

Opinions

Recruiting woes: Tips for a smooth hire

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There are several things to keep in mind while hiring, including not asking predictable questions or interviewing candidates for undefined roles.



By Glenn Carroll

The success of a business depends largely on hiring the right people. One of the biggest challenges is finding the best talent and for the candidate the right role and employer.

Last year, before I stepped into the wonderful world of self-employment, I had the bizarre and frankly depressing experience of dealing with the employee versus employer interface, which I had not faced for some time. And in many cases, it wasn't pretty! I would sum this up in a few gentle reminders for hiring managers.

Don't ask predictable (or lazy) interview questions

When hiring a candidate, it is vital not to make the mistake of asking predictable interview questions that have been gathering 'mental dust' for a lifetime. The problem with such questions is that the candidates do predict them, trot out rehearsed answers and sound like robots. More helpful are spontaneous questions, asked to encourage the candidate to apply a little originality and show some sense of self awareness, thinking ability and independence of mind.

Never leave undefined roles or responsibilities for the available position

Another mistake made by companies when hiring is poor definition of job roles, which can be a calamity because the performance of the company can be affected negatively. It amazed me last year while going for a VP-level role, there was no job spec, no character profile, no defined expectation of the role... nothing. I ran a mile. But this could have been so much better handled if the employer had simply been prepared. Candidates on the whole know that being prepared is key for their success, but it seems to slip some employers' minds and external recruitment companies. It works both ways.

To avoid this woe, define the roles and responsibilities accurately in any brief. This tends to attract candidates who have the qualities and abilities that are needed. A good description of the roles and responsibilities and a simple list that defines the overall purpose of the job is key.

Avoid ghosting a candidate during the recruiting process

This drives many of us nuts! I think there is nothing more off-putting, rude and plain amateur than when recruiters neglect to reply to candidates during an interview process, even if it's to say they know nothing. It is bad form, and it can put off good candidates. It's a sloppy way to behave. Good talent won't endure a drawn-out and lengthy hiring process either. They could take up a different offer very quickly. Even if there is no news to deliver, keep them in the loop throughout the recruitment process by contacting them regularly. It's good form.

Do your due diligence

We have no one to blame but ourselves when we hire an unqualified candidate for a position. A good resume can make someone look more talented than they are in real life. That's why we need to carve out time to know the people we want to hire.

Dedicate time for research and ask around! It amazes me how many duff assignments are made and over time, a contact says "I told you so." Avoid this. It costs time and money. Oh...and ask the candidates to provide proof of their training or qualifications. It's amazing how many MBAs there are floating about.

It's a mistake to hire the CEO's 'friend' in any position

Another common setback made is falling for 'the CEO worked with them years ago.' Oh, really?! I have had too many muck-ups with forced hires of such people, or worse, hiring a boss' former 'love interest'. Although this may sound a little far-fetched, it surprises me how often a hire is made when no role really exists. It is unfair to other employees and causes unnecessary poor group collaboration as well as being a waste of time and money. Hiring because they 'look pretty' and 'seem fun' is a no-no. Again, it happens!

Other than a CV, ask for a pitch

Most organizations are guilty of using recruitment strategies that are outdated coupled with their sometimes admin-heavy systems. Resumes and tests are fine and necessary in most cases. But in my experience, asking the candidate to pitch themselves in 200 words is a



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great test of skill—it gets the better candidates to come up with the goods and stand out from the melee.

Have your company sales pitch ready

Candidates can quickly get a better offer elsewhere if they can't recognize the benefits of the role and responsibilities that are sold to them. Identify selling points through the whole recruitment process including the job description, the interview and the job offer. A good candidate will ask for reasons why they should work for an organization, so be ready to sum that up concisely.

Trust your gut feeling

There are times when you will have that gut feeling that an individual is not the right fit, or won't be able to deliver on your expectations, even though they look great on paper. It is crucial that you trust your feeling at that point. What's written on their resume is important because it gives an understanding of their skills and experience. However, you know deep down that you or your team may not be able to work well with the person. Go with guts each and every time, good or bad.

Job recruitment can be time-consuming and challenging. We want to end up hiring the best person for the role—one who hits the ground running, eases in and grows with the team. Some of the tips above may help to avoid recruitment mistakes. But there will always be a 'tale of woe,' we are human after all.

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