HIRING THE RIGHT EMPLOYEES

People tend to hire people they like – people who look like them, sound like them and potentially think like them. This is a risky proposition. You need people in your organization who think and act differently from you, with different skills, abilities and interests.

There is nothing more important than hiring the right people. The right people need coaching, development and hands-on management, but not nearly as much as the ‘wrong’ people. The right people grow with your company, developing their careers over time. The wrong people jump to the next seemingly exciting opportunity before adding value in their current role and to your company. Recruiting and hiring is the single most important thing managers do, besides manage their employees. And yet, we don’t do it deliberately, with disciplined rigor.

A few uncommon hiring tips:

1. Hire to your weaknesses.
2. Assess whether or not candidates want to be governed by your company and team’s values and norms. If these established behaviors don’t resonate with candidates, they aren’t a good fit with your company.
3. Many of the needs, behaviors and preferences employees exhibit shortly after starting a job could have been detected during the interview process.
   a. If the candidate needs to work from home and is waiting to feel comfortable with you before making that request, you can tease that out during the interview process.
   b. If the candidate doesn’t really want this job but plans to use it as a stepping stone to his next opportunity, you can tease that out during the interview process.
   c. If the candidate really wants more money and is hoping that a pay increase will be forthcoming shortly after being hired, you can tease that out during the interview process.

Consider adding a few questions to your interviews like:

- What are three things that will keep you in this job and what is one thing that would make you leave?
- What has you interested in this job? What do you think the job and company will provide for you that is compelling?
- What are your concerns?
- Tell me about the organization you worked for that felt like the best fit for you. What made it the best fit?
- Tell me about an organization you worked for that didn’t feel like a good fit. What about it wasn’t a good fit?

Many hiring managers are unnecessarily and unpleasantly surprised after bringing on, training and developing new employees – read investing valuable time and resources – to learn that they can’t meet employees’ needs and desires. And thus those newly found employees leave the organization within a year of being hired, when they are still on the debt side of the business.

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4. Require a writing sample. Most professionals, regardless of the job they’re in, need to be able to write using proper grammar, syntax and structure. You don’t have time to teach people the basics. If candidates don’t know and practice these rules by now, they’re not going to in the near future.

5. Require candidates who are in the final stages of interviewing to demonstrate that they have the required transferrable skills by including a chance to demonstrate the skills you are seeking. Ask potential trainers to do a formal presentation during which they teach a panel of interviewers a skill. Ask potential sales people to conduct a mock sales call. Ask potential project managers to design a project plan based on information you provide.

Spend more time learning about candidates and less time figuring out how to get rid of staff who aren’t a good fit, don’t work hard and don’t have the skills and experience you need.

A few common hiring tips:

6. Use a mostly – 75% -- list of established questions for each role so that you can compare one candidate to the next.

7. Ask additional questions – 25% of your interview questions – based on different things you want to know about an individual candidate.

8. Practice behavioral interviewing – interview questions that start with, “Tell me about a time you…” and require the candidate to draw on past experiences to demonstrate transferable skills.

Lots of ‘surprises’ can be unearthed during a thorough and disciplined interview.

If your track record for hiring the right talent is weak – your staff stays less than a year and/or aren’t strong performers; the people you’ve hired aren’t a good fit with the organization and/or you regret some of your hiring decisions – get help. Have someone you trust with a good hiring track record screen your candidates. Debrief each interview with him and understand how he formed his impressions, so that you make better decisions next time.

Hiring the right staff is too important to not get it right. Everyone at some time in his/her career makes bad hiring decisions. Candidates are elusive and most will say anything to get hired. The more thorough, disciplined and deliberate you are, the better decisions you’ll make.

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