effective and non-discriminatory hiring practices. A company can reduce employee turnover, exposure to litigation, and prevent a tarnished company image by hiring employees from diverse backgrounds that have the expertise and experience necessary for success in the job.

In today's competitive environment, companies are starting to realise the increasing importance of hiring. In 1995 U.S. companies allocated the majority of their business training budgets, approximately $52 billion to training programmes designed to instruct in hiring practices and interviewing techniques. For instance, American Honda's manager of corporate training and development favours a "process-oriented, common-sense approach to interviewing and hiring". "Honda is currently using what they call the five-step approach to interviewing; complete skills analysis, select skill definitions, develop questions, conduct the interview and rate skills [USA Today]".

Before beginning any recruitment process, employers should understand that federal and state laws forbid discrimination against employees or candidates for employment because of race, gender, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, marital status, sexual preference, physical disabilities, and age if over 40 years old. These anti-discrimination laws apply to all aspects of the employment process including: job descriptions, employment advertisements, interviews, job applications, salaries and benefits, promotions, and all decisions related to hiring and firing personnel. Employers should consult with competent legal counsel when developing recruitment programmes.

A distressed applicant may seek legal action which could lead to federal or state agencies taking action as well. Under the Civil Rights Act of 1991, employees who feel they have been discriminated on based on race, religion, sex or disability are allowed a jury trial. An employee who wins is eligible to recover actual damages, punitive damages and legal fees. Daniel Vliet, a Milwaukee attorney who specialises in employment law, states that lawsuits claiming hiring discrimination are much less than those claiming discrimination in firing or promotions. Vliet explains "People get more upset over being fired than over not being hired [Bahls, 1995]". Also, evidence is much harder to obtain when the applicant is not yet an employee who can measure up their circumstances and compare it to others. Still, companies should be prepared for these types of claims.

How to Hire Employees Effectively

Starting the Hiring Process

The first step to effective hiring is to draft a job description. This process will force the employee to identify who is needed and why. The why may be as simple as an increasing work load or filling a position left vacant by resignation or retirement. Requirements to fill this position should be set forth in the job description and announcement. The job description should also specify what skills and abilities are needed to perform the required tasks.

It may be helpful to ask existing personnel in similar positions to describe their daily tasks. They may have a better understanding from performing the job day-to-day as to what will be needed to perform the job successfully. In addition, these employees should have an understanding of how the organisation runs and the daily challenges the position presents. Key personnel should be included in the hiring process. This will make team leaders feel involved, provides additionl feedback, and decreases the likelihood of hiring incompatible employees.

Not involving existing employees can create problems. Motherware, a $5-million catalogue company, discovered after a new employee was hired that the majority of her work team did not get along with the newest group member. Jody Wright, president of Motherware, remedied this situation in a unique fashion. “We encouraged an employee who was having personal difficulties with her co-workers to hire the people she was going to be working with. That way, she would be committed to making it work”. By encouraging this employee to contribute to the hiring process they have eliminated the problem. Wright stated that out of that employees’ 10 hires, there has only been one mishap [Inc.].

As an alternative to hiring new employees managers should evaluate whether promoting from within the company is possible. Promoting from within improves morale and eliminates having to familiarise a new employee with company policies and procedures. On the other hand, hiring from outside the company can bring fresh ideas and experience from other companies. Often, employees resent management for hiring outside the company. Many employees feel they end up training outside hires for positions they are themselves qualified to perform, but were overlooked for promotion. A contemporary illustration of hiring outside the company is the Los Angeles Chief of Police, Willie Williams. The Los Angeles Police Commission recently voted not to renew his tenure for another five years. One of the reasons for not renewing his appointment was his failure to be accepted by command personnel, including Deputy Chiefs and Commanders.

The job description should include the technical and performance skills required. Technical skills are those which require knowledge of a specific piece of equipment or software. A job requirement involving technical skills may be operating a Centrex phone system, running a backhoe, or operating a Mcintosh Computer using Microsoft Word. Performance skills are assign-

ments or responsibilities that may be assigned to your position. An example of performance skills are managing a customer service unit, providing sensitive company information to the public, or simply following your companies policies and procedures.

A well defined job description should contain the qualifications, and fundamental and non-fundamental job functions. The qualifications will include required certifications, education, experience and necessary skills. To avoid excluding certain groups of applicants, you may want to explain education may be substituted for experience or vice versa. The American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 protects individuals from discrimination due to handicaps, therefore be specific about which functions are truly fundamental and which are desirable but non-fundamental. In addition, the ADA also requires that employers with more than 15 employees provide accommodations for disabled personnel who work for them. These provisions can include adjusting their workload and making physical adjustments to the workplace environment.

An effective job description will help provide a guideline when interviewing. The job description will assist in determining if the applicant is qualified. It is imperative that care be provided when writing the job description so as not to discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Do not list a requirement unless it is really required to perform the job satisfactorily. For instance, do not list typing as a requirement when typing is not a daily requirement but only necessary when the staff secretary is sick. By listing typing as a requirement when it is not, you may be unfairly discriminating against people with paralysis or carpal tunnel syndrome. Typing in that case would be considered a non-fundamental function.

The next step in the recruitment process is locating qualified candidates. Pooling job applicants from various sources increases the probability of finding the right person for the job. Advertise job postings in diverse places and shun applications and supplementals that may discourage a group of potential employees who are otherwise qualified. According to a survey by the Association of Executive Search Consultants in New York, more and more companies are filling top management positions with individuals who are experienced in different industries. This concept is referred to as "out-of the box" hiring [Nation's Business, 1995]. Although these companies typically need to educate these managers with industry specifics, such as product and customers, they can often benefit from the candidates' management and administrative experience. It can also be extremely beneficial for a company to hire outside the industry when they are considering entering a new market. For example, when a beverage company expands into the snack industry or a telephone utility expands into beeper and cellular service.

In a few circumstances discrimination in recruitment is acceptable. Some examples would be hiring a priest, rabbi or something requiring a gender

specific worker such as a strip searcher or shower/restroom attendant. These examples are referred to as Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications (BFOQ). If challenged, however, the burden will be on the employer to establish its right to rely on the BFOQ exception.

Subtle adjectives, descriptives and job titles can be construed as discriminatory. By opening any Sunday classified section it is apparent that some employers are opening the door to legal liability. Descriptive terms such as Girl Friday, Salesman, and Waiter should be avoided. Titles such as Administrative Assistant, Salesperson and Wait Staff are much less likely to draw a complaint. An advertised job description should close by stating that the company is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE). If, however, the company is not an EOE, this document could prove damaging at a trial of a discrimination claim.

Companies can often weed out unqualified applicants by making them come into the office to fill out an application. The application itself may indicate how well an applicant can follow instructions. If a person turns in an application that is incomplete or has mistakes, it may be a warning sign. Resumes can be an indication of the applicant's style and experience, but often these are prepared by friends, family or outside agencies and may not accurately reflect the applicant's abilities. In addition, applications can be used to obtain authorisation to check references prior to committing to an interview.

The Interview

Interviewers should prepare questions beforehand. Different types of questions will lead the candidate into different types of responses. There are various styles of questions: rapport building questions, open ended questions, trick questions, probing questions, and non-question questions [Deems, 1995]. The most effective interview will include questions from each category.

Rapport building questions are used to make job candidates feel comfortable. Finding areas of compatibility can make a candidate feel more at ease. It is important to create an open and relaxed atmosphere. The way an interview starts will set the tone for the entire interview. Creating a positive atmosphere will reflect well on the company's image and can create a sense of trust. Building rapport starts with comments like "I enjoyed reviewing your resume. I see here that you went to the same school as a friend of mine. Can I get you something to drink?". A relaxed candidate is more likely to share past experiences.

Open ended questions are those that lead the applicant into a discussion or examples. These types of questions spur the applicant to cite examples and details of how he/she handled situations. Examples of open ended questions are "Can you think back to a situation or project that ran smoothly? Can you

describe how you contributed to its success or completion?" or "Your cover letter stated you are currently supervising five people. Can you describe a difficult situation that occurred related to customer service and how you handled it?". Questions should evoke situations that pertain to the employer's business or be relevant to the position for which the candidate is interviewing. These types of questions give insight to how the employee will handle difficult situations. Often past performance is a key to determining if the candidate is suitable for the position.

Many managers will admit, with hesitation, to having thrown in a few trick questions during their interviewing career. These questions may test how an applicant handles stress or deals with a question to which they do not know the answer. Some typical trick question may sound like this, "If you were on a deserted island and you could choose an item from this list of five, which would you choose and why?" "Can a woman legally marry her widow's brother?". These types of questions tend to catch the applicant off guard, and probably may not indicate how well a person will perform on the job.

Roger Dow, vice president and general sales manager of Marriott Lodging states he has no patience for trick questions. He states "If you play games you will hire a group of game players". He instead conducts interviews that involve situations that have occurred in the past. He might ask "Here is one of the biggest challenges we face in our business: The competition is consolidating. What can we do about it [Austin, 1996]?" A well prepared applicant will have less difficulty with these types of situational questions. In addition, the interviewer gets to learn whether or not the applicant has done her homework.

Probing questions are often used to obtain explicit examples and keep the applicant on track. They are used when the interviewer wants to lead the applicant in a certain direction of discussion. The candidate may not have understood the question or answered vaguely. You may want to ask "You said you enjoyed dealing with the public. Take a few moments to remember a situation in which you had to deal with a confrontational customer. Describe how you handled the situation". It is essential that applicant's be given time to gather their thoughts. Unless the position will require split-second decision making, the applicant should be encouraged to remember back and not be rushed. This will allow the applicant's answer to be precise and accurate and will give fuller insight into their past experiences and actions.

Lastly, there are "no-question" questions. These are statements that do not end with a question mark but require an answer. These are helpful in creating an open atmosphere. You may want to state, "Tell me a little bit about your past experience", or "Think back to a time on your last job where you

felt most productive. Describe what you were working on". These types of questions allow applicants to open up and talk about something that makes them comfortable.

The interview should take place in a comfortable room away from distractions. It is important to recognise that the applicant will form an opinion of the company based on the interviewer's appearance and the environment of the interview room. Interviewer's should dress appropriately, clean the room, and remove unnecessary clutter before the interview takes place. Seats should be available for all participants and the atmosphere should be as comfortable and as non-threatening as possible.

The applicant should be advised that notes will be taken during the interview to assist in decision making. Some corporations will even tape-record interviews. As a key aspect of the interview, the applicant should be allowed to ask questions. The types of questions asked may give additional insight into the applicant. If the applicant has taken the time to research the company prior to the interview it reflects initiative. It is becoming increasingly more important for job applicants to research the companies with which they are interviewing. Does the candidate relate his/her job experience to situations that relate to your company. For instance, if an applicant's questions are only related to salary, benefits and hours it may show a lack of interest in the compny and it's job tasks.

When closing the interview, thank the candidate for their time and interest. Explain the process and time schedule. Never falsely express or imply employment or it may later result in litigation. Lastly, walk the candidate to the door or elevator. This shows consideration and concern and enforces a positive company image.

Many companies do not recognise the hidden costs associated with a new hire. It is much more cost effective to keep good employees happy by offering enticements such as money, involvement, responsibility and advancement. Depending on what study or article you read, it is estimated that each new employee costs a company 30 - 50% over the new hire's salary. For example, it can cost a company as much as $75,000 to fill a vacant $50,000 engineering position. Some of these costs can be attributed to training, mistakes, second-rate customer service and the recruitment process itself.

A 1996 national survey of 838 business owners by management consultant, George S. May International Company showed that more than 56% believe it is harder to find competent employees today than it was five years ago, while only 37% think it is easier. In addition, Donald J. Fletcher, president of George S. May International States "There is a direct link between keeping good employees and retaining customers. Motivation, whether through financial incentives or team-building efforts, is essential [USA Today, 1996].

Nicholas Corcodilos, managing director of the North Bridge Group, an executive search and consulting firm, states that companies like AT&T, Delta Airlines, and Procter and Gamble are taking a deeper look at the way they have been evaluating potential job applicants. He states they have learned the hard way that "There is absolutely no correlation between how you interview and how well you perform on the job. Managers keep hiring on the basis of personality rather than ability to do the job." He goes on to state "The new interview is a hands-on, at-work meeting between an employer to get a job done and a worker who is fully prepared to do the job during the interview". The trend will be to focus on skills rather than personality.

This is not to imply that personality is not important but rather that they should go hand-in-hand. The primary focus should be on whether the applicant has what it takes to get the job done. Mary Kay Haben, executive Vice President of the pizza division of Kraft Foods, states she tries to focus on interview questions that are related to what the applicant would do on the job. She also relies on "multiple data points" opinions from other interviewers. She suggests having the applicant meet with more than one manager and then get together later to exchange thoughts and opinions. She goes on to say "In the old days everybody followed the resumes and asked exactly the same things. That does not happen anymore [Austin, 1996]". Some job interviews today take a full day and involve meeting many people, depending on job importance.

Some companies are turning to psychological tests, handwriting analysis and decision making software to assist in the hiring or elimination of potential candidates. However, these approaches are subject to claims that they invade the applicant's right to privacy. For over ten years chief executive of Tom Payette Buick Inc., a $25 million dealership has been using handwriting analysis to evaluate his potential sales staff. When first approached by Hu Vista International, a graphology business with over 25 years experience, Payette was very cynical. He did however submit a sample of his own writing out of curiosity. After receiving the results he stated "I was surprised they pegged me but I still was not convinced. I did not see anything that I felt was particularly original". A year later he again submitted a writing sample. He was curious to see if it showed changes in his personality that occurred during the year. The analysis showed the following "I see you have got your sarcasm under control". Now he was convinced. During the year he had been working on his manner of tone to his employees after receiving a few constructive complaints. This Auto Dealer thinks the $45.00 "Quick Screen Analysis" can help reveal traits that are not easily recognisable during the interview process. He also attributes his 36% annual turnover, nearly half the industry average, to his effective hiring practices which includes handwriting analysis [Bianchi, 1996].

How to Hire Employees Effectively

What works for one employer, may not matter to another. In 1995 The National Centre on the Educational Quality of the Workforce surveyed 3,000 employers on what characteristics mattered most in an employee. Attitude and commumications skills were ranked the highest [Inc.]. A recent study of Fortune 500 companies was conducted by EdWel & Co., a training and consulting firm. Ironically, the study showed that companies that use screening tests for hiring had higher turnover rates than companies that did not use tests. Michael Welles, Managing Director of EdWel & Co., explains "In many cases, the more qualified applicants [as indicated by screening tests] consider their new positions to be merely transitional [Industry Week, 1996]". These tests may eliminate applicants that will grow into stable productive employees.

Checking references is one key to successful and effective hiring decisions. Although employers are reluctant to provide information besides dates of employment, it is still important to take the time to check. Speaking with past supervisors can be beneficial in confirming and backing up impressions obtained during the interview. Notes taken during each interview should be reviewed to compare responses from various applicants.

After a well thought out decision is made, the chosen candidate is usually contacted by phone. Job offers should be presented verbally and followed up in writing, including a description of the job, salary/compensation, and a proposed start date. The applicant should be allowed a reasonable amount of time to contemplate the offer. Professional courtesy dictates that all applicants who were interviewed be notified of the hiring decision. This should be done after your selected applicant has accepted. Sometimes a first choice may decline the offer so the employee may need to contact the second choice. Unsuccessful applicants should be notified by letter.

Conclusion

Corporate managers seem to agree that the best way to evaluate a job applicant's work habits is by past experience. A solid work history is the best indicator of future success. Recruiters should evaluate the candidate's ability to solve problems, check references, and use interview questions that relate to how the candidate handled situation in the past.

A generation ago, it was common for a corporate employee to spend his entire career with one company. As companies downsize and reorganise with increasing regularity, employees find themselves switching jobs more often. Companies can reduce their overall efficiency and productivity by paying special attention to the hiring process. As shown, this process starts with a well written job description and involves active participation from existing employees. Although methods have changed, the interview still provides an indispensable tool in the evaluation of job applicants.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Malcolm G. Meador, Jr., and Brian H. Kleiner

During the past two decades, tumultuous years for organisations in the USA, fundamental changes have occurred in the contracts between employer and employee, both implied and written. Rapid technological changes and global competition have driven these changes. In order to maintain a competitive edge, and oftentimes simply to survive, organisations have adopted "lean and mean" approaches to staffing. Blue collar workers had become accustomed to feeling the pinch of layoffs during cyclical economic downturns and plant closings resulting from technological advances in the manufacturing processes. The emphasis has more recently shifted to encompass whole layers of professional white collar workers. Various mid-level and some senior-level white collar staff positions are virtually disappearing. Organisations are flattening their structures not only to operate more cost efficiently, but more importantly to increase the speed of communications and quality of response to changes occurring within and outside of the organisation. The buttoned down corporate automaton of the past whose sole means for survival was dependent upon his/her ability to keep a narrow focus and avoid rocking the boat is being replaced by a more adaptable manager. This new manager is capable of working effectively across traditional lines of management discipline and within self directed work groups. Communication is also directed further up and down the structure of the organisation, requiring agility from the board room level to the shop floor. Unquestioning loyalty was once the key to longevity and security. Loyal employees are quickly being replaced by professionals willing to take risks by questioning the *status quo,* constantly evaluate and update their skill sets, and remain open to a much more effective albeit difficult process of managing through consensus.

