

The eight biggest hiring mistakes that companies make

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Hiring quality employees is probably the most important function you perform as a business owner. It can be the most challenging, the most burdensome, and the most fearful aspect of business. Hire the wrong person and you lose time, money and momentum. Hire the right person and your business can grow and prosper.

How can you reduce the risk without sacrificing the reward? Here are the eight biggest mistakes companies make when looking for new employees.

1. Emotional Hiring—The last thing you want to do is hire someone based on desperation. You justify why the employee would be right for the job, even if your gut instinct tells you otherwise. The solution: involve more people in the hiring process—people who don't necessarily have an emotional attachment to the needs of the group within the organization.

2. No Job Descriptions—in life, if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. Same with job descriptions and candidates. Take the time to create a clearly written and realistic job description so you can stay focused on your company's needs. This will help you separate the good applicants from the bad. If the candidate

doesn't fit the job description, don't hire.

3. Creating vs. Plugging—When hiring, many companies tend to create jobs around a person, instead of plugging them into an existing job opening. In essence, you aren't hiring people to do the jobs that are required—you are hiring them to do something you don't need. Job descriptions help a lot. In addition, you will need to complete a list of 3-5 "must haves," the essentials. If they don't have the must haves, you have to move on.

4. Unrealistic Expectations—Finding a candidate that possesses everything you need may happen, but don't count on it. Identifying the ideal person for the job doesn't mean focusing on the skills the person already has. Assess the person's ability to learn the skills needed. Given a reasonable amount of time, the almost-perfect candidate can become the perfect employee.

5. Inflexible Advertising—The definition of insanity is repeating the same task over and over again and expecting different results. When recruiting, companies often advertise their open positions the same way over and over, then anticipate getting fresh, new candidates. Consider trying new venues of classified advertising on the Internet and print media. There are other options as well, such as on- and off-site job fairs, employee referral rewards and recruiting at local colleges.

6. "No Good People" Syndrome—After trying for months to find the right person, you conclude that no good people exist. Big mistake. If there weren't good candidates out there, what would fuel successful companies? The answer: make your company as attractive as possible to potential candidates. Examine it from the outside in. Is it a fun place to work? Are the co-workers nice? Do the supervisors care? How about your benefits? Ask your employees for their feedback and suggestions to get a better feel on how to sell your company.

7. Bypassing Background Checks—Neglecting to perform reference and background verifications can be one of the most hazardous mistakes when hiring an employee. Skipping this activity can have costly and devastating effects on your company. Background checks verify work history, attendance issues and education credentials. Better to find out about a candidate's history of theft, violence or delinquency before exposing your customers or other employees to him or her.

8. Skipping the Second Interview—Hiring a person based on one interview may seem like a good idea, but you can't really get a feel for the candidate in just one sitting. You would never consider making a large purchase on instinct alone. Why would you do it with an employee that costs you at least five fig-

ures? When you bring the potential candidate back in for the second interview, have a new set of questions prepared. Dig deeper into their workplace behaviors. Consider a behavioral analysis assessment conducted by a certified trainer. And allow the employee to observe the job for a few hours or more at its busiest and most challenging times of the work day. The candidate may be more relaxed and reveal more than you saw the first time.

This is, by no means, an exhaustive list of all pitfalls to avoid during the hiring process. But use this list, and chances are you will make a more informed decision about the type of employee you are going to hire.

After all, there are no bad employees. Just bad decisions.

Tina Hamilton, PHR is president of HireVision Group Inc., Whitehall. HireVision, formerly InterSource, takes the difficulty and hassle out of finding the right employees. Through its hiring management services, the company handles recruitment for small, mid-sized and large companies by managing ad placement, collecting responses, interviewing prospects and checking backgrounds and references. Outsourcing these responsibilities saves time and stress, while ensuring that you have the best employees for your business. Find out more at www.hirevision-group.com.