

Hiring the Best

Selecting a winning team is crucial to your organization's success. In some cases, however, the process itself can actually prevent employers from hiring the best employees. So, how do you make sure your hiring process gets you the best results? Here's a simple six-step process:

1. Understand the Job

Be sure that the job matches the needs of your business. The proper time to develop or change a position is prior to hiring that new employee. When hiring, recruit what you need rather than what you've always had. Know what employees do that make them successful and hire for those skills and competencies.

2. Cast a Wide Net

You'll never hire the best if you aren't able to find the best. Don't just rely on the same sources for candidates such as newspaper ads or the major internet job boards. Diversify your efforts to include employee and customer referrals, colleges, niche websites, and trade or professional organizations. Each time you have an opening, you should create a marketing plan for that search.

3. Work the Funnel

Picture the process of narrowing down your candidate pool as a funnel. You'll begin with a large number of candidates, but can narrow down the pool during each stage of the funnel. The goal here is to end up with two or three top candidates. While the process can seem time consuming, each step is worthwhile if it helps you find the best. In addition to reviewing applications, you can further narrow your pool by conducting phone interviews. While you won't have the benefit of face-to-face interaction, phone interviews help you narrow the pool based on your "must haves" and essential qualifications. This is also a good time to clarify pay expectations so that neither party is wasting his or her time.

4. Structure Your Interviews

You wouldn't purchase a house without a thorough inspection, so why hire an employee without a well-developed interview process? Before you even begin, spend some time developing worthwhile interview questions based upon the job. Determine who to involve and make sure they are prepared and trained for the interviews.

5. Be a STAR Interviewer

What does it take to be a star? Easy - ask behavior-based questions to better learn how candidates are likely to perform based upon their past performance. Past performance is usually the best predictor of future performance, and your interviews should be structured so that you can determine how candidates have actually performed in the past. Phrasing questions like "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a situation when you had to..." will elicit details about past behaviors. Prompt the candidate so that he or she gives you the details of a real situation, the task that needed to be done in that situation, what action was taken, and the result.

6. Investigate Past Behavior

If you think you have the pool narrowed down to the cream of the crop, be sure to verify your assessment by checking references and running background checks. We often hear employers say that they don't check references because they don't think they can get useful information. Not true. By structuring your reference-checking process, or outsourcing it, you can obtain useful information that will confirm your choice or help you avoid a costly hiring mistake.