The affects of these changes places much greater significance on the process of hiring new employees. The costs associated with mis-hires is ever increasing. Major corporations estimate the costs of mis-hires to be from between two to four times the person's salary (Smart, 1989, p.3). Some companies consider the cost of mis-hires even greater. In order to put this issue in perspective, the following list compiles the cost estimates computed by eight separate companies associated with hiring a person who quit or was fired one year after being hired, and was at least 50 per cent productive during that year (Smart 1989).

With costs estimates like these (opposite page), it is clear that success within organisations today is ever more dependent on the quality and competence of the people you hire to manage the organisation's business. Furthermore, because of the need for greater interdependence at all levels within the organisation and the need to work more frequently across the more traditional lines of discipline, it is not enough to simply hire the most

Company	*Position*	*Annual Salary in $USD*	*Cost Of Mis-hire in $USD*
Mercer-Meidinger-Hansen	Managing Consultant	50,000	518,000
John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory	Director	70,000	521,000
Gould	General Manager	200,000	675,000
Inter-Continental Hotels	Hotel General Manager	100,000	529,000
Intelsat	Translator	40,000	162,000
Booz Allen & Hamilton	Partner	250,000	2,000,000
STM	Programmer Analyst	30,000	132,000
EHS	Head Nurse	32,000	66,000
		Total	4,603,000

technically competent people. To be successful, organisations must find capable people that have the utmost flexibility, maturity, compatibility and integrity. These are difficult standards to meet.

Developing effective hiring practices first requires an understanding of the key elements associated with successful hiring, and secondly the ability to employ the tools and techniques that are available to help accomplish the ultimate objective, hiring the best employees.

Clearly Identifying Your Organisational Needs

The first element in developing effective hiring practices may seem very basic, almost redundant. You have decided to hire a replacement staff member for one that is leaving, so you brush off the job description your predecessor prepared some three years prior. What were the reasons for the previous employee's departure? What expectation's do you have for your own future? Do they depend on the success or failure of your staff? Have your organisation's needs changed so little?

The first step is so often overlooked, yet is one of the most critical in effective hiring. Because of the rapid changes within most organisations following past hiring practices will probably not provide the best outline to identify the more qualified candidates for hire.

How to Hire Employees Effectively

Tools And Techniques

Start with drawing a blueprint of your needs. Briefly state the main purpose of the position you would like to fill. This will help you to focus on the level of person you need to begin thinking about.

Example: You are a car manufacturer. You recently purchased the company who has been your primary supplier of hood assemblies. That companies president has decided to retire and you need to identify and hire his or her replacement. As an independent company, the acquired entity had the need for an executive level decision maker who happened to act as a key operations manager, as well. Integrated within your car assembly and manufacturing process, the hood assembly process is one of many minor sub-assembly routines. The main purpose of the position you are replacing has changed dramatically. An executive level person will probably be an inappropriate replacement.

Identify the key objectives that the position is designed to accomplish. This will help you in defining the skill sets that a candidate will need to meet the job requirements. Example: You are the CFO of a successful startup company on the verge of filing an initial public offering. Your accounting department is being managed by the accounts payable manager who started with the founding president five years ago. The integrity of monthly financial reports is suspect. The monthly closing is taking more than forty-five days, and the manufacturing department complains that they are having trouble getting orders accepted because your vendors are complaining about late and inaccurate payments. The key objectives for the position will include (1) developing standard monthly closing procedures, (2) documenting those procedures and training the staff accordingly, (3) evaluating important operating processes such as in purchasing, and identifying the weaknesses and bottlenecks that are contributing to the problems being experienced by the production group, (4) evaluating the skills and potential capacity of the staff and outlining a plan to upgrade so that the staff can meet the expanding needs of a growing organisation. It is readily apparent that by outlining these key objectives, the CFO can more clearly identify the skill sets needed. The candidate will need experience managing subordinate staff members and a high level of competence in analysing work process flows. Someone who has had several years of experience managing the accounting department of a medium to large sized entity will more likely have developed the skill sets necessary to analyse and establish efficient standard monthly closing procedures and evaluate the skills of subordinate staff. Furthermore, a candidate who has also had experience in a public accounting firm, or in the operational audit group of a large commercial entity will have the skills necessary to review and evaluate the work process flows that contribute to efficiencies in day to day business activities.

Evaluate and clarify the standards by which the company and ultimately its employees will be measured. This will help to further develop the profile of a successful candidate. Example: You are a manufacturing and distribution company aspiring to expand your market overseas. Your director of manufacturing, is retiring in two months and you are developing a job outline for a replacement. In order to meet the competition in foreign markets, your company will need to evaluate and identify the product standards required in the targeted markets. Experience with the international ISO 9000 standard should be a requirement. Foreign shipments are generally financed with documentary letters of credit that have specific standards associated with packaging, documentation, customs and content. Certain industries have specific quality standards to meet regulated safety requirements, health standards and industry norms. These standards should be enumerated in full as a basic level of experience required of your candidates.

Lastly, articulate the style of management that you espouse and that which you believe will be required of a candidate to be successful in the position. Spending the time to identify these attributes will contribute to a better fit within the organisation.

Example: You are a senior manager for a company that manufactures and distributes highly technical surgical medical equipment. Until the Clinton administration shook up the industry with its proposed national health care policies, your company enjoyed high margins on its products and a large diverse customer base. With the failure of the national health care policies, the medical industry heeded the message and woke up to the need for better cost controls. Since that time your company has been faced with a significantly reduced customer base as hospitals and doctor groups across the country have banded together in purchasing co-operatives. This has provided the buyer with measurable clout resulting in downard price pressure on your products. Consequently, your average sale has increased dramatically, but profit margins have suffered. Your sales force was comprised of a reasonably unsophisticated group, primarily order takers. You and the sales manager have controlled the group with an iron fist. Little if any negotiating freedom was allowed. Travel and entertainment expenses were tightly managed. The sales manager is leaving and you are seeking a replacement.

Changing market conditions clearly require a sales force capable of negotiating at highly sensitive levels. The sales force will obviously need to be upgraded. Your management style and that of the sales manager currently being replaced are no longer acceptable given the more professional level of sales staff required. You are willing to participate in a high level management training programme to upgrade your management skills and understanding. Given the anticipated needs of a more professional sales force, you will be looking for a sales manager experienced in motivational theories and

how to apply them to a highly professional and authoritative staff. This manager will also have in-depth knowledge in financing alternatives, and in the art of negotiating.

Understanding your management philosophy and style, as well as those of your staff, are increasingly important in the hiring process. Changing conditions are so pervasive as to dictate a periodic review to determine their ongoing relevance.

Selecting Qualified People As Suspects For Interviews

You have spent the time to develop a blueprint of your company's needs, and now it is time to find qualified suspects for the position you need to fill. Many business managers have difficulty with this next phase. Most tend to look in the familiar places and incorporate time consuming traditional methods, such as running ads in the local papers. While ads and other more traditional methods are not necessarily to be ruled out, they can result in a cattle call. The problem with this is in interviewing too many of the wrong people. What you want to do is reach qualified prospects who are dissatisfied with their current jobs, but have not yet taken action to seek a new opportunity (Winninger 1997). Reaching potential applicants at this stage will give you an advantage over other employers in your area. These are the three stages occupied by all people headed for another job (Winninger 1997).

1. Dissatisfaction. They know that they are unhappy with their jobs, but their dissatisfaction has not progressed to the point where it becomes an ongoing concern.
2. Movement. They begin planning a job search.
3. Active Search. They look for a job.

Tools And Techniques

Developing a list of qualified suspects for interviewing requires a continuous and proactive recruiting effort. You can not wait until your key employees leave. This will put your company in an emergency situation resulting in a reactive effort rather than a proactive one.

Some ideas for developing a continuous recruiting programme include the following (Winninger 1997).

1. Develop A Targeted Recruiting Plan. Create a demographic profile for the key positions where you would expect to find the most qualified prospects. Buy a mailing list for people who fit these characteristics.
2. Offer Job Search Assistance. Most communities have a welcome wagon committee or other newcomers groups. Also, many national real estate brokerages provide relocation services. Offer to provide job search assistance or career counselling

through these groups for relocating employees, and especially their spouses. The spouses can often provide bountiful opportunities for finding qualified suspects.

3. Offer Bounty To Employees. The best source for qualified suspects can often be found within the confines of your office. Offer your employees a token cash award for qualified suspects. Step up the *ante* with a weekend trip to a local resort for all suspects provided who are ultimately hired.

4. Devote Quality Time To Meeting Suspects. Set up some time each week to meet and talk with potential suspects. It will help you become a familiar face with potentially qualified prospects in your community, and increase the chances that you will get the first call from dissatisfied employees, before other employers in your area.

Converting Qualified Suspects Into Prospects For Hiring

Following the steps outlined above has provided you with a group of people potentially qualified to fill your company's open jobs. The next step involves converting those qualified "suspects" into qualified "prospects" for hiring. When you are fortunate enough to interview only those people that have already been pre-qualified in that they meet your preliminary hiring criteria, you will be hard-pressed to hire someone that is unfit for the jobs you have to offer (Winninger 1997).

Tools and Techniques

During the process where you outlined your organisation's needs, you identified the key objectives for the position(s) you are attempting to fill, and clarified the standards by which your employees will be measured. These attributes will assist you in developing a sample job analysis. The sample job analysis, an example of which is outlined overleaf, will allow you to rate your candidates in an initial interview, in an effort to further narrow the field of qualified suspects (Winninger 1997).

Once you have rated the suspects, pick the best thirty per cent of the candidates and identify these as your prime prospects. Now it is time for the final rounds of interviewing, and selecting the candidate you feel will be most suited for the job you have to offer.

Interviewing And Hiring The Best

Congratulations! You have worked hard on this assignment and it is time to interview the best qualified prospects for the job. It is important to spend time in preparation before having an in depth meeting with the key prospects, as you would before engaging in any important meeting. Keep in

Sample Job Analysis Accounting Supervisor	
Ability to analyse results	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to delegate responsibility	1 2 3 4 5
Communications skills	1 2 3 4 5
Leadership abilities	1 2 3 4 5
Training, experience	1 2 3 4 5
Professional status (licenses, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
Industry knowledge	1 2 3 4 5

mind that one or more of the prospects will be spending many of their waking hours with you, contributing to the success of your company, and ultimately your own success.

Tools And Techniques

1. Review the work you performed in defining your organisation's needs. Compare the salient points of the job description, objectives and standards to the prospects resume and identify areas where you find a match for in-depth discussion.
2. Review your understanding of where the company is positioned, changes it may be undergoing, and the challenges that lay ahead. Make notes on salient points to discuss with the prospects and gauge their reactions.
3. Review your own management style, those of other key managers the prospect will be interfacing with, and the experience and qualities of the staff the prospect will be supervising.
4. Review the balance of the resume to further familiarise yourself with the candidate.

Begin the process of interviewing by putting the candidate at ease. Generally this will take only a minute or two. The in-depth interview will then begin in earnest, including questions covering education, work history, plans and goals for the future, self appraisal, management experience and philosophy, and focused questions (Smart 1989). You have prepared yourself with background information on the company, yourself, other key players and of course the candidate. Depending on the experience you have had with the process of interviewing and hiring, you may benefit from using an in-depth guide to process through the questions. A great source for this guide can be found in *The Smart Interviewer,* by Bradford D. Smart, in Appendix A.

Finally, you will want to perform reference checks on the prospects. While the human resources manager can perform some of the preliminary checks related to time and place of employment, the hiring manager should conduct the in-depth reference checks. Here are a few additional tips on performing these reference checks (Smart 1989).

1. In-depth reference checks should be performed after the in-depth interview. You will have a better knowledge of the candidate which will magnify your credibility, and improve chances at obtaining meaningful input.
2. Contact previous supervisors, particularly those the applicant reported to during the past five years. This will give you the most relevant insight into the style and quality of management capability.
3. Obtain written permission from the candidate to conduct reference checks. This will enhance your ability to obtain relevant information about the candidate.
4. Do not waste time calling references listed in a resume, unless those listed are the candidate's former supervisor.
5. During the interview, ask the applicant to supply you with a list of the former supervisors you intend to contact. Ask the applicant to call the former supervisors and obtain permission for you to contact either at home or at their place of employment.
6. Promise those contacted total confidentiality, and keep that promise.
7. Contact the reference at home, preferably on the weekend. They will generally be more relaxed and willing to talk outside the office.
8. Create the tone that you are a trusted colleague who knows the applicant well. Let them be aware that you are not a personnel clerk following up on orders.
9. Contact the current supervisor. If this is not acceptable until after an offer has been made, make sure the candidate knows that the offer is contingent upon receiving no surprises from the candidate's current supervisor.

Good hunting!

Current Trends In The Market Place

According to Ernst & Young's findings, First Tennessee National Bank was able to fill job openings in just 19 days, compared to the industry average of 31 days because of it's focus on the Company's bond with it's employees. You may have discounted this as an important factor until Ernst & Young's

recent finding's on it's study of 275 portfolio managers. In that study it was found that 35% of investor decisions are driven by non-financial factors. Furthermore, of these factors, a company's ability to attract and retain talented employees ranked fifth of thirty-nine. The link between long-term potential and employee-friendly policies is becoming more clear (Wall Street Journal, March 1997).

Discussed in the body of this article were the rapid and dramatic transitions that companies are facing today. This has resulted in corresponding changes in the contract between company and employee. Several of the nation's largest companies are attempting to supplant the old model of American management where employees stay on for long periods of time with one company to one that encompasses continuous employment, but not necessarily with the same entity. Recently, to meet the challenge, these companies, including AT&T, DuPont and Johnson & Johnson, form the Talent Alliance. This group will offer career counselling, training, information on job trends and career matching services in an effort to both provide increased employment security for employees, and ensure themselves of a constant pool of highly skilled and accomplished talent (Wall Street Journal March 1997).

What these recent articles provide is a glimpse into the future trends of employment. As skill sets rapidly become outdated, traditional educational institutions will not be able to fulfil all the needs of industry. Companies will from necessity be required to undertake a greater role in retraining and recruiting in order to continue to succeed. Investors are recognising the benefits of dedicated and talented employees in greater force, as evidenced by their investment decisions. In conclusion, the process of effectively hiring and retaining quality employees will continue to grow in significance.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Michael Mazur and Brian H. Kleiner

The news, broadcast to us daily, mystify and horrify us. Several thousand workers were laid off in the past years as a result of business downsizing, technology advances, global competition. This process has noticeably slowed down and approached a bottom line. In the meantime the business cycle is reversing upwards and the economy is gaining strength. Companies restructured their echelons, merged with others, sold out unprofitable units and are ready to compete in the new economic conditions. But the bad news is that according to official statistics, the national unemployment rate is at its lowest point in seven years- down from high 7.8 per cent in June 1992 to a low of 5.1 per cent in 8/1996. Some employers already have weathered the staffing drought. In a survey of one thousand employers, almost seventy five per cent reported difficulty in finding qualified workers for the following reasons.

Labour Force Growth

The labour force is growing more slowly because there are fewer young people to enter the job market. The rate of about 16% annually, is expected to remain until 2000. This is a much lower growth rate than the annual 26% during the 1976-1988 period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The primary reason for slowdown is a decline of births in the early 1970s. Seventy six million baby boomers entered the workplace years ago, building companies and creating jobs that the 50 million baby busters now coming into their own can not possibly fill.

Education Quality Decline

In accordance with data provided by the National Association of Manufacturers in 1991:

* Two out of three companies said that most job applicants lack motivation and for general skills needed to be productive.
* More than one third of companies regularly turn down job applicants because they can not read or write well enough to hold a job.
* One-fourth of responding companies reported that they turn down applicants because of inadequate maths and communication skills.

Increasing Mismatch between Skills needed in the workplace and skills that workers possess

Employers now require more advanced skills than ever, even of their lowest - level employees, because of staggering global competition. In addition,

human resources managers are competing for the exact same people using the high-tech technology, aggressiveness and ingenuity. It is no longer enough for employees to possess good technical skills, now they have to relate to the customer, have good communication skills, and be a team player.

