

How do I know if I've done a good job hiring

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We have a hiring freeze on as we work through way through the recession, but soon this will change and we'll be adding people. I want to get better and smarter at bringing on the right people. What do you suggest?

This question comes from a solid, well established, service based business. This company has the potential to really take off as our economy moves from recession to recovery. The owner is a careful manager, who tries to balance working in the business and working on it. This question is just one more sign of the owner's desire to learn and improve. Learning is a distinguishing factor that indicates a company's ability to thrive, so hats off to this owner for coming forward with such a thoughtful question.

While it currently is a buyer's market, with unemployment above 9 percent, that won't last forever. Here's an interesting fact: by 2010, 40 percent of the US work force will be eligible to retire. Given the challenges of this recession, many workers will probably extend out their retirement dates. But sooner or later, they're going to go, and as they do, the available work population will shrink.

Here are some factors to consider when evaluating the company's skills at hiring well. Consider the time it takes to fill an opening with a high quality candidate. Evaluate candidate quality against standard tools and benchmarks. Look at the diversity of your workforce. Assess candidate performance, and rate employee and manager satisfaction. Monitor length of time in the job and promotion opportunity. Help to strengthen company reputation by monitoring candidate experience - for hires and non-hires.

Here are some basic questions you'll want to answer, in order to get your company set up to take action.

- Is there a ready pool of candidates to look at?
- Are up-to-date job descriptions used to craft job ads and inform interviews?
- Are qualified recruiters available if needed?
- Does the company know where to place job ads to attract qualified candidates?
- Who is in charge of the recruiting process? Does that person understand what it takes to succeed in the role?

Once the search process is underway, make sure you have tools and benchmarks in place.

- Do you use interview scripts to qualify all candidates?
- Do you have several people screen candidates?
- What testing exists to insure candidates have necessary skills and attributes?
- Are background and references checked?
- Does each position have a number of success factors identified - things the candidate must demonstrate?

Our work population is expected to change dramatically over the next 20 years, with current minorities becoming majorities or at least much bigger players in the talent pool.

- Does your workforce match our society's demographics?
- Do you encourage diversity by understanding social norms, holidays, languages of different cultures?
- Is the company gender, age, race and religion neutral when it comes to promotion opportunities?
- Who are the highest level of minorities in your company? Is that good enough to show others there is sufficient opportunity?

Look at on-boarding, evaluation, promotion processes, once candidates become employees.

- How do you formally introduce new employees to the company - employees, culture, rules, job specifics?
- How satisfied are managers, 1 - 2 years post hire, with their employees?
- How satisfied are employees 1 to 2 years after joining your company?
- How does the company provide employees with feedback, within 90 days, 6 months, 1 year of joining the company?
- How long does it take for employees to get promotion or growth opportunities? What kind of training is available to help them prepare?

Finally, consider the company's reputation. How the company is viewed by candidates who don't get the job, and employees who exit, can give you insight into improvements you'll want to make.

- Do candidates who are not hired feel they are treated with respect?
- Do candidates who are not hired, and former employees, ever refer anyone to your company?
- When employees exit, is there an exit interview?
- Does the company use critical information gathered from candidates, employees and former employees to improve its processes?

This is a challenging list of questions. Set time aside to work on them a little each week. Develop strong answers and you'll be well on your way to building your successful hiring processes for the future of your business. If you need help building good answers, call us!

Looking for a good book? Try "Stop Hiring Failures!" by Steve Springer.

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