

Successful Hiring Practices for the Small & Medium Sized Business Owner

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On top of the daily challenges you face running your business, hiring the best employees can be difficult. But with the right documentation and process, you can make successful hiring decisions more often than not.

When you make the decision that you need to hire a new employee, be sure that you have a detailed, written job description. These days, the cost of hiring an employee can be very expensive, but the cost of losing an employee due to not being right for the job can be even more expensive. By having a detailed job description, you and your new hire will know what is expected regarding performance in the position. Job descriptions can include anything from required skills, performance criteria and salary expectations to key responsibilities, core competencies and growth expectations. Basically, anything you would like an employee to know about being successful in their job should be included in the detailed, written job description.

Now that you have a job description, you have to find qualified candidates from which to choose. You can find someone that could fit your job description perfectly with plenty of experience, but that does not mean the candidate will fit with your company culture. For example, a company that is reliant on teamwork probably will not want to hire someone who prefers working alone and doesn't get along with others—that is a recipe for disaster.

There are ways to ensure success at hiring the right person for your company. Just like having a job description, write an employee description that uses general terms to convey the type of person you want to hire. By having an ideal candidate in mind before you start your job recruiting process, you will be able to weed out the people who would not be good candidates for your company. This description will also help you create your recruiting advertisement.

Once you know the type of person you want to hire and you have a well-defined, written job description, you have to start looking for possible candidates. Using online resources such as Craigslist.org, Monster and Hot Jobs is easy to do. Consider customers you have that you would like to have on your team, or people you know at other companies in the same industry looking for something new. Another great way to find candidates is asking friends and employees for referrals. This way, you will have at least one person who knows them on a more personal level and that is almost as good as if you knew the person yourself. If all else fails, try advertising in business journals or local newspapers. Be sure to specify in your ad that applicants must respond with their resumes only via e-mail, fax or mail. Clearly state that no calls will be accepted about the advertised position. This way, you will not be bothered by extra, time-consuming calls.

After screening your resume responses, arrange to have qualified candidates take a behavioral assessment. These assessments are effective and can be taken easily online through a behavioral assessment company. Once you are ready to invite pre-screened candidates for personal interviews, be sure the interview isn't with just one person; involve a few other employees to get more perspectives and aggregate their feedback.

While in the interview process, make sure your interviewee is as comfortable as possible. Often, the candidate will inevitably be nervous; it is your duty to set them at ease in order to get the best interview and most information from them. Engage in minor small talk to help break the ice—but don't get too side-tracked. Begin talking first and explain the company and job to the interviewee with enthusiasm—the interviewee will become calmer about you and your company if you have positive things to say. Be sure to ask specific questions and don't get off track with unimportant facts. This is an interview to see if the person could fit in with your company and job, not to see if you would be friends with this person. Once the interviewee answers a question that you do not think would be a good fit for that specific position, end the interview. Likewise, if you think the candidate is a good fit, let him or her know.

When hiring for a management position, take special action during the interview process. Ask especially challenging questions and take note on how the manager develops his or her solutions. This is someone you will trust to run your company; hence you need to be sure you can trust them. Since this person will most likely be running the business for you, a character test will be applied. You will want someone with experience and maturity, but one that will be honest as well as authoritative. The last person you want running your business is someone who is passive and allows the company to run wild.

Finally, once you have found the person whom you think is the best fit for your company and for that position, be sure to provide proper training to expedite the new hire's learning period. The more your new employee knows in a shorter time, the sooner he or she can make valuable contributions to the company.