Healthy Economy

Despite all the talk about downsizing, there are plenty of jobs to go around thanks to all the displaced workers who took fat severance packages and started their own companies. As downsizing organisations start to rebuild, they are finding that experienced workers who were given the boot have said good-bye to Corporate America for good. There are fewer people to fill more demanding job slots. No wonder companies are struggling. Furthermore, because these are such sweeping changes, the labour shortage is likely to continue at least until the end of the decade, may even go another 10 years.

Companies are rethinking the strategies they use to find and keep good people. In a competitive market, recruitment is the first line of defence because each employee in modern companies is more important to the success of the company than they were when staff was larger.

How To Find Quality Employees

Innovative companies are using a whole host of strategies-some old, some new- to get people into their organisations. Many managers and business owners find themselves stuck in a rut because they seek new employees in the same old places, and often can not find the time to be creative in recruiting. As shown in [1], the trouble with interviewing every applicant is the fact that 70 per cent of all hiring decisions involving an interview are based on personal chemistry-instinctive feelings of like or dislike. Few interviewers realise that the very person they dislike may be the best candidate for a given job.

One of the most important techniques in attracting high-quality people to interviews involves approach and timing. Specifically, recruiters must reach prospects who are dissatisfied with their current job and have not yet begun to seek new employment. If you contact applicants at this stage, you will have a jump on half the employers in your community.

These are the three stages occupied by all people headed for another job:

1. Dissatisfaction. They know that they are unhappy with their jobs, but their dissatisfaction has not progressed to the point where it becomes an ongoing concern.
2. Movement. They begin planning a job search.
3. Active search. They look for a job.

If you do not prepare by hiring only qualified people at entry level, you will end up with unqualified managers later. Here's the example.

A manager gives two weeks notice, so you look among your technicians for the best one to promote for manager. What preparation does this person have for being a manager? None. What training is that person going to receive after he/she becomes a manager? Usually none. Consequently, the new manager spends time doing what he/she is familiar or comfortable with, which is the job he or she was doing before promotion. That is everything but managing. Further problems will occur because we now have two people performing the same duties: the new manager and the person who takes over the new manager's former job.

Employees are expected to be more intelligent, more productive than ever before. They must be creative and motivated to learn. They must be able to offer perceptions about customers, or insights into production process. These days, an order clerk may be expected to punch-hit as a salesperson, analyse operations as a consultant, and communicate as a leader.

Finding qualified people who become loyal to the company, remaining with the firm for decades, may determine success or failure of companies in this knowledge-based economy. "Brains have replaced brawn as an employee's most valuable asset. By and large, our economy has moved from relying on physical capital...to relying on human capital, such as knowledge, experience, talent, and intelligence... You are what you hire. Your long term financial success depends upon the quality of your employees requiring a quality recruiting and hiring process"[1].

A "Help Wanted" sign hanging from the plant or factory gate is likely to attract no more than a bored glance these days, especially if low-paying jobs are being offered with no prestige and little chance for advancement. To find quality people companies need to think ahead of time about filling empty positions, and managers must continually be cultivating internal and external leads, and making sure the company has the candidates. The rewards are handsome and, in most cases, far greater than expected.

The later the recruiting is activated, the more rushed the process becomes. As a result, the hiring standards will be lowered, candidate's positive attributes may be exaggerated and negative ones- overlooked.

Employees As Recruiters

Employee referral programmes are among the most successful means of finding new employees. There are two ways to increase participation:

* By offering incentives that vary with the level of the position to be filled, and the difficulty of filling the position;
* By promoting the incentive programme with both current and

new employees during orientation.

Current employees who are familiar with the workplace are well-qualified to screen candidates for personal characteristics that fit the job environment. Furthermore, the employees have a stake in the candidates they refer: to some extent, their own standing in the firm is on the line. They will not risk it by pushing doubtful choices, even for cash incentives. Depending on the position to be filled, those payments can be substantial: from $100 for referring an entry level housekeeper (Doubletree Hotels) to $10,000 for referring an executive (NeXT Software Inc.). Some organisations use hiring committees made up of both executives and employees. Committee members are constantly on the alert for prospects-anyone who impresses them.

Another recruitment method is to enlist the aid of former employees including retirees who left the organisation on good terms and maintain connections with the organisation. About 70 to 80% of all service workers are recruited directly through job networks.

Hire Your Own Employees

When companies are going to spend time and money finding qualified applicants, they should have a compensation and benefits package that is designed to keep them. But in a job market in which candidates can be picky, they are looking at more than money. They want relationship and opportunity to learn, to be creative, and to advance. This is especially true among younger employees, who do not have the same loyalty and work ethic. What your company offers employees that other companies do not to prevent employee's departure for greener pastures?

Successful business products, services and reputation, active connections with communities in which it operates, flexible schedules and work/family programmes such as on-site child care get top marks from the employees. However, staffing professionals agree the hottest selling point today is ongoing development. Employees who have heard the death knell of lifetime employment are not only shopping for companies based on training opportunities, they are staying there because of them. This is true regardless of the level of employees.

The process of internal promotion as a means of a staff development programme designed to train employees for advancement. The programme may include:

* skill-building seminars or classes-make it company policy to invest in the staging of employee learning opportunities;
* schedule of events, activities, seminars and classes available in the community, technical colleges, and other organisations.

Some employers start their own trade schools. During their classes, real-life company situations are examined. At the end employment opportunities and interviews are offered to anyone interested in a career with their organisation, and flyers are distributed. Less extreme than founding the trade school is to co-sponsor and teach some classes at a local vocational or technical school. Media ads and posters in stores are effective methods of advertising courses. A company will benefit when employees apply their skills on the job and enhance the value of the services or product.

Doubletree Hotels offers classes to help employees get their graduate equivalency diploma, and English -and Spanish -language courses. Additionally through its "Care" University, Doubletree provides training needed to help employees move up the corporate ladder. "This is one of the few industries left in which employees can enter at the level of a housekeeper and end up as CEO", says Ann Rhoades, the company executive vice president of Human Resources. "We do everything we can to facilitate that". What has the impact been on retention? In industry that reports 120 per cent turnover annually, Doubletree's is just 60 per cent.

Raytheon Company provides educational assistance for employees who want to pursue job related educational programmes since 1992. Demonstrating its commitment to educational opportunity, the company expanded its scholarship awards programme for employees' children in 1997.

These days companies can not afford to waste any talent that is already on board. They must optimise the resources by creating better internal human resources management process. By keeping skills databases, competencies, and interests of existing employees, companies can fill a position more quickly by looking within. Doubletree Hotels has developed the kind of assessment process for uncovering these internal candidates. With an annual growth rate of 25 per cent, the company does not have the time to look externally for management talent. Twice a year, the company asks managers what opportunity they are interested in, where they would like to work, and if and when they would be willing to relocate. This way, when a new property is acquired, managers can be relocated from the other hotels immediately. At any given time, the company knows what the area managers' ambitions and skills are. The knowledge of existing talent helps the company make internal placements that might not otherwise be obvious.

Hire The Retiree

In the wake of massive downsizing, companies are discovering that many of their best workers walked out the door with early retirement packages. Demographic trendwatchers say companies need to think about giving these people something to do. It is expected that many millions of boomers will have to work beyond age 65 because they have not saved enough money for retirement. Some companies have found the cutbacks that saved them money have cost them talent. Faced with bare-bones staffing, they need to

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fill staffing gaps with low cost, experienced help. By hiring retired employees, the human resource departments can gain back the experience and skills they lost-and often substantial cost savings. "It may be a situation in which a person was being paid, say $70,000 or $90,000 a year. In fact, for $20,000 or $30,000 you can get that person three or four times a month, which is when you really need him or her", says Peter Francese, president of American Demographics in Ithaca, New York.

Hartford, Connecticut based Travelers Insurance's programme for re-hiring retirees, *Trav Temps,* has been widely publicised as one of the first formal programmes for re-hiring retirees who want to work. By using its own job bank of retirees to fill temporary work needs, Travelers saved more than $1 million last year. The company also found that hiring a retiree is a much more productive situation than hiring a new or temporary worker. There is no learning curve. These people know the environment, system, culture.

Honeywell Inc. and Eastman Kodak which also have their own programmes for re-hiring retired workers have an advantage in setting up such programmes- a large resource pool. These employees are often used in positions for which they have expertise or skill gained through tenure. They generally demonstrate commitment to quality, attendance, punctuality, loyalty to organisation, more control over their time than temporary workers, such as college students and working mothers.

But mangers rate retirees low on learning flexibility, technological ability and ability to learn new skills. Moreover, retirees are perceived to suffer more health problems than young workers. Companies often worry about absenteeism due to illness, physical limitations or costly medical coverage. Seniors often are perceived to have less energy than younger workers and often are unwilling to make long commutes or take physical tasks.

Companies that explore retiree-work programmes, however, may still find the benefits well outweigh disadvantages. Many may find, for instance, that myths about senior workers are simply that: myths.

Some managers believe that retirees who self-select to keep working generally are healthier than seniors overall and often provide their own medical coverage through Medicaid[3]. Retirees may not only be reliable and capable, they can spread their good influence, work ethic, care. "Retirees may have more enthusiasm because work is an option for them", says Pat Thatcher-Hill, principal of Tomlin Inc. in South Natick, Massachusetts, which sets up intergenerational work programmes for corporations. "There is a genuineness and warmth and level of vitality that elders bring to the working place".

Because experienced workers are getting harder and harder to find, retiree-work programmes will pique more interest in months and years to

come, for both corporations and retirees. How best to do it, from the corporate standpoint, can present as many challenges as rewards. Managers need to train themselves to think differently about older workers. Retirees who do not need a job, who have the skill set, willingness and energy to continue working because they love working, are clearly some of the best employees around.

Telecommuting

Many companies have been experiencing the idea of telecommuting over the past several years. It has allowed firm's existing workforces the option of not coming into the office every day. Most often, telecommuting has been more on the level of offering workers more flexibility in their work schedules.

But more recently, the idea of *distant staffing* has expanded telecommuting further by giving employers the option of recruiting and hiring new employees who may rarely or never show up in a company's headquarters. What was once just an employee benefit, telecommuting-or employing people who live in distant locations-is also a big company benefit and employment tool. It is a radical change from the staffing norm, but one that is allowing companies to hire the best people for jobs-even if they are working from afar.

Distant staffing benefits to employees are clear. They get the convenience of working from home-or virtually anywhere-which allows them to prevent relocating, a costly proposition both for new workers and for organisations that pay relocation expenses. It provides new employees with more flexibility in handling personal commitments, such as not having to transfer children to new schools, relocate aging parents or leave education commitments mid-stream.

But there are strong drivers for employers as well. Originally, the impetus behind many companies' moves to implement telecommuting programmes was the Clean Air Act and the need to comply with its restrictions. Coupled with this has been the growing number of employees who have demanded more flexible work options. For example, sales people can live near their territories rather than having to live near company headquarters and having to travel more than they otherwise would. New communication technology makes it possible for employers to avail themselves of a talented pool of qualified workers that is not restricted by geographic boundaries. In addition, having off site workers can save organisations money on office equipment and office space, because many telecommuters already have much of their own office equipment. And the hiring company does not have to pay for relocation costs. These are the reasons behind more ads in local papers recruiting employees as virtual staff members for companies thoughout the nation and even the world.

How to Hire Employees Effectively

Even though many companies consider telecommuting as an employment tool for employers, there are still a large number of organisations that are hesitant to try it. The biggest concern that many managers have is the matter of trust and control, or the belief that people do not work unless they are watched. This belief is being revised nowadays. Being the case for plants, farms, and factories this belief may not be still true in the office environment. Managers should consider such factors as company's geographical diverse, budgetary restraints, employing people with right skills and "electronically capable". Can employees work as effectively from home as they could in the office next to you? Can you communicate with them easily? Can they be kept up to date? Once company managers answered these questions, they should be able to develop a new work paradigm that allows distant staffing to work efficiently. Self-motivation, self-discipline, good job knowledge, and a demonstrated ability to meet deadlines are traits that make telecommuters as good workers and even entrepreneurs[3].

Employment Screening

More and more companies rely on pre-employment tests of personality, skills, and general ability. They realise that it is easier and less expensive in the long run to take the time to hire good employees. Nearly 80 per cent of large European companies employ handwriting analysts to help them hire. Grapho-analysts say that people project their mental processes into their writing. They subconsciously shape and organise their letters, words, and lines in ways that reflect personal qualities.

About 20 per cent of U.S. firms use personality surveys that predict on-the-job behaviour and determine how a person might fit in a company. Most companies qualify applicants by giving them skill and general-ability tests before giving the personality test. Their purpose is simply to determine whether the applicant has the skills to do the job. These tests rule out applicants who do not meet a minimum standard. A supervisor's time is too valuable to waste on interviewing and reference checking if a potential employee does not make the grade on the tests. Without those tests, the hiring decision will be based upon the strength of a handshake, nice smile, and whether or not the person is fluent and seemingly intelligent. You do not have to know if a person will feel good about doing a job until you find out whether he or she is able to do the job.

General-ability tests measure intelligence and technical knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways but are used most often to measure knowledge and experience. They predict successful overall job performance rather than success in one particular task. This is especially valuable when used in a series with personality trait tests and skill tests. An applicant who can not pass a cognitive ability test probably should be considered unsuitable for a job, even if he or she scores well.

Personality tests evaluate traits and personal characteristics that relate to measurable aspects of job performance, such as leadership and aggressiveness. Many companies use them to reduce turnover by evaluating applicants for the personality traits demonstrated by long-term employees. The tests can be obtained by such companies as Profile International, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Predictive Index, California Personality Inventory.

Conclusions

Employment problems require innovative solutions. The employees prospects will not respond to traditional company invitations any more, because they have too many suitors. Because the end of the labour shortage is nowhere in sight, managers must rethink the strategies for finding and keeping good employees.

Education is one of the effective recruiting strategy in our "knowledge" economy. Success is achieved with skills and qualifications.

While these strategic employment tactics might not end the staffing drought, it will bring in the people you need, when you need them.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Niko H. Cain and Brian H. Kleiner

Introduction

Human resources are the most valuable asset in any business. Depending upon the size of the company, the task of recruiting qualified employees may fall on the human resources office staff, or for smaller companies, the hiring of new employees may fall on the particular department in need of new employees. Because employee turnover costs can prove to be quite costly, it is imperative that companies take the time and the steps necessary to hire employees that will be able and willing to make a long-term contribution to the company.

Identifying A Need

The first step toward effectively hiring employees is to identify the need for the particular position. The person responsible for filling the position should take time to review his or her understanding of the job in question. This can be accomplished by reviewing existing job descriptions, and talking with others in the position. If there are other employees who hold similar positions, talking with them about what their jobs involve can be an effective way of learning about the position in question (Deems, 29). The hiring authorities should then focus on the specific job skills necessary to make someone successful in the position, and begin writing a job description which will accurately reflect the necessary skills for the job.

Job Descriptions

Many employees have never seen a written description of their job. Average companies cannot provide written job descriptions for all existing positions (Wendover, 1993). The tasks of analysing jobs and writing descriptions can be tedious. This is especially true for small companies that experience fast growth. This growth tends to be haphazard and disorganised, and when a position needs to be filled, no one seems to know what the last person in a particular job did.

Job descriptions provide definition and focus. They describe day-to-day responsibilities, levels of authority, and they usually identify tasks which are not routine to the position and are only performed occasionally. For the purposes of hiring, job descriptions can assist in explaining the job to applicants. After a person has been hired, a job description can give the new employee a direction from which to start. The four most important elements of a job description are:

1. A brief overview of the position.
2. A list of the functions.

3. An explanation of the reporting structure.
4. The necessary qualifications for the job.

Necessary Skills

It is important for the hiring authorities to identify the skills which are essential for the open position. This includes any necessary technical skills and previous experience. It is also important to identify any necessary performance skills which will make the new-hire successful in the position. Some examples of performance skills are: interpersonal skills, organisational abilities, making and being responsible for decisions, and following established guidelines. Technical skills which include knowledge of computer hardware and software, data entry skills, etc., are often more easily learned than performance skills (Deems, 1995).

Placing Classified Ads

Published classified ads represent the largest major source of concentrated information about available jobs in the local marketplace (Falcone, 1995). Classified ads are a cost-effective source for companies seeking to identify high volumes of qualified applicants for specific openings.

It is not good hiring practice to rely solely on ads to find qualified people for a job. These types of ads bring in large numbers of *related* applicants, but do not tend to quickly locate individuals with the proper *specific* skills and qualifications. There is definitely a relationship between the quality of an ad and the quality and quantity of the responses generated from the ad. The largest volumes of qualified applicants are generated by ads with large layouts, and more detailed information concerning the nature of the position and the company involved.

