



## **Recruiting Best Practices:**

MAKING THE RIGHT HIRE: THE FIRST TIME

After hiring close to 60,000 employees in the last decade, we have worked with thousands of hiring managers across the nation. The most common request from our managers is *“How can I tell I am making the right hiring decision?”* It’s a question that has a dramatic impact on the business, and if left unanswered can cripple an otherwise solid organization.

Far too often hiring managers forgo disciplined hiring methods and ultimately leave the hiring decisions up to chance. Frequently, the manager will hire the candidate they most like as a person without regard to qualifications, or in many cases hire a candidate that has a personality *“like them.”* More often than not, however, these decisions lead to turnover and low job performance. Fortunately, our ten years of hiring top candidates in all industries, across the nation have led us to a certain conclusion: top employees are as diverse as the companies they work for and come in all genders, colors, and body types. Each has a unique set of experiences and talent that make them a perfect fit for a certain organization.

The practice of assessing talent from a traditional one-hour interview and an occasional background check is no longer an adequate solution to hire and retain the industry’s top talent. A disciplined approach to hiring is necessary to mitigate the risks of hiring the wrong employee and in turn wasting time, money, and the most critical resource, competitive advantage.

The disciplined approach to hiring can be broken up into five (5) distinct steps, each requiring a fair amount of preparation, but when done correctly can significantly increase your hiring the right employee the first time.

## 1.) Know the positions' specifications

The best way to truly understand the position for which you are hiring is to be specific when developing the tasks of the position and suggested skills and experience required for a candidate to be successful. When you are specific about the tasks of the position, assessing the candidates experience with those tasks becomes much simpler than “guessing” whether a certain skill set enables a candidate to perform a particular task.

Determine the title for the position based on the level of autonomy and innovation required to perform the job successfully. For instance, a staff level accountant will have a set of tasks they are required to perform and they will have a minimal amount of innovation or development of new systems required of them. A CFO, on the other hand, will be required to develop new systems as required and will find him/herself with few repetitive tasks to perform on a daily or monthly basis.

## 2.) Interpret the resume

There is a distinct difference between *reviewing* a resume and *interpreting* it. Keep in mind, an applicant has written his/her resume to secure a new job. On the surface, most candidate resumes look pretty good. When *reviewing* a resume, a hiring manager should ascertain the skill sets of the candidate that qualify them for the job and how many jobs they have held in the last five years (which should be less than three.) However, a resume is very telling about an applicant. To *interpret* the resume, perform some analysis on its content.

A. An applicant without months or years of positions held generally means there were unexplained breaks in their career.

B. A University listed under “Education” without a graduation date generally indicates that the candidate didn't graduate.

C. A Sale person's resume that doesn't include statistical evidence of their past performance, generally means they were an average or even poor performer. Be weary of sales resumes that don't indicate ranking among peers, and lastly how many people were in their previous sales organizations.

These are a few examples of *interpreting* a resume. The few minutes spent here can save time and money when deciding on which candidates to interview.

### **3.) Prepare your interview questions in advance**

Your interview will be your single most important tool you use to assess your candidate. Behavioral based questioning will give you the greatest indication of a candidate's propensity to perform successfully in the future. Prepare your questions in advance with the goal of soliciting a confirmation that your candidate has accomplished the tasks you have outlined in your job specification.

Examples of a behavioral question include:

- A. "This job requires seventy percent cold calling: Give me an example of an activity in your past that demonstrates your ability to generate new business through cold-calling."

Your candidate should give you specific examples with names, dates, situations, etc. Don't be fooled by phrases such as "I would" or "you should."

I recall a time when I was interviewing a recruiter who had all the answers to my questions, but when asked for specific situations, he was unable to produce names, dates and situations. His appearance was extremely polished, he was Harvard educated (according to his resume) and all indications pointed to a successful future in our company. However, his inability to be specific rendered me suspect. Upon further checking of references, we found out that his resume was a complete charade. He hadn't worked

for the companies on his resume. In-fact, he hadn't worked for nearly six-months.

Many recruiting disciples will tell you to “trust your gut.” I would have to agree with half of that statement. If your gut is telling you no, then don't hire. If your gut is telling you to hire, then be sure to stick to the discipline of listening for examples otherwise don't make the hire!

#### **4.) Use sales assessment tools**

There are many tools on the market, and they objectively predict the likely hood of an employees' success. As a proactive company, research which tool can fit best into your hiring process and has robust measurements surrounding performance. Several companies that specialize in sales assessment tools report an increase of productivity near 35%.

#### **5.) Do your own reference checking and confirm graduation dates**

By conducting your own reference check, you can ask questions specific to a candidates' previous performance. Your expectation of performance is usually considerably different than the expectation of the human resources department. Many times the job can be so technical that HR can only ask generic questions which are not adequate to evaluate an individual. Another great advantage to doing your own reference checks is creating the opportunity to meet other candidates through your due diligence.

There is no guaranteed method to hiring a great candidate, however the more tools you use as part of a refined process, the more you increase your chances of finding and hiring the premiere talent.

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