Anatomy of an Ad

According to Paul Falcone, author of *The Complete Job-Finding Guide for Secretaries and Administrative Support Staff,* successful ads usually have four characteristics:

1. *The enticement lead-in.* This portion of the ad functions as the appeal mechanism, meant to draw your immediate attention and entice you to respond to it above the other hundreds of ads on the page.
2. *The requirements section.* This section typically focuses on the skills necessary to qualify for the position. The components of a typical requirements section include: technical skills, functional or departmental orientation, reporting relationships, and "fluff" claims.
3. *The responsibilities section.* This section consists of "hard factors" that will be considered in the selection process.

4. *Follow-up instructions section.* This section provides specifics regarding the timing and method of responses, such as mailing, calling, or faxing (Falcone, 1995).

Evaluating Resumes and Applications

What hiring officials should look for in a resume depends upon criteria determined ahead of time. Recruiters should be very careful to try to stick to these criteria and not be distracted by unrelated or irrelevant factors, such as having attended the same college as the applicant. The key to evaluating a resume is to remain impartial. This may be easier said than done, but the attempt must be made (Wendover, 1993).

Resumes and Cover Letters

Undoubtedly, the first factor a recruiter takes into consideration is the initial appearance of the resume and/or cover letter. This gives one an indication of the care taken in the preparation of these documents. Some things to pay close attention to are spelling errors, proper usage of past and present tenses, quality of paper used, and the overall readability of the document. While some of these items may seem inconsequential, they do indicate the level of care taken when preparing the resume, and possibly, the level of interest the applicant may have in doing a good job (Wendover, 1993). Some other indicators of possible job performance can include: incomplete applications, lack of good reasons for leaving past jobs, and large gaps of unemployment between different jobs.

Interviewing Candidates

Although resumes are a good source of previewing potential candidates, when recruiting for more specialised positions, search firms and networking may be more effective. Often, finding the right person for the job is made more difficult because too many people are interviewed. Recruiters often waste time on candidates who are not right for the position. This can be avoided by using proper screening techniques. One should also come up with a set of criteria, such as what the position pays, the specific skills needed, and years of experience desired (Wendover, 1993).

Once the resumes have been screened properly, more weeding out can be done by conducting telephone interviews. The telephone conversation often eliminates a large number of candidates. Many resumes overstate qualifications in response to the needs of the position. Another way to weed out some of the candidates is to request that the candidate supply a full salary history and the nature of the business for all former employers. Candidates who do not supply this information can go into the “no” pile (Cauvier, 1993).

Developing Interview Questions

Before beginning the preparation of interview questions, it is important to understand some necessary guidelines. First, one should avoid asking questions that can be answered by a single word. These are called "yes or no" questions. These types of questions do not yield much valuable information. An example of such a question is "Do you like working with people"? Second, ask open-ended questions which require more elaborate answers. These questions cannot be answered by a simple "yes or any" answer. For example, "tell me about your experience in training subordinates" will cause the interviewee to go into more detail than a closed-end question will. The third thing the interviewer needs to keep in mind is that questions should be kept focused. Questions which are not directly related to the open position prove to be a waste of time, and in some instances, can even lead to litigation when a candidate that is not hired decides to take legal action (Deems, 1995).

Federal legislation states that you cannot base a hiring decision on anything other than *bona fide occupational qualifications* (BFOQs). This means that you cannot discriminate against an applicant because of age, sex, marital status, ethnic origin, religious preference, sexual preference or disabilities. This also means that there are certain kinds of questions you simply should not ask during the interview. If you do, the applicant can later claim that he or she was not hired because of something other than a BFOQ. At all costs, you want to avoid any accusation of exercising bias or discrimination in your hiring practices. This involves being aware of related kinds of questions that may be construed by others as intended to gather information that has nothing to do with a person's qualifications. For example, federal guidelines specifically prohibit you from asking how old a person is or when the person was born. But in an attempt to get around the restriction, some managers have asked, "When did you graduate from high school"? That question, however, can be construed as asking for a candidate's age, and is therefore considered to be discriminatory in nature, because if you know when a person graduated from high school, you also know, within one or two years, the person's age. These types of questions should be avoided at all costs.

The Interview

Before interviewing candidates, there are certain preparations that should be made. First, the resume of the interviewee should be reviewed immediately prior to the actual interview. This will help to remember the candidate's background and experience and keep the interviewer from having to refer to the resume throughout the interview. Second, the interviewer should be certain to clear his or her calendar. Interviews should not be scheduled to begin at the start of one's office day. This will allow for the candidate to be interviewed without interruptions. Third, the interview should be conducted out-

side of the interviewer's office. This will help to avoid interruptions. If the interview must be held inside of the office, the phone should be turned off, or all calls should be forwarded to a voice mail system or a secretary (Gerken, 1996).

It is important for hiring authorities to remember to cast out any preconceived notions about prospective employees. Often, we allow our past experiences and situations to influence us. Each person must be looked upon as a completely different individual, because there is no room for prejudices in the interview and selection processes. Everyone deserves and must be given an equal chance to compete for the position for which he or she qualifies. We often label others based on how they speak, how they dress, how they shake hands, how they look on paper, and so on. Some of our labels are accurate, and some are way off-base.

The principal reason for an employment interview is to determine which of the pre-screened candidates is the best person for the job. An additional purpose for the interview is to tell the applicant about the job and the company. Interviewers should keep in mind that the interview is intended to narrow down the number of likely prospects for a job. As an interviewer, you should ask yourself these key questions: "How well will the applicant fit in with the company"? and "To what degree would the company benefit if the candidate is hired"? (Cauvier, 1993).

Having prepared your interview questions, the interviewer and the interviewee should become acquainted so that the interviewee's mind is at ease. By taking the time to help the applicant relax, you will reduce his or her level of stress. This will help the applicant converse more freely, and you will receive answers that accurately reflect the true characteristics of the applicant. You can help this along by shaking hands, taking the applicant's coat, offering the applicant a chair, introducing yourself, and beginning with some informal discussion. The interviewer should always explain the procedure that will be followed during the interview. This serves to put candidates further at ease by letting them know what is generally going to happen and about how long it will take. The candidate will also be reassured to know that there will be an opportunity to ask questions toward the end of the interview.

The body of the interview is the assessment period. Here, the interviewer fulfils the primary objective of gathering the information that will help determine whether the applicant fits the job. Obviously, the way the exchange of information is conducted is crucial. The interviewer needs to ask appropriate questions, solicit pertinent responses, and constantly evaluate the applicant's verbal and non-verbal expressions.

After the interviewer has solicited all the information needed to make the hiring choice, it is time to close the interview. Here, both the applicant and the interviewer have a chance to meet some of their objectives. The appli-

cant has an opportunity to find out what he or she wants to know about the position, the organisation, and prospective co-workers. The interviewer, in addition to answering the applicant's questions, has the chance to further evaluate the applicant's values and if appropriate, to sell the candidate on the company and the job.

Immediately following the interview, the interviewer should record specific answers and general impressions. A post-interview report is a checklist used to record the interviewer's impressions. Using a checklist can improve the reliability of the interview or selection technique (Cauvier, 1993).

Checking References and Credentials

Employers have little information on which to base hiring decisions, other than the information provided on the resume and application. References can be helpful in ascertaining the competence and value of an applicant.

In the past, traditional references were provided in written form. However, most employers have turned to telephone inquiries as a more efficient means of obtaining information (Deems, 1995). In a written reference, the reader is only provided with what the author thinks is important. In calling references, the evaluator has the opportunity to ask questions more directly related to job requirements and specific performances (Kauffman, 1992).

It is important to remember that reference checks take time. This can certainly be an inconvenience when there is a rush to fill an immediate vacancy. It is estimated that at least 30% of applicants misrepresent their educational background on resumes and applications (Falcone, 1995). Employers must be thorough in their investigations of potential employees.

Employers should also keep in mind that employers can be and have been held liable for the negligent hiring of employees (Cauvier, 1993). When the backgrounds of employees were not sufficiently checked, and the employees inflicted harm on other employees, courts have found the employer responsible for the employee's actions, because better care should have been taken in the hiring process.

Unfortunately, employers have also become increasingly resistant to providing references on former employees for fear of litigation. Some companies have gone so far as to provide only the name, position held and work dates of previous employees, regardless of their performance on the job (Wendover, 1995).

Conducting Reference Checks

Reference checks should include people with whom the candidate has worked in the past three years. If candidates hesitate to provide the names of

individuals with whom they have worked directly, this should arouse suspicion.

When speaking with a reference, ask if there are other people who worked with the applicant, and if you may speak with them. Keep in mind that references listed by the candidate have been prepared for this task (Cauvier, 1993). Contacting an unsuspecting reference may provide more candid information. You may occasionally be transferred to the personnel office if the candidate left the company more than one year ago. People in this department normally only give out job titles and dates of employment.

Questions which should be asked of the references should be built around the position which you are trying to fill. The same questions should be asked of each reference. Try to develop a rapport with references. Doing so gives the reference time to open up, and become a little less defensive about giving out information.

Checking Credentials

With the number of people who misrepresent themselves on resumes and applications, it has become necessary to verify any stated degrees received, especially when they are a requirement of the job. Educational credentials may be checked by calling the school listed and inquiring about not only whether the applicant attended, but the dates of attendance, the programme or major studied, and whether he or she graduated. One can also verify the existence of schools by checking *The Guide to Background Investigations,* published by National Employment Screening Services. There are also companies which specialise in performing background checks on prospective employees.

Notifying Candidates

In the hiring process, the final task is notifying all candidates of your hiring decisions. The first communication is usually a telephone call to the successful candidate. Either the hiring authority or the personnel office should make the job offer. For exempt positions, this initial job offer over the phone is usually followed up with a written letter which details the offer. It is important to wait until the first choice candidate accepts the offer before notifying the other candidates. This way, if your first choice declines the offer, you can still contact one of the other candidates if any of them have the skills needed to be successful in the job.

The successful candidates should be given time to consider the offer before he or she responds with an answer. This may take up to several days, depending on the level and location of the position. For non-exempt positions, notification to the successful candidate may be handled over the telephone; however, your company's reputation may be enhanced if you also send a confirmation letter summarising the job, start date, and compensation.

It is equally important to notify the candidates who were not chosen. The quickest way to accomplish this task is to send a letter to the candidates. The letter should be well-written, professional in appearance, and most importantly, the letter should be personal. The notification should make the candidates feel as though they were treated in a courteous, professional manner. Form letters, otherwise known as "fill in the blank" letters, do not leave the candidates feeling as though they were treated as individuals (Deems, 1995).

Orientation and Training

After you have hired the right person, he or she must be helped to begin working efficiently as soon as possible. Orientation and training cost time and money, but these costs turn out to be sound investments. Newly hired employees are seldom able to perform their new jobs very efficiently. Although individuals may have years of experience, they need to learn the organisation, culture of the office, and the workflow of the office. Orientation and training supplement the new-hire's abilities (Cauvier).

One of the first things that can be done to introduce the new employee to his or her new position is to explain to him or her the organisation's structure. It is important that the new employee understands how he or she fits into the "big picture", and how the chain of command operates within the company. You can also show the new employee how his or her deparment relates to the other departments in the company. Next, the company's mission, both long-term and short-term, should be explained. This will help the employee to understand what he or she is ultimately working toward.

Personnel policies should be explained thoroughly. These include salaries, hours of work, overtime compensation, paid holidays, vacations, sick leave, leave of absence, bereavement time, termination policies, staff evaluation and training, medical coverage, and other benefits (Cauvier, 1993). Most companies have employee handbooks which cover these issues, and go into great detail on other issues as well.

Conclusion

Hiring new employees can be very costly for companies. Although a lot of time, money and effort go into finding the right person for a job, it is important to take every necessary precaution when it comes to screening applicants. Companies may be held liable for the actions of employees when the courts find that the company did not exercise due diligence in checking past references. Employers should make every effort to recruit employees who are willing to make a long-term commitment to the company. This can avoid high rates of employee turnover, which can prove to be very costly.

After making a decision on whom to hire, companies should remember that it is necessary to notify all candidates who were interviewed for the po-

sition. Companies that are really concerned about their reputation may even go as far as to notify applicants who were not chosen to be interviewed. Maintaining a good rapport with past applicants may even lead to future hiring of an applicant who was not chosen for a past position. The ultimate goal of a company when it comes to hiring, is to have a mutually beneficial employer/employee relationship which will result in higher returns for the company as a whole.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Alicia Meneses and Brian H. Kleiner

"Every organisation needs new talent at one time or another" (Marvin 1973). It may be because of expanding operations, terminated employees, or turnover. Whatever the reason, managerial and staff positions must be filled successfully either from external hiring or internal promotion or transfer.

Everybody is different, and organisations can utilise these differences to make employment selection choices that attempt to recruit the person(s) most likely to succeed. "A 'good fit' takes place when a job potentially fulfills the same major needs an individual possesses, and a good fit is a major key to a stable and satisfied workforce" (Chusmir 1985). "Fitting-in" is an important variable in good employee selection because companies like to hire people who share their values. Unfortunately, people take rejection for not "fitting-in" personally, they do not realise that it is worse being accepted in a job and being unhappy than rejected and not getting the job.

Whether the firm is large and relies on a HR department for hiring or small with the owner/manager hiring, the success of any organisation depends on its success in hiring and retaining qualified employees. Effective hiring requires time, effort and careful attention in the employment process. A "systematic approach for recruitment" (Herring 1986), streamlines selection and orientation of employees, saves money and attracts and keeps high quality personnel. Its purpose is to recruit and retain good workers promptly and competently without wasting time on unqualified applicants. The principles of a systematic selection are: 1) The methods used must be technically sound. 2) The method must be administratively convenient. 3) The methods used not only should be fair, but also perceived as such (Ungerson 1983 p.23).

Systematic Selection Process

1. *Defining the Position*

The position definition is the blueprint for recruitment. The essential facts of the job must be stated clearly from the beginning, otherwise, deficiencies will be evident during the recruitment process or, even worse, after the appointment has been made. More often than not, positions are associated with the persons who perform them, concentration on what the position should accomplish is associated with a good description of the position.

The position is defined by asking, "What is the position to accomplish"? (Owen 1984). The position definition consists of three aspects. First, the job description, which contains duties and long and short range achievements. Second, the standard of performance, which are the results expected from the incumbent. Finally, auxiliary functions, which are not a requirement but

a preferred qualification that helps in choosing between applicants that possess the basic qualities needed.

A good job descriptions is essential for candidates to be "accurately found, screened and sold on the job" (Smart 1944).

2. *Defining the Candidate*

Clarity is very important when defining the candidate. Confusion on the necessary attributes will disqualify potential applicants and cause difficulties in identifying the right candidate. Focus on characteristics a candidate needs to perform the job, rather than on attributes the supervisor would like the person to have. It is helpful to ask yourself: What characteristics are necessary for a person to perform his/her job functions? (Hutton 1984).

Define at least twenty to forty characteristics a person needs to do the job successfully. These characteristics should be: 1) Intellectual, such as intelligence, experience, pragmatism etc.; 2) Personal, such as independence and emotional maturity; 3) Interpersonal, for instance, leadership and assertiveness; 4) Motivational, such as interest in company and ambition (Hutton 1984). It is helpful to list the tasks or duties and associate each with specific characteristics that are required to perform the task.

No one is perfect. No matter how good they are, individuals always have weaknesses. The challenge is to balance the strengths and weaknesses of candidates to determine if there is a good enough match with the organisation. An important thing to keep in mind is that an ideal candidate may be one who does not have all the required characteristics but has the potential of acquiring them through on-the-job training.

Evaluating Current Employees. Before starting a market search for the needed candidate, evaluate existing personnel. "Often, money and time are spent seeking the right person outside the company for a position when there are suitable in-house candidates" (Owen, 1984).

Actual performance observation of current employees is far better than a resume or a written job application. Gaps between actual and needed performance may be below requirements for the new position. If the employee is good and training can be provided to bridge the gaps, promote or reassign him/her.

Promoting from within usually results in significant time and "dollar savings for the company and a more satisfied workforce" (Owen 1984).

3. *Screening the Candidate*

The majority of jobs have a relevant labour market in which to find the correct prospects. Drehier and Sackett reason that the labour market characteristics determine the favourableness of the candidate search. The relevant

markets can be defined by answering this question: What will be the most appropriate labour market search by industry, education or specialty?

Once the labour market is defined a search plan can be drafted to specify what methods will be used to reach candidates from the relevant labour market. Prospective employees can be reached by advertisement, employment agencies, executive search firms, schools, word of mouth, company files, in-site or off-site open house, or internal prospects. Depending on the specific objective, type of business and location, any of these sources or a combination of them can be the best solution and the least costly and time consuming. For example, a company looking to fill an entry level position will probably find the right candidate by recruiting at a university. On the other hand a company looking for a vice president will have more success by utilising an executive search firm.

A nationwide survey of recruiting strategies of 500 firms, conducted by AMA, revealed that the majority of companies utilise between two and three searching options. The survey results indicated that the most preferred recruitment approach is to use company files of previous job applicants (Greenberg 1986).

Selecting the Interviewees. Careful screening of applicants' resumes to decide who will be interviewed can save time and effort. To obtain the individual with the right profile, remove from the selection process all applicants whose education, experience or work history do not match with the job to be performed. Coca-Cola USA, the largest division of the Coca-Cola Company only select candidates that match their specifications because it "pays-off for the company, managers and employees" (Slavenski 1986). Phone interviews can help to narrow the selection of candidates. They are a useful tool to make sure that prospective candidates come close to the job specification. In addition, interviewing by telephone is a good way to get to know the "person behind the resume without investing the time and effort of a formal interview" (Herring 1986). Of the selected candidates, the most likely to perform the job with success should be given attention first.

The Pre-Interview. Interviewing candidates as soon as possible after initial contact has been made gives best results, otherwise, candidates will wonder if the sought position is really important and may withdraw their candidacy.

It is vital to treat applicants fairly, courteously, not to leave them waiting for long periods of time or ask them to fill out long application forms before they know they are being seriously considered for the position being offered. The way candidates are treated are a reflection of the company and will shape its reputation. If treated properly, even candidates that do not get the job may recommend great prospects for the job.

Preliminary interviews are a way to further screen the applicants. Their principal function is to determine if the applicant warrants further consideration. Preliminary interviews serve two purposes. First, "to determine whether the applicant possesses the critical specifications for the position in question". Second, to tactfully "expedite the departure of unqualified applicants and those who are socially undesirable, overtly hostile, or emotionally disturbed" (Stanton 1977). Another very important aspect of the preliminary interview is to determine if the candidate is suitable for the social environment of the organisation. As discussed earlier, "fitting in" is essential in matching the candidate with the job.

In-Depth Interview. The objective of this type of interview is to find out as much as possible about an individual's work background, skills and work habits and to match them to the position to be filled. Interview questions may be about past performance, interests, preferences or anything that has to do with the work the person will perform. To get the persons to talk about themselves ask open ended questions, about specific work experiences, that are comparable to the duties that will be performed.

An essential aspect of the in-depth interview is to sell the organisation to the prospect and to introduce the company and the job. During the interview, talk about the mission of the institution and how the open position interrelates with other parts of the organisation. Give an overall understanding of the functions of the position by mentioning job duties such as data entry, statistical analysis, and so forth. Explanations of this nature are imperative in order for the applicant to decide if the job really fits his/her interests.

According to John Truit, if the organisation wants to have a selection of good candidates for the position "First, make sure all your prospects want the job, then see who is best qualified" (Truit 1985).

As soon as the interview is over, to avoid forgetting, write your impression of the person, his or her matches to the position and something about their physical aspect, to help remember who they are at the moment of making hiring decisions.

A good rule to follow is to hire "applicants that are so good they will replace you" (Stidger 1939 p.55).

Second Interview. Unless the perfect match for the company comes across in the first series of interviews, it is advisable to call the best prospects for a second interview. Many institutions integrate a second interview as part of their systematic process. Even if another interview is not part of the regular hiring process, it is advisable to conduct one if the hire/no hire decision is difficult because two or more of the job applicants are equally qualified to perform the job.

4. *Verifying Resume Worthiness*

It is extremely important to verify the truthfulness of the resume information such as references, academic degrees, professional memberships, publications, etc. "One out of every four job seekers" commits "resume fraud, or the communication of misleading and/or fraudulent information by job applicants on their resumes, applications and during employment interviews" (Broussard and Brannen 1986 p.129). The president of a New York's credential verification agency, Jeremiah McAward states that 22 per cent of the resumes investigated by the agency contain outright lies (Broussard and Brannen 1986).

Request three professional references and contact them by phone. Written recommendations are not always valid. They could be written by the applicant or contain misleading information. The persons who write them are very cautious because they know the applicant has the right to see them. On the contrary, when references are contacted by phone they tend to be open and say what they really think.

Even when recruiting is outsourced it is advisable for the hiring party to check the references personally. The probability of successful hiring can be increased by at least 20 per cent when references are checked appropriately (Hutton 1984).

Never settle for verifying only one reference even if it is a good one. Always contact all three. It is important to keep in mind that some people give a bad referral for personal reasons, such as disliking the person, or because of fear of losing a good worker.

Some applicants do not have extensive work experience or do not have work experience at all. To verify their worthiness former and present teachers are a very good source of information.

Checking academic degrees is fairly easy. Although schools can not give out grades they can provide information on the candidate's type of degree - BS, BA, MBA, etc., field of degree - Business, Health, etc., and year of graduation.

Another reason why recruiters are often misled is because "job applicants commonly list (bogus) attention-getting awards, honours, articles published and memberships in professional organisations on their resumes" (Broussard and Brannen 1986 p.132). In the majority of cases, these type of resume fraud can be easily verified by requesting a copy of the award or publication. Unfortunately, questions about the authenticity of membership in professional organisations can not be resolved since anybody who fills out an application and pays the fees can belong to them.

5. *Hiring Decisions*

As soon as all job applicant information has been gathered and references checked, decisions must be made quickly because "employment is a two way street and a candidate wants you to be as interested as you want him/her to be" (Hutton 1984). To show your interest and, also, not to lose your candidate to another employer, you must act rapidly.

In selecting the ideal candidate there are three important considerations: 1) Rate accurately - evaluate the candidate realistically; 2) Avoid both under-qualified and over-qualified people - both are poor practices that increases employee turnover; 3) Do not compromise on standards - continue the recruiting process until you find what you are looking for (Stanton 1977).

After a decision to hire an applicant has been reached make a verbal and a written offer. Contact the candidate by phone and make an offer. During the phone conversation allow the applicant to ask questions to clarify any doubt he/she may have. Provide the candidate with a time frame in which he/she should start working and when to let you know. Send a letter of offer that specifies the nature of the job, the benefits to the candidate and the expectations of the company.

After a no hire decision has been made inform the applicants by mail. Station, Smart and Bradford recommend not to tell rejected applicants the reason for their rejection. They argue that to avoid lawsuits or any other problem it is best not to tell the candidate that they are unwanted or unqualified but simply that someone else approximated the desired qualifications more closely (Smart and Bradford 1944).

6. *Negotiating the Job Offer.*

It is a good policy to offer competitive salaries. Avoid offering salaries that are either too low or too high.

Employers who offer low salaries in order to have room for negotiation do not attract the best candidates. "Additionally, although it is theoretically impossible in a free market economy to hire someone at too low a salary, it happens. It happens because of candidates ignorance of their economic worth, because they are desperate or because they have been oversold on the benefits of working for a company. And what happens when they find out they have been taken advantage of? They leave" (Hutton 1984 p.16).

To make attractive offers from the beginning gives better results. According to Truitt, if you want a candidate to accept your offer, offer him or her more than he or she can possibly receive during the next twelve months at their present employment (Truitt 1975).

If the chosen candidate wants to negotiate, decide whether the candidate is worth negotiating or increasing the initial salary offered. If the recruitment was done effectively you should have at least one or two candidates to whom you could offer the position. Close the deal only if you really want the candidate and you can afford the demands to upscale his or her salary. Otherwise, contact the second choice candidate and offer your employment opportunity.

Sometimes, the candidates decide not to take the job because with a job offer in their hand they can negotiate a higher salary with their present employer or because another job offer fits their needs better. It is good advice not to "be crushed if your offer is flatly refused" because one of the other "finalists will accept it and probably (it will) work out even better. If not, recruit some more prospects". The recruitment process is ongoing and "each prospect you meet will mean even more names of sources and other prospects" (Truitt 1985).

7. *Staying in Touch with the Candidate*

Although the recruitment process formally ends when an employee is hired, it is an effective hiring practice to stay in touch with the new employee. Maintaining contact with the new hiree when he/she starts the job, and even before the start day, is an effective way to start creating a solid relationship with him/her.

The first days and weeks of employment is when the candidate will wonder if he/she made the right decision. To assure the candidate of his/her good choice, make sure that the first day the employee shows up for work there is a place for him/her to sit with all the necessary supplies and work to be done. Very often, on their first days or weeks of employment new employees are neglected and find themselves with nothing to do or with stacks of manual or procedures to read.

Instead of giving employees reading material that they will not remember, provide them with an orientation. A well-done orientation can "help the new employee to adjust to the new job and to make him or her productive more quickly" (Herring 1986 p.52). The supervisor of the new hiree must show him or her around, discuss departmental rules and procedures and introduce the employee to workers. The supervisor also must help the new employee to prepare for work (Herring 1986).

It is advisable for the supervisor to follow-up with the new employee. This can be done by meeting with the hiree a few minutes at the end of the day at least for the first week or two, and once a week thereafter, for the first couple of months. This will allow the supervisor to find out how things are going and to clarify any questions about procedures or the job itself (Truitt 1985).

The follow-up procedure is very important because it aids in solving problems, whether they are obvious or hidden, at the time they start to develop. Thus, follow-up may prevent the organisation from losing employees and going through the recruitment process again.

Conclusion

The success of any organisation depends on its success in hiring and retaining qualified employees. A systematic recruitment process pays-off because it can avoid wasting time, effort and money and help to ensure that managerial and staff positions are filled successfully. It can be used by a HR department or an owner/manager for effective hiring.

For a successful systematic selection process: 1) It is important to define the position to be filled with accuracy because it is the blueprint for recruitment. 2) When defining the candidate keep in mind in-house prospects. 3) Screen the candidate by selecting who to interview carefully, conduct a pre-interview by phone, an in-depth interview in person and even a second interview. 4) Verify resume information, it is vital for not hiring the wrong person. 5) Make hiring decisions quickly to avoid losing good candidates. 6) When negotiating the job offer, close the deal only if you really like the candidate and you can afford his/her demands. 7) Stay in touch with the candidate after he/she starts working to prevent problems from developing and losing the new employee.

Presently, workforce demographics are somewhat stable. However, the baby-boomers are creating a surplus of middle aged workers and, as they continue to retire, a shortage of entry-level workers will cause a surplus of jobs.

Businesses of all sizes will have to look harder at their employee selection procedures to meet the work force changing demographics. More than ever, organisational success will depend on a well implemented systematic selection process for effective hiring.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Wan - Wen Fong and Brian H. Kleiner

When hiring employees in today's market, managers must be alert in knowing who and what they are looking for before, during and after the interview process. In general, look for the best person available for the position open. Hiring is based on comparisons; therefore, hire the person who is best, compared to all other candidates for the job. A manager should know what to look for in a candidate. Specifically, know the requirements in terms of the job to fill.

The qualifications essential for successful job performance vary with the particular position to be filled. This obviously means that a careful study of each job or job family must be made to identify what is required to do the job. Without knowledge of the job requirements, a manager will wind up describing, not evaluating, the person. Each executive was looking for the perfect, all-purpose employee. They want employees who are persuasive, as well as able to handle detailed and complex problems in their areas.

The myth is that upon promotion into management, a manager becomes mystically endowed with all the skills necessary to manage and to create a team that gets the job done. That is a manager's job, after all: to get work done through others. It means picking them right in the first place, because it is impossible to manage effectively without hiring effectively. So, the managers are ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of their teams. That should be common knowledge; so should the fact that those managers who do not hire the right people therefore cannot manage appropriately, and ultimately get the axe.

How to Attract and Hire the Right Kind of Employee

Attracting Candidates

The quality of the candidate pool depends on where the company looks, how and when. One possibility is to advertise in newspapers and in professional journals. Advertising, however, is relatively ineffectual in recruiting and screening, and it often reveals to the potential candidate that the organisation has problems of turnover. Know the marketplace of talent being addressed. Speak their language. Describe the job in terms they understand, and explain the requirements clearly and comprehensively. Be at once sufficiently general to attract responses from a wide group, and sufficiently detailed to attract a group that is appropriate to the company's needs.

One method of expanding the opportunities for finding high-calibre talent in data processing management is the on going search, a policy of seeking top talent regardless of immediate staff openings. It may be easier and

more cost effective in the long run to select the best employees when they are available.

Selection Process

The selection process is the comparison of one candidate's qualifications for the job against others. A manager needs to screen candidates quickly, and then on the basis of comparison, select the best person for the position. If this process is allowed to go on for too long, the best candidates will be lost to other companies. The qualities being looked at are numerous and elusive. Each comparison calls for subtle, well-trained judgments. The candidate's track record is important, as are skills, ambition and the likelihood the candidate will make, and keep a real commitment to the organisation. Appearance is important and personality is crucial. Measure each candidate's personality against the people with whom he or she would be working. Look for balance in a healthy mix of aggressive, promotable types and the more conservative people who are unlikely to compete as actively with their fellow employees.

As in the planning stage, the key here is to know what to look for. A manager should consider the following before starting the interview process:

* The duties and responsibilities of the job,
* the mix of management talent already in place
* and the role of the new person in that context.

Hiring: Closing The Sale

Having gone through the selection process and identified the candidate wanted, there is still much to be done in order to land him or her. Make an offer and make it stick. Get him or her in place before another company wins out. First of all, make a decision quickly because the pool of available talent is always in flux, and the candidate will not be a candidate for long. Make a decision as quickly as possible after the interview, and let the person know. Also, treat the candidate in a thoroughly professional manner from the start. Be courteous, respectful and responsive to his or her needs. Above all, make a fair and competitive offer. Do not try to buy cheap at the last minute or the candidate will walk out. Furthermore, block competitive offer in writing and setting a reporting date soon after the date of hire. These hiring guidelines grow out of research and years of experience in recruiting for the date processing industry. They can help attract the right people to a company, when they are needed.

The Interview as an Assessment Tool

No one knows how many managers have stalled their careers through an inability to make the right hires. The manager's problem is often little more than being unable to interview effectively. It is not essential for the inter-

viewer to have psychological or personal training. The necessary raw materials for being a good judge of others are reasonable intelligence and a sensitivity or feel for others. Because it is almost axiomatic that the success of any manager depends upon the depth of talent with which he surrounds himself, it becomes absolutely critical for him to learn to effectively evaluate manpower. The interview is one tool he can use and one he can learn to use well.

How Good Is The Interview As AN Assessment Tool?

Until recently, much of the research concerning the effectiveness of the interview for predicting job behaviour has shown disappointing results. Investigators often found little relationship between the ratings generated by interviewers and actul on-the-job performance. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the researchers did not concern themselves with the skills of the interviewers. In fact, in many studies in which the interview turned out to be a relatively ineffective assessment device, the interviewers were not particularly well trained. And even in those fundamental interview training, the interviewers were rarely required to follow a specified technique or procedure. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the studies showed the interview to be a rather limited tool for assessing others. By contrast, when an experienced skilful interviewer makes an assessment, he can demonstrate good predictive accuracy. So, if the participant can apply the techniques successfully, then the value of the interview as a tool for managers can be demonstrated. Furthermore, if managers learn to use particular techniques and if they are effective, then certain predictable results should occur.

For example, in 1995, as a midsize CPA and consulting firm, Crowe Chizek and Company, based in the Midwest, was creating a new strategic plan, their approximately 1,000 employees were asked to envision recruiting in the year 2,000. The firm has recruited college students for 30 years and currently visits approximately 25 campuses annually. Because the firm wanted to continue to hire people who would succeed in their environment, they investigated the recruiting practices and of various CPA firms. In general, they found the standard process of hiring had not changed in over 30 years, but a few innovative companies and firms were using behaviour-based interviewing. This CPA firm's leaders were impressed with this new technique and agreed that if they took extra time to learn about potential candidates they would have a better understanding of how they would fit in the firm. They chose to use a type of behaviour-based interviewing that focuses on the recruits "core competencies", defined as the underlying characteristics; such as, motives, self-concepts, values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that have a direct influence on the level of employee behaviour, especially performance.

Basic Responsibilities

Defining the "ability" aspects of the job is a major step. Each manager's situation is unique, so there is no proper sequence to follow, no one revealing, streamlined set of questions to ask. The managers will naturally mix and match the questions in hiring the best to suit their particular needs; also they will have to put candidates into their own voice. This first sequence of questions examines the key areas of a candidate's functional responsibilities. The manager will gain insight into skills, special knowledge, and relative strengths and weaknesses.

Write a job description. Before an employer wants to hire a new employee, write down what the job requires and what kind of employee it will take to do it. If the employer does not put anything on paper, the chances are an employer will hire someone simply because they like him or her.

Seek the right personality. Look for the right temperament for the job. For example, a quiet, technologically savvy person might be the best one for an accounting or book-keeping position. Generally, these folks work alone on projects and have little interaction with peers.

Prepare the right questions. The manager needs to learn how to ask open-ended, non-restrictive questions. It is because communication is probably the most important part of the whole hiring process. By asking the right questions, the manager can find people whose personalities match his or her jobs. According to this, the managers can recall or save their questions to run a more efficient operation for the next interview schedules.

Screen the candidates. Use screening interviews to narrow the pool of candidates. Begin by asking each candidate the questions. Ask for an example and find out if there is any substance behind the jargon.

Test the candidates. The manager can test job candidates on aggressiveness, leadership qualities, and success drive. A testing company evaluates how the candidates would approach a job.

Check references. Check references on everyone you are thinking about hiring, particularly labourers or carpenters, to see whether they are reliable and can do the job. Ask references open-ended questions about the candidates. What a reference tells an employer could determine if an employer's potential hire is the right one for the job.

Hold comprehensive interviews. Interview all the finalists to measure how each person stacks up. By comparing test results and the information gathered in the screening interviews, the manager will be in good position to find the right person for the job.

Talk it over. Before making a final decision, solicit another opinion. Discuss the selection on final candidates with others in the company's management to gain further insight into the candidate.

Four Basic Factors

To plan an agenda, the interviewer must first be aware of the kinds of information that are essential to know at the conclusion of the interview. A tool that can help determine which data are most critical is the statistical technique of factor analysis.

Intellectual factor. In order to understand a candidate's intellectual capabilities, intelligence must be examined from two different points of view. On the one hand, there is intellectual capacity, the innate ability to solve problems. All people are born with basic capacities that define the limits within which they can function. On the other hand, there is the question of application and effectiveness, that is, how well the individual applies and uses intellectual capacity.

Motivation factor. The motivation factor can be evaluated by learning what a person likes to do or finds satisfaction in doing. Some writers refer to motivation as the "will do" factor, while intelligence, knowledge, and personality represent the "can do" factors.

Personality factor. This factor refers to three different but highly interrelated elements: psychology adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and temperament. To obtain data for these elements, the focus should be on acquiring information about two basic abilities. They are the applicant's skill in interpersonal relationships and in coping with work demands.

Knowledge and experience factor. Basically, to form a rounded picture of an individual, the interviewer must obtain data about the relevancy of a person's educational background and prior work experience. On the other hand, it is valid and appropriate for the interviewer to ask how the applicant would solve specific technical problems if the interviewer uses the test question as a basis for observing how the candidate handles himself or herself, the methods used to solve the problem, the sophistication of knowledge displayed, and so on.

What Makes An Employee Great

To be considered great in most societies, the employees must develop a level of excellence and performance that exceeds that of anyone else in their field. Employees must attain some degree of distinction and widespread recognition of their outstanding achievement. Most people believe that it is impossible to achieve greatness, either the employees have it or they do not. That is simply a myth.

Reality

Great employees were not born great. They worked hard, and were extremely focused. Also, they took hedged risks and solved their problems creatively. Here are the characteristics that great employees have in common, and how they can inspire their peer employees to become much better at whatever they do.

Intelligence

Most great employees are intelligent but not in every subject. They simply have well-developed intelligence in the areas or fields they have chosen to pursue. In fact, some great employees may seem dumb by some standards of intelligence but quite smart in the areas of their particular achievements.

Practice

Historically, almost all great employees have spent many years practicing their particular talents. It takes about several years of intensive practice or study before they can become so proficient at what they do that excellence comes almost naturally. Many areas, such as relationships, require a tremendous amount of hands-on experience, dealing with people, structuring an organisation, etc. They only acquire that kind of knowledge from intensive practice.

Energy

Great employees have tremendous energy levels. They are very active and involved in their particular work. Their high activity levels spring partly from tremendous enthusiasm and excitement for the things they are doing.

Concentration.

They are happy to put in hours practicing. They do not collapse when confronted with major obstacles, criticism or setbacks.

Survival Skills

Many great employees have suffered traumatic experiences early in life; such as sickness, orphanhood or poverty, such experiences helped them develop their robustness and persistence. They became equipped to overcome obstacles and endure. This ability is absolutely essential.

Willing To Take Risks

Great employees have no problem sticking their necks out. They do not care what people think or whether their work or ideas will embarrass them in front of others. They only care about pushing their limits.

How to Hire Employees Effectively

Overall, the greatest employee is often a buffer between the manager and front line of the other employees in a company. So, when deciding whom to promote, do not just consider points like seniority or productivity. Choose someone who is not afraid to say, "Boss, you are wrong". A second-in-command has to tell the boss unpleasant truths from time to time; that is part of the job. Choose someone who is respected by other employees as well. Of course, the employer would like everyone in their department to love their boss and want to produce for the company.

Today, many managers are struggling to come to terms with the final cost of deception. A company's personnel is its heart. A company may have the best plant and equipment available, but how much knowledge and dedication, how many skills and personalities does a company need to survive and prosper? It is the people who make or break an organisation, who produce and ship the product, who perform the service. Bad hires affect the company, the individual and you as a manager - though not necessarily in that order. The wrong person doing the wrong job is harmful to the corporation's health. Many wrong people multiply this malady, and then a manager has a debilitating disease. Now, as business believes very strongly in a surgical approach to medicine, if the disease is localised in the department, it could ruin an entire day or a company's entire process.

According to many manager's experience, they have all made bad hires and worse excuses before. Yet, in all cases, the cause of the bad hire can be traced to one of the following reasons.

* Poor analysis of job functions
* Poor analysis of necessary personality-skill profile
* Inadequate initial screening
* Inadequate interviewing techniques
* Inadequate questioning techniques
* Poor utilisation of "second opinion"
* Company and career/money expectations were over or inappropriately sold
* References were not checked.

In short, the manager failed to ask either himself or the interviewee the right questions at the right time; and perhaps even failed to interpret the answers given to his questions adequately. Everyone can learn from a mistake and do a good job next time. At the same time, everyone can remember a system that will assure to get answers to the three most important questions that guarantee a good hire.

Three Questions To Guarantee A Good Hire

Able To Do The Job

Often the hiring decision is on ability alone. While important, here it is merely the first step in ensuring consistently successful hires.

Willing To Do The Job

There can be a distinct gap between ability and willingness to do the job. Determining willingness is the second evaluative approach.

Manageable Once On The Job

The third level of a candidate's evaluation, of paramount importance to a successful hire, is the determination of manageability of each potential employee. A person able and willing, but nonetheless unmanageable, is not for the manager. If a manager does not relish the idea of catering to a spoiled brat, determining manageability will help a manager to find employees who act their age, not their shoe size.

Sources of Candidates

Effective assessment techniques are most helpful when there is a pool of good talent from which the most qualified can be selected. Some pointers are also provided for making optimal use of these sources.

Employment Agencies

Employment agencies are regulated by state laws and really represent the job seeker. Because they need employment opportunities for their candidates in order to earn their fees, agencies aggressively contact potential employers to learn about present and future personnel needs. As an employer, you also may list job openings with agencies. In large cities, many agencies specialise in certain occupations such as sales, personnel, computer programming, book-keeping, or nursing. Agencies work on a contingency basis. That is, a fee or charge is not incurred until a candidate referred by the agency is actually hired.

Executive Search Firms

Most reputable executive search firms perceive themselves as consultants to the clients they serve. Thus, they are hired to seek out and present to their clients candidates who meet desired specifications, most search firms are organised to find candidates at professional, upper-middle, and top management levels. Difficult to find candidates, such as those with special technological skills, also make up a portion of the business for most search firms. An interesting creative approach to the use of search firms is to in-

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volve the subordinates of the potential incumbent to work closely with the executive recruiter in determining behavioural requirements. In this approach, the employees help select the individual who will be their boss.

Advertising

The companies are referring here to classified ads in newspapers or block space advertisements in trade journals or newspapers. Advertising is difficult to evaluate because its effectiveness depends so much on the level of job and the impact of the advertisement. Media costs depends on the size of the ad. Generally, advertising will provide a large number of resumes from candidates who will not meet the company's needs. Most companies find that advertisements are most useful in producing good candidates when one or more of these conditions exist: a large number of people need to be hired; the skill or job requirements are not stringent; a specific, easily ascertainable skill or knowledge is required. Most large organisations will find it productive to engage an advertising agency to develop and place their advertisements.

Job Posting

Many organisations routinely post job descriptions and job requirements for employment opportunities within the company. Even if an organisation does not routinely follow that practice, posting should be considered when trying to fill certain personnel needs. Most companies find it impractical to list jobs at upper management levels because they want the latitude to bring in outside talent when necessary. The success of job posting in any organisation depends largely on the personnel department's ability to constructively manage the volume of candidates the posting system may generate. Organisations considering implementation of job posting need to make it clear that all jobs beneath a certain defined level must be posted when a vacancy occurs. This principle of all jobs being posted is critical to the success and integrity of any such effort and must be clearly understood at all levels in the organisation.

College Recruiting

There are public relations benefits from the company being known by graduating students. Even if they are not recruited as young graduates, their positive attitudes toward the organisation may predispose them to seek employment in the future or to accept an employment offer at a later time. Campus recruiting may be the only viable way of hiring a pool of young college graduates. Many organisations have management development and training programmes that prepare young employed for key responsibilities, and the college graduate represents the right mix of intelligence, age, and educational background for the company's development effort. A key element in developing a recruiting plan for each campus is the broader issue of overall relationship with the college.

In conclusion, today's management recognises that manpower is the most important resource of a business; the efficient performance of employees is crucial to the success of an enterprise in the competitive environment. No wonder companies are showing increased concern about getting the best person for the job. However, what constitutes the right hire? The most concern is a person who is able and willing to do the work, someone with team spirit and who is manageable, a professional who fits the corporate image and who is personally compatible with a company's place on the corporate evolutionary scale. And of course, an emotionally mature adult with sound and rational judgement will be a necessity in the department. Hopefully, most managers can find the best employee which they want to hire.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Janet Lynn Mac Innis and Brian H. Kleiner

Overview of Effective Hiring

Effective hiring practices will vary from one company to the next based on company size, type of business, type of job being filled, number of vacancies to fill, time restraints, laws and regulations from outside sources, and various other factors.

To be effective the hiring processes requires planning, control, and should be handled by trained and knowledgeable individuals.

Recruiting is an important step in successful hiring as the recruiting effort will determine the types of applicants from which a selection can be made. Three important decisions in the recruiting process include the recruiting method chosen, the recruiting message and the applicant qualifications required.

Selecting future employees should be seen as a matching process, matching individuals who have relevant qualifications and skills to job-openings within an organisation. A good match can lower training and operating costs and increase the amount and quality of work. A poor match can cost a company in terms of time, trouble and money. Once there is an applicant pool to choose from, the selection process generally includes one or more of the following; interviews, tests, background investigations, and physical exams.

It is important not to treat individual applicants differently from one another during the selection process. This occurs when some applicants are asked to pass through more stages. Examples include a manufacturing firm that required female applicants to pass mechanical aptitude tests while not requiring the male applicants to do the same, and a firm that ran credit references only on certain minority groups.

Effective hiring practices are important not only in the aspect of matching qualified people to jobs but also in the public relations dimension. Companies' reputations are built in part on their hiring practices. Discriminatory hiring practices, rude interviewers, inappropriate testing procedures, and lack of follow-up all contribute to a bad reputation while the opposite can build good will.

The Hiring Process

Realistic Job Profiles

The first step in the hiring process is an understanding of the job that is needed to be filled. An analysis of the job can be done by direct observation

or interviewing the incumbents and/or supervisors. Commonsense tells us that a search for someone who possesses the qualities needed for a particular job cannot be done without knowing what qualities the job demands. The skills, education, experience and salary range of the position all need to be thought out before moving on in the hiring process.

It is important that employers do not oversell or misrepresent the job to make it appear to be better than it is. A realistic job description may lead to a lower response to the job offering, but in the long run it is healthier for the company to be realistic and truthful. It is not only the correct thing to do from an ethical standpoint, but also indicated by research that realistic job profiles have been linked to reduced turnover (Mathis and Jackson 1991). The main causes of turnover involve not a lack of skills but over qualification, dissatisfaction with job potential, and improper socialisation (Bowes 1987).

Where to Look

Hiring from within. The best candidate for the position may be someone within the company. Current employees often expand their job skills and knowledge while working for their employer and may be much better educated or qualified for a position than their application at time of starting with the company reveals. Hiring the current employee has several advantages. The current employee already knows the company and is a known quantity by the company, proven loyalty, lower hiring and training costs, and a proven ability to fit in. It is an asset to the company to have a reputation for hiring from within. Companies who fail to hire from within usually also fail to retain their brightest and best employees who quickly move elsewhere in order to move up the ladder.

Hiring from within should not be the exclusive practice as it can lead to "inbreeding" and a perpetration of old ways while stifling creativity. The same applies to uncontrolled referrals which can produce too many similar employees and develop a company stereotype.

Internal versus external hiring practices. Mathis and Jackson list a comparison of advantages and disadvantages of internal versus external hiring practices. The advantages of internal hiring practices include: morale of promotee, better assessment of abilities, lower cost for some jobs, motivator for good performance, a succession of promotions, and having to hire only at entry level. The disadvantages of internal hiring include: inbreeding, possible morale problems of those not promoted, "political" infighting for promotions and a need for a strong management development programme.

The advantages of external hiring practices include: "new blood", new perspectives, cheaper than training a professional, no group of political supporters in the organisation already and it may bring industry insights. The disadvantages of external hiring include: possibility for selecting someone

who will not "fit", may cause morale problems for those internal candidates and a longer "adjustment" or orientation time.

Interns, consultants, temporaries and similar contacts offer a great pool of possible future employees. One of the advantages includes the first hand knowledge as to what kind of employee the company is acquiring.

Networks. "It's not what you know but who you know that counts". When Lee Bowes asked various companies about their hiring practices, it became clear that employers felt most secure when they took on people recommended or referred by others. This is partially due to a belief that their company had unique requirements, their workplace was unlike any other and hence it would never do to hire an unknown individual who walked in off the street, no matter how well qualified. The most important step in the hiring process is a personal contact (Bowes 1987).

"Fitting in" or getting along well with others is one of the most important attributes an employee can have to insure success on the job. This helps to explain why "knowing someone" is a well utilised and successful practice. This method is also effective because a lot of qualified candidates can be reached at a low cost. However, this method is not recommended when the organisation has an under-representation of a particular minority group as it is considered a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

A number of studies have revealed that referrals from employees, friends, or even friends of friends are the best predictors of good work performance. Life Insurance Marketing Research conducted a study which looked at the success records of 38,000 subjects recruited from a variety of sources. Tests were poor predictors and responses to newspaper ads, college recommendations, and employment agency referrals all proved unreliable. It was the self-initiated contacts from those who had heard about the company indirectly or from current employees that did far better. A study of skilled workers found that survival on the job was greatest with employee referrals and internal posting (Gannon 1971). It appears that the employee referral is the best source of workers who will stay on the job.

The media. Media sources of recruitment include television, radio, magazines, newspapers and bill-boards. We are all familiar with the help wanted ads and classified section of our newspapers. Newspaper recruiting has a short lead time of typically not more than two or three days, which is great for positions that must be filled quickly. On the down side however, newspapers have a diverse circulation with a narrow margin who are interested in replying to the job offer and those who do are often unsuited. Other medias can prove to be useful but are not usually suitable for frequent use.

School recruiting. High schools, colleges, and vocational or technical schools can be a good source for new employees. It is important for the company to maintain a good relationship with these institutions, even if they are

not currently hiring. The organisation can be of service to the schools not only by hiring students but also by supplying educational films, demonstrations, exhibits and speakers. Due to the probability of many companies all competing for the top graduates, maintaining a healthy relationship is vital to accessing the "cream of the crop". Providing promotional brochures, participating in career days, and co-operative work programmes can also prove beneficial to the company (Mathis 1991).

Effective Hiring At Sears Telecatalogue

Sears Telecatalogue has a well planned and organised system to ensure that hiring is done in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Through the following case study we experience an effective hiring system.

Sears has one of ten regional Telecatalogue centres in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where orders are taken from customers calling an 800 number. Employment at each of the Centres ranges from 1,500 to 2,500 employees. The employees are almost all part-time, working as customer consultants taking orders from catalogue shoppers. For these Telecatalogue Centres, effective hiring practices involve a series of steps including a mini-application blank, telephone screening interview, clerical test, math test, personal computer (PC) interviews, realistic job preview, and personal in-depth interview.

If you walk into the Fort Wayne Centre as an applicant inquiring about a job, you are first given a mini-application to complete. Upon handing that to the receptionist, you are told you will be contacted by telephone about any part-time work that fits the hours you listed available. Later, you are contacted by one of the personnel staff who conducts a structured telephone screening interview. Because the job requires constant talking on the telephone, your voice clarity, pace, and grammar are all evaluated during the phone interview.

Upon passing the telephone interview, you are scheduled for testing and further interviews. When you arrive at your scheduled time, you are given a more detailed application. The next stage is testing. Because the job requires attention to details and the use of numbers, a math test is used to measure arithmetical skills and a clerical test to identify speed and accuracy in performing routine clerical tasks.

Next comes a two-part interview. The computer-assisted interview addresses simple computer skills that are important because the telecatalogue centres positions require computer use. The computer interview also involves questions in the multiple-choice format. The use of the computer in this section is helpful because it has been found that people are sometimes more open with a computer-assisted interview as it helps eliminate the attempts to impress or outguess an interviewer.

The PC-interview was developed specifically for Sears Telecatalogue and identifies areas for follow-up to be covered in the personal interview. All applicants receiving the PC-interview are given a personal interview also. This is to eliminate the selection or rejection decision being made by a computer.

A realistic job preview is given through a video that is viewed while waiting for the face-to-face interview. A supervisor or manager who has thoroughly reviewed the PC interview print-out application and screening form then gives the applicant a tour of the work setting and conducts a thirty minute interview consisting of a core group of questions and open-ended. The applicant is thanked and contacted later. The contact is a telephone call for successful applicants with a discussion of work schedule, pay, and benefits. Unsuccessful applicants are notified by a letter.

Gael Hanauer, the Centre manager for Fort Wayne, says, "Our selection process is designed to allow for the most efficient use of time and resources for both applicants and Sears. If people are treated with respect and see a well organised, friendly selection process, then it communicates the kind of employer we are" (Mathis 1991).

The Role Of Computers

Computers are helpful in the recruiting process in order to maintain a database of resumes for reference in pursuing future employees, "personalised" computer generated letters to respond to applicants, and computerised matching services (Mathis 1991).

External computer database systems such as Electronic Job Matching (EJM) include information such as biographical data on potential candidates. The database system known as Corporate Organising and Research Service (CORS) has helped over 4000 corporations locate qualified applicants from within its database.

Software systems can be purchased for use within the company itself. Roscoe the Recruiter is a system that can organise data on applicants and current employees. When an opening arises, candidates can be chosen according to their skills and background to match the opening.

Systems such as the Restrac Resume Reader allow resumes to be loaded and then searched according to occupational fields, skills, areas of interest, and previous work history. For example, when the job requires an MBA and sales experience, the key words *MBA* and *sales* can be entered and all resumes applicable to these guidelines will be identified (Mathis 1991).

The advantages of computers in the recruiting process include identifying potential candidates more easily, reducing costs associated with recruiting and saving time.

Computer and electronic interviews. The Sears Telecatalogue case exemplifies one of the ways a computer can be helpful in the interview process. Another example includes a hotel chain that has front-desk applicants view a videotape of some of the typical customer service situations and then answer how they would handle the situation.

Testing, Reference Checks, and Evaluation

Tests have been used throughout history to try to determine both the traits that lead to success and which individuals possess those traits. The civil rights movement made an impact on certain tests which were biased towards whites and mainstream Americans. Now, tests *must* be job-related and careful not to exclude any particular group or segment of society. Employers must be wary of any hiring practice that could lead to suspicion or legal action. Selection tests *must* be valid and reliable and should relate directly to the job being applied for.

An important step that must not be overlooked in the hiring practice is a reference check. This should be done prior to hiring the applicant, but under certain time pressures it must wait until after. When time is of the essence, several of the recruiting steps may be omitted or the order changed.

The recruiting effort is not finalised with hiring the employee. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the recruiting effort must be performed in order to improve future recruiting efforts. Recruiting is of vital importance to the company and usually a major expense. It is estimated that it costs one-third of a new hire's first year's salary to recruit him/her, with training and learning costs at an additional fifty per cent or more (Taylor and Bergmann 1987).

A general format to follow for evaluation of recruitment efforts includes the quantity and quality of applicants, the cost per applicant hired, and whether the required goals for hiring protected-class individuals is being met.

The evaluation can be more specific and look at the length of time from contact to hire, total size of applicant pool, percentage of qualified applicants in the pool, percentage hired, proportion of acceptances to offers, time frame it took to make a hire from each of the different sources used and a long term evaluation of the recruitment effectiveness, meaning an evaluation of the employees hired job performance, absenteeism, cost of training and turnover by recruiting source (Mathis 1991).

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Thiagarajan Srinivasan and Brian H. Kleiner

Hiring the right employee can be a lot like looking for a needle in a hay stack. You may know what you are looking for, but you can not see clearly enough to find it. Everybody wants to hire the best, unfortunately few know how to do it. The decision to hire may be the most important decision which a supervisor would make. Hiring is the process of finding and attracting job applicants who have the skills, abilities, and other personal characteristics that your organisation is seeking (Cauvier, 1993). In order to be successful in attracting the best talents, the company should make the labour market aware of its employment opportunities.

There is no one single best recruitment technique, for recruitment depends on the situation and the approach is determined by the job requirements and by organisational environmental constraints. Finding the right employee is a continuing challenge and hence companies should plan the hiring process well ahead of time.

The steps involved in making an effective hiring decision can be summed up as follows:

* Realising the need and defining the job requirement
* Job analysis and writing job descriptions
* Advertising and receiving applications for the job
* Employee testing
* Interviewing
* Legal aspects
* Making the job offer to the candidate

Realising The Need

Michael Ovitz's entry into Disney is the most talked about story in our modern times and his exit was even more dramatic. Michael Ovitz was arguably the best agent Hollywood ever produced. His company skilfully put together the stars, director, and writer for a film and then shopped them as a unit to the highest bidder. Though the Chairman of Disney Mr. Michael Eisner realised the need for someone to work under him, he did not define his requirement. Mr. Ovitz's great strength was in seeing the future and figuring his place in it. However at Disney he could not rally the team around him. Disney's Chairman had to shoulder part of the blame for he did not give Ovitz enough support nor did he define his role. However a good executive has to learn how to fit into a corporate culture and Ovitz never seemed to try it. This clearly illustrates the importance of realising the need, defining the

job requirement and hiring the candidate. At Disney, the need was realised, the candidate was hired, and the job was defined around the candidate. The costly Disney/Ovitz fiasco illustrates the effect of not adhering to the correct process.

Job Analysis and Writing Job Descriptions

The information gathered while defining the job requirement determines the content of the job description. A job analysis is the process of collecting and recording the specific characteristics of a position (Cauvier, 1993). To be sure that the job description reflects the duties and responsibilities of the position, ask yourself the following questions:

1) What is the purpose of the job?
2) What are the day to day activities?
3) From whom will this new hire receive instruction?
4) To what extent will employees in this job plan their own activities?
5) What records are maintained by this new hire?
6) What are the usual contacts made in this job?

One of the critical aspects of job descriptions is the way it is written. One has to be careful in writing up a job description in terms of the words and phrases used. The following could be viewed as a sample job description (Cauvier, 1993).

Job Title:	Accounts Payable Clerk
Division:	Electronics
Department:	Accounting
Supervisor:	Accounts Payable Manager

Job Summary: To process incoming vendor invoices in terms of purchase orders conformity, price, arithmetical accuracy, authorisation. Coding the items to the necessary Account heads distinguishing between Assets and Liabilities, Income and Expenses. Preparation of accruals and answering queries.

Results:	To maintain the sanctity of the accounting system with respect to the items being processed. To minimise errors in terms of excess or short payments, wrong payments, wrong accounting.

Experience:	At least one year's experience in processing vendor invoices in a large to medium sized company.
Qualification:	High School with working knowledge of Accounting.
Responsibility:	Invoice Processing
Approximate % of Time:85%	
Duties:	*Knowledge and Skills Required*
Opening Invoice Mails	Be organised
Checking P.O's	Be organised
Comparing PO's to Invoice	Ability to understand
Checking Arithmetic Accuracy	High School Maths
Coding Invoices	Be organised
Checking Authorisation	Adhering to policy
Inputting Invoices into system	10 key capability
Responsibility:	Answering Queries
Approximate % of Time:	15%
Duties:	*Knowledge and Skills Required*
Answering Inter-Dept Queries	Basic Book Keeping Knowledge
Answering Vendor Queries	People Skill and Book Keeping Skill

Advertising and Receiving Applications For The Job

Finding the right applicant for the job is a continuing challenge for most companies. There are two major types of advertising:

1) Internal Search
2) External Search

Some companies have a policy whereby an initial attempt is made to fill the positions from inside before going outside. There are different forms of advertising each with its own pros and cons. Long term techniques involve public relations activities designed to convince the community that yours is a desirable company to work for (Cauvier, 1993).

How to Hire Employees Effectively

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
Internal	Own Staff	-Individual is well known -Availability of Performance Appraisal -Employee Morale Boosted -Economical	-Limited choice -No fresh inputs -Jealousy

According to Hertzberg's theory of motivation, recognition is a major motivator. It does make a lot of sense that one's own staff are promoted. However care should be exercised to ensure that animosity and jealousy are not aroused.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
Internal (if the employee left for known reason)	Former Staff	-Individual is known -No training necessary -Economical	-Limited choice -Difficulty with former colleagues

A recent example quoted in the local paper was about an ex-employee returning back to the same company to a higher level. These are more the exceptions than the rule.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
Internal	Employee Referrals	-Previously known -Realistic expectation	-Embarrassment -Limited choice

There are arguments for and against going for employee referrals. In some areas like software where demand exceeds supply, employees are paid referral bonuses. However there is a downside risk to this. People might recommend mediocre candidates and the companies in their hurry to fill the position may overlook the obvious. The referral bonuses should only be paid if the new employee meets the performance standards.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
External	Government sponsored employment centres	-Wide coverage -Many related service	-Slow to respond -lacks resources to prescreen applicants

In spite of the fiscal cutbacks, government-sponsored employment centres do provide free services to help match up job seekers with employers.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
External	Private employment agencies &	-Fee based can cost less than in house search	-Poor fit -Poaching
External	Executive search firms	-International access -Wider choice	

With the time and cost involved in recruitment, these external agencies could be a viable alternative. However we have to give a clear direction as to what we are looking for, provide a job description, resumes of people who have occupied this position as well as a list of critical obstacles that the successful applicant would have to overcome in order to excel in this position. Once the search has been assigned to them, it takes approximately two weeks to get the first feedback.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
External	College Campus	-Fresh Thinking -Fresh ideas -Motivation to do well -More flexible	-May not be right for job -Little previous experience

Nearly all colleges and trade schools try to help students to find suitable placements. By establishing and maintaining a continuing relationship not only with the placement office but also with key faculty members, a company can identify the better graduates. Similarly relationship can be established with other trade organisations.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
External	Walk-ins	-Available immediately -No expenses involved -Motivated to work	-May not be suitable -Background checks

Generally this may not be the ideal set up to recruit people. True, this may work in a situation where urgent recruitment is required to meet some basic warehouse/clerical type of jobs. However we cannot depend on this type of recruitment for managers, CFO etc.

Type	Source	Pros:	Cons
External	Newspaper advertisement	-Larger audience -Wider choice	-Large number of applicants -Poorly designed ad may not attract the right candidate.

This is one of the more popular and generally used recruitment technique. But the most crucial factor is to attract the right type of candidate and care must be exercised on its content and placement. Once the resumes come in, the next job would be to go through these resumes and pick out the right candidate.

Employee Testing

Unfortunately, not too long ago, Texas instrument's recruitment strategy was not reaching the superb students. The company was visiting a limited number of campuses and administering an assessment test battery that took more than three hours for students to complete. "We were taking an awful lot of flack in working with campuses. Students did not like it, deans did not like it. This battery was worse than any final exam these students would take", says David Current, manager for TI corporate university relations (Flynn, 1996). This does not mean that we have to do away with tests. In fact pre-employment testing helps employers to obtain highly accurate predictions of how applicants are likely to perform on the job (Mercer, 1993). Another company which uses testing in its recruitment process is Servicemaster. The testing system was developed by London House and it covers the following areas:

- Whether the worker has been engaged in certain activities in the past
- Whether the worker has a propensity towards certain behaviour

Servicemaster wants to recruit people who want to be in a service minded career, who are not ashamed of being a housekeeper or a maintenance mechanic or a bug sprayer. They look for people who have a high level of service-mindedness and low turnover propensity (Flynn, 1996). The testing system has reduced the turnover from 180% to about 14%. The following could be viewed has some basic testing guidelines (Dessler, 1991).

1) Use tests as supplements
2) Validate the tests before administering them
3) Analyse all current hiring and promotion standards
4) Keep accurate records
5) Beware of certain tests

6) Use a certified psychologist

7) Test conditions are important

Various Federal and State laws (including the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1967 Age Discrimination in Employment Act) bar discrimination with respect to race, colour, age, religion, sex and national origin. These laws were bolstered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and by several court cases and were then modified rather dramatically in 1989 with decisions such as Wards Cove (Dessler, 1991). With respect to testing before Wards Cove these laws boiled down to:

1) It has to be proved that these tests were related to success or failure on the job

2) That these tests did not unfairly discriminate against either minority or non-minority sub-groups.

The burden of proof rested on the employer. However, after the Wards Cove case, the burden of proof is no longer on the employer but on the employee/plaintiff. Specifically, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the burden of persuading the judge or the jury in a lawsuit always lies with the person bringing the complaint.

Interviewing

Preparation both on the part of the candidate and the interviewer is very important. Successful hiring is a methodical process that begins by determining those skills and attributes that are required to fill a position. Once we have determined the skills, then we have to devise questions that will reveal whether or not an applicant meets these requirements. In other words, to find the right employee, you would have to define the position you want her or him to occupy. The following three step rule would go a long way in accomplishing the task.

a) *Profile the position's responsibilities:*

Most positions involve a wide range of responsibilities, each of which requires specific skills, work habits and knowledge. By establishing these responsibilities, one can determine the position's requirement. Establishing responsibilities lies at the heart of effective interviewing and hiring.

b) *Establish specific requirements:*

Once the responsibilities have been established, we would be able to determine the specific skills the applicants need to fulfil. This can again be broken down into those that are technical and those that are behavioural. Technical refers to specific skills that the position demands. Behavioural refers to how a person needs to act to fulfil a given responsibility. In fact behavioural factors are far more important than sheer technical knowledge.

c) *Establish your priorities:*

The last step in this process is the establishment of priorities. These could be categorised as "must-haves" and "want-to-haves". The "must-haves" could be determined in the initial meeting or the phone conversations. "Want-to-haves" are those attributes which an applicant should possess in addition to "must-haves".

When the interviewing is complete, collect all the available information, including all the notes, your observations, remarks from references and the opinion of the relevant people in your organisation. Make sure that the evaluation is done on a consistent basis so that a clearer picture emerges about the candidates.

Legal Aspects

Good hiring is important not only for the organisation to achieve its goal, but also from the legal stand point. Employers are increasingly being held liable for damages stemming from their "negligent hiring" (Dessler, 1991). The courts are increasingly finding employers liable for damages where employees with criminal records or other pre-hire problems took advantage of job related access to customer homes or other similar opportunities to commit crimes (Dessler, 1991). Some of the case laws on negligent hiring are as follows (Cook, 1988).

* *Henley v. Prince,* George's County, 305 Md. 320, 503 A. 2d 1333 (1986)

An employee with a criminal background, which included a conviction for second degree murder, sexually assaulted and murdered a young boy. The management knew of the employee's criminal background before the assault and murder. The parties settled before trial for $440,000.

* *Ponticas v. K.M.S. Investments,* 331 N.W. 2d 907 Minn (1983)

An apartment manager with a pass-key entered a woman's apartment and raped her. The employer's duty to exercise reasonable care in hiring includes making a reasonable investigation of the employee's background, the scope of which investigation is directly related to the severity of risk that third parties are subjected to by such an employee. Negligence by the owner and the operator of the apartment complex in hiring the apartment manager was found to be the cause of the personal injury to the tenant.

Some of the laws which an employer needs to be aware of are:

- Federal and State Wage and Hour Laws
- Worker's compensation
- Immigration laws
- Child Labour Laws

- California anti-discrimination laws
- American with Disabilities Act
- Federal and State Family Leave Acts

Another aspect to be considered at the time of the interview is the type of questions one can ask. The basic guideline being that only legally justifiable questions are to be asked of the applicants. Specifically the questions that are not allowed to be asked are the questions that are not directly related to whether the applicant can do the job. The following exhibit gives us somewhat of a guideline in terms of the questions we might ask (Mercer, 1993).

Legal guidelines for interviewing

Subject	**Non-job related questions you should not ask**	**Job related questions you can ask**
Age	"How old are you"? "What's your birth date"?	Age related questions are allowed in signing up a new-hire for benefits.
Arrests	"Have you ever been arrested"?	None. (Reason: Arrests are not convictions and may not even relate to the job)
Conviction	"Have you been convicted of any illegal activities"?	"You applied for the job of cashier "Have you ever been convicted of stealing"? You applied for the doorman job. "Have you ever been convicted of any assault-related charges"?
Handicaps	"I can see you have a disability. Can you do this job"?	"This job would require you to carry out X, Y, Z duties. Can you perform those duties? Would you need any special accommodations to enable you to perform those duties"?
Gender	"Almost all our employees are men. Are you sure you would feel comfortable in this environment"?	None allowed unless there is a *bona fide* occupational qualification.
Family	No questions about applicant's family	"Can you work such and such hours"?
Marital Status	None allowed	Same as above

These are only broad guidelines. However, care should be exercised so as not to give an impression of discrimination. One of the factors to be considered here is reference checking. It is wise to get the candidate's written approval first-not only to check the references provided, but to pursue additional references of your choosing that will give you needed insight into the prospects business and educational background. The same discrimination laws apply to reference checking as apply to interviewing. You cannot probe into marital status, age, handicaps, religion, colour and national origin for the purpose of using that information as the reasons for hiring. The information collected during reference checking must be kept confidential.

Making The Job Offer To The Candidate

The number of people involved should be limited to only those necessary. One cannot try to reach a consensus as it would be time-consuming and counterproductive. For labour and clerical position one decision maker (i.e.) immediate supervisor is optimal. For managerial levels, a maximum of three should be involved. These individuals would be the immediate supervisor and perhaps two managers from departments with which the person will have contact. There should be a clear understanding about: (Dobrish,Wolff, Zevnik, 1984).

- Compensation and benefits
- Conditions of the offer
- Relocation requirements
- Travel requirements
- Starting date
- Deadline on acceptance of offer
- Special job requirements

It might also be a good idea for the final candidate to meet the President of the company.

Conclusion

Hiring is a process which happens in organisations on a day to day basis. It is the process on which a solid organisational foundation is built. Good hiring practices are developed and refined over time. This learning process takes time and effort and care should be exercised while evolving this process in an organisation. A process which smacks of discrimination would definitely invite criticism and law suits. A strong organisation is built on strong hiring practices.

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How to Hire Employees Effectively

by Leh - Cheng Hou and Brian H. Kleiner

Today's management recognises that manpower is the most important resource of a business; the efficient performance of employees is crucial to the success of an enterprise. Employees who stay with the organisation for several years represent thousands of dollars in investment. Mistakes in hiring are costly not only in terms of financial investment; but also in loss of productivity, disruption of service and depressed morale. In today's market, there are lots of applicants for every opening. However, finding just the right person for a specific job is not easy. Therefore, the greatest need for managers is for a hiring system that does not force them to rely on a gut feeling or their intuition. They need the system that enables them to gather the right information and use it to make informed hiring decisions. They need the system that has built-in predictability, so they know the person they hire will be successful on the job. The following steps should cover the basic ideas of an effective hiring system.

Understanding Your Needs

Today, it is a hirer's market. Managers can afford to be choosy. However, it is hard for them to find that unique individual who is exactly the right match for their job now and in the future. Many may have appropriate training, experience and technical skills; but only a few may process the drive and flexibility you are looking for. To find a right person to meet the need of a particular job, understanding the job is the first step that helps managers to understand whom they want to hire. Managers can do this by reviewing existing job descriptions, talking with the person in the position, and evaluating employees in the job. The job descriptions need not be as lengthy as a full job description, but it does need to include whatever information will give them a deep understanding of what the job is about. If there is no person in that position, they should talk to other employees who hold similar positions and ask them what the job involves. Managers can ask the questions, which relate to the job function, such as: does the job involve making decisions relating to policy; does the job involve contact with customers; does the person manage others?

Because the different jobs require different personality types, the next step for managers is to know how to get the right person. The following are some personality traits, in three profile categories, that should be considered and evaluated by managers during an interview. Any or all could be important for the job that managers are trying to fill.

Personal Profile

These traits can reveal basic character, a personal portrait that can broadly affect various aspects of any job.

Drive. Has a desire to get things done; has an ability to make decisions and to avoid busy work; breaks overwhelming tasks into component parts.

Motivation. Looks for new challenges; has enthusiasm and a willingness to ask questions; can motivate others through their own interest in doing a good job.

Communication. Can talk and write to people at all levels.

Confidence. Is honest with all employees, high and low; yet knows when to keep a secret.

Professional Profile

These professional traits can reveal loyalty to a cause, person or company, and speak well of a person's reliability.

Reliability. Does not rely on others to ensure that a job is well done; keeps management informed.

Integrity. Takes responsibility for own actions whether good or bad; makes decisions in the best interests of the company, not on personal preference.

Dedication. Has a commitment to tasks and projects; does whatever is necessary to see a project through to completion on deadline.

Pride. Has pride in trade or professions; takes the extra step and always pays attention to details to see the job is done to the best of his/her ability.

Learning skills. Listens and understands rather than waits for a chance to speak.

Business Profile

These are the characteristics that show a person understands that you are in business to make a profit.

Efficiency. Always keeps an eye open for wastage of time, effort, resource, and money.

Economy. Knows the difference between expensive and cheap solutions to problems; spends your money as if it were his or her own.

Profit. Knows it is the reason we are all here.

When managers find a candidate with these qualities and they are sure he/she will fit in with their shop or office team, they have got a match.

Using Advertising to Pre-Screen Candidates

Almost any job opening today will attract dozens, maybe hundreds, of applicants. Unfortunately, it is the quality, rather than the quantity, of candidates, that is important.

Supervisors and other managers often feel overwhelmed by the volume of applications they receive - many from candidates who are obviously unfit for the job. It is better to elicit a manageable number of qualified candidates, than to amass a multitude of misfit applicants. For example, the Marines call it, “Looking for a few good men”.

Advertising is simply a way to reach out and make contact with potential employees. Professionals, skilled in the hiring process, know how to use classified advertisement and job posting to pre-screen candidates. Rather than running an open-screen ad, which seems to fit almost anyone, it is much more efficient to develop a sharply focused ad, which causes potential job-seekers to screen themselves. By using a thematic ad, which pinpoints exactly what the job is and what it takes to do it, managers will cut down the number of throwaway applications and attract only candidates worth looking at. A self-screening, thematic announcement allows readers to decide for themselves whether or not they fit the job and results in many unqualified candidates eliminating themselves.

A well-crafted thematic advertisement starts out with specific questions, which enable readers to determine if they can fill the job. The following example is a classified advertisement looking for a shop foreman. “Do you enjoy planning and organising a work assignment? Do you like to see others succeed? Do you enjoy a fast pace? Do you like to pay attention to details? Can you make decisions quickly? If so, our company invites you to join our team. We seek a top-notch shop foreman with a track record of excellence. This job involves supervising 12-20 specialists, planning projects and following them to completion. If this job is for you, call _____ for an appointment. We are an equal opportunity employer”.

A thematic advertisement takes longer to write, but the result is a self-elected pool of well-suited candidates.

The Cracks in the Resume

The most important thing managers should know about resumes is that they offer a distorted image of reality whose main function is to deceive the eye. Resumes have long been regarded as worth little more than the paper they

are written on. If managers do not want to get fooled, their first job is to find the cracks the different resume types are designed to hide.

There are three styles of resume in common use, and each has different capabilities to highlight certain strength and leave the skeletons well hidden in the closet.

The Functional Resume

The functional resume is perhaps the most confusing to decipher. It focuses attention on major skills and specific accomplishment in certain areas. It provides no chronological records of employment and no details of the type of jobs where this experience was gained.

The Chronological Resume

Chronological resumes are probably the most common and need the least explanation. Their set-up is exactly what it says, a chronological record of employment history. They are used by people who have no gaps in their history or who feels such gaps can be hidden by sleight-of-hand. This type of resume will often demonstrate successively responsible positions.

The Combination Resume

The combination resume is a mixture of both the functional and chronological styles. It is the most comprehensive, because it reveals both employment history and highlights specific skills and accomplishments.

The Interview

The interview is the final forum for sorting out winners and losers. It is a manager's only real opportunity to gauge motivational and attitudinal factors. Look for strengths (creativity, persistence, problem-solving ability), weaknesses (resistance to change, procrastination, poor communication skills) and needs (status, power).

The time and place of interviewing is important. Interviews should be scheduled at a time convenient for managers and for the candidate. The interview site should be private, quiet, free from distraction and comfortable.

All good interviews are structured, not hit or miss. Managers should know what they are looking for and consistently ask all candidates the same set of predetermined question.

Developing Questions

Managers should avoid asking questions that can be answered by a single word, usually a simple "yes" or "no". Single word answers do not give managers much information, and they do not give the candidate an opportunity to tell them all they need to know about the person. For example, the ques-

tions such as "Do you like working with people"? or "Did you like your last job"? do not provide managers with much valid information.

Instead of asking questions that can be answered with just a single word, managers need to pose questions that invite the candidate to talk about what he or she has done in the past. As the candidate talks, managers have an opportunity to get the information they need in order to make an informed hiring decision.

Managers can use open-ended questions that ask for specific examples of past job behaviour. Past behaviour is the best indicator of future performance. Asking focused questions can prompt the candidates to talk about past job experiences in very specific detail. Instead of asking hypothetical questions about how the candidate might handle some future task, ask specifically how the candidate handled something similar in their past or present position. Managers should keep their questions focused so the candidate does not ramble and provide the specific information they need.

Conducting the Interview

In conducting the interviewing, follow the overall plan managers have set for themselves and cover each major area thoroughly and chronologically before moving on to the next one. Otherwise, after the interview is over, managers may get sidetracked and discover that there are big gaps which makes the selection decision difficult. The following are some general guidelines to ensure a smooth interview process.

Create the environment for an effective interview. Managers should make the interview room comfortable, pleasant, and arranged so managers and candidates both can talk easily. Managers can take a look at their office (or the room in which the interview will be held) and do whatever housekeeping needs to be done. Flat surfaces (desks, tables, and work surfaces) do not necessarily need to be cleared of all books and papers, but they at least should appear neat. Managers must know that the candidate will form an opinion of the company based to a great extent on how this room appears. Aim for a pleasing, comfortable appearance.

Establish rapport with the candidate. As managers greet candidates, immediately begin to establish rapport. One of the most effective ways is simply to address candidates by name. If managers use candidates' first name during the interview, they will put candidates at ease, and at the same time subtly communicate something about the style or culture of the organisation.

By building rapport and creating a comfortable professional atmosphere, managers make it easier for candidates to relax. Candidates will not only react to the company in a more positive way, but also will give you more complete information. Managers will simply have made it easier for candidates

to think of the kinds of specific information about past job behaviour that managers are looking for. If managers find that themselves and the candidates share some common experience, such as belonging to the same professional or community organisation, talking about it is an effective way to build rapport.

Ask questions about past job performance. Since past behaviour on the job is the single best predictor of future job performance, managers' questions should focus on what candidates did in the past and how the people did it. To encourage candidates to talk about their past experiences in the kind of detail managers need, use open-ended questions, which require answers of more than just a few words.

At the start of most interviews, the information managers get from the candidate often will be general in nature. The fact is, most interviewees do not take the time to prepare for an interview, and their responses can tend to ramble. In order to make the best use of the time managers have, they must stay in control of the interview. If the candidate begins to ramble or offer opinions that have nothing to do with the managers' job needs, managers can say something like "That is an interesting story, but now we would like to get back to your job experience. Tell us about...."

Managers can be tactful and still maintain control of the interview, directing it toward the information they really need and impressing candidates with their company's professionalism at the same time. As the interview progresses, managers can ask for more detail. If candidates are not providing the depth of information managers need, use probing questions and statements to get it or to help candidates clarify what they are attempting to say.

Probe to clarify understanding. When managers know how a candidate behaved in the past job situations, they can predict how the person will perform in similar situations in the future. Sometimes, however, managers will need to ask probing questions in order to get this kind of specific information. They may even need to give candidates an example of the kind of detail they want. Managers should also remember that they need specific examples of past job behaviour so they can evaluate how people are likely to perform in the new job. Sometimes they have to probe to get the information they want.

Seek contrary evidence. When an interviewer begins to get a one-sided impression, he or she tends to ask questions that will confirm that impression. This should raise a red flag that the "gut feeling" is still at work. If the interviewer thinks the person is just right and has all the necessary skills, he or she will tend to ask questions that confirm the impression and that continue to put the candidate in a good light. The reverse is also true. When an

interviewer thinks a candidate has all the wrong skills or behaviours, he or she tends to ask questions that confirm the impression.

Sometimes all that is needed is to step back, regain perspective, and ask for contrary information. For example, if all managers' interview questions have focused on situations that turned out well, they should ask a few questions that focus on situations in which things did not work out well. Sometimes asking for contrary, evidence may change managers' evaluation of the candidate. Whether contrary evidence confirms or changes their earlier opinion, it will help managers make an informed decision based on more extensive information.

Allow the candidate to ask questions. The interviewers' next step is to ask if the candidate has any questions about the position or the company. These kinds of questions managers get may vary; depending on how much information the candidate was given prior to or during the interview. Managers should bear in mind that the candidate who traditionally has been the most successful in his or her jobs was the ones who took time to learn about the company and the job prior to the interview, and who came prepared for his or her time to ask questions.

Close the interview. How managers close the interview is just as important as how they opened it. Managers still need to maintain rapport with the candidate, and leave people with the clear impression that their company is one of the best the candidate might ever work for.

As managers close the interview, they will thank the candidate for his interest in the company and the position. Managers should make certain in their closing comments that they do not make any remark that could be construed as an indication that they definitely plan to hire a specific candidate. Managers also can summarise the next action steps. Let each candidate know what his or her procedure is from this point on, what his or her expected time line will be for making a decision. Managers who share their decision-making plans and time lines with job candidates invariably contribute to their company's reputation in the marketplace.

Evaluating and Selecting

Managers have conducted their interviews using behaviour-based questions. They have taken good notes during the interviews on how each candidate responded to their open-ended questions, and on the questions each person asked them. They have probed for specifics. Now it is decision time.

When managers have a system for evaluating candidates, they will take less time to make their decision and they will do it with more confidence than when they just had their hunches and intuition to rely on the evaluation system is just as important as the interviewing system. The following are how to set it up and streamline managers' evaluation and selection process.

Develop a candidate performance summary chart. The candidate performance summary charts provide a straightforward way to organise managers' findings and thoughts about the candidate. With this tool, managers can review each candidate fairly and objectively, based on their behavioural interview. Basically, managers can prepare their chart by reviewing the brief job-description statement they originally wrote, making certain that they have used words that match and describe the skills needed to be successful on the job. On the other hand, managers can also review the primary technical skills and performance skills they have identified as essential for people to do the job, and list those things on their candidate performance summary chart.

When managers complete their charts, they are ready to review their notes from each candidate and summarise their findings. After they have gained some experience completing these candidate performance summary charts, managers may want to set up their charts before their round of interviews, and fill in their findings about each candidate when they review their notes after each interview.

Notify candidates. Managers' final task in the hiring process is to notify all candidates of their hiring decision. Their first communication, usually a phone call, will be to the successful candidate as managers make the job offer. For exempt positions, this usually involves an offer over the phone followed the same day by a letter detailing the offer. More and more, supervisory, managerial, and executive candidates also expect to receive a letter outlining the offer and detailing the various forms of compensation.

Before notifying the other candidates, managers should wait until their first choice says "yes". That way, if their first choice declines the offer, they still can contact one of the other candidates if any of them has the skills needed to be successful in the job.

Give candidates several days to consider the offer before responding with an answer. If managers need the position filled quickly, they can tell the finalist that they need to confirm the position as soon as possible.

In conclusion, there is no such thing as the "perfect person" for any job. When hiring employees in today's market, managers must be alert in knowing who and what they are looking for before, during and after the interview process. A managers' job is ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of their team. If managers pick candidates wrongly in the first place, it is impossible for them to manage their team effectively. Therefore, no wonder today's companies are showing increased concern about hiring processes which help them to get best employees.

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