

Tips To Avoid Costly Hiring Mistakes

Why is it, most organizations spend so little time and resources helping managers hire the right people? I could argue that it is one of the key activities that can make or break a company. This isn't rocket science, folks. Look around. The companies, who invest in getting it right on the front end, tend to be financially successful, have less turnover and have a better reputation overall than their closest competitors.

Help your managers avoid some common hiring traps that can trip up the most seasoned managers:

BUT HER SKILLS WERE SO PERFECT!

Hiring someone who isn't a fit for the culture will take you down a slippery slope. While the end results may look good, the energy it will take to repair relationships and untangle political snafus is going to drain you dry. And firing someone who doesn't fit the culture is a lot tougher to document and act on than firing someone for an absenteeism problem.

HALOS CAN BE BLINDING.

We like people who are like us. They seem so smart, so comfortable, so right. The problem is that they aren't always the best people to fill a job. Instead, seek out the person who fits the job requirements. "Well, of course," you say. Yet, it is the most common mistake managers make. Unfortunately, this mistake colors the manager's judgment long past the hiring day. The manager tends to look at his or her new employee through rose colored glasses and often isn't objective about the employee's performance. Sometimes these managers are so protective of their hiring choice, they can't see problems until it's too late.

DON'T SETTLE FOR A PULSE.

Staffing shortages make it tempting to settle for less. Yet, if managers lower their standards, they might have hell to pay for years, with an under-performing employee and resentful coworkers. An employee like this can become the black hole of the department, requiring fellow employees to train the person and even to cover for him. Instead, consider some creative solutions with the employees you have, such as job sharing, creative work schedules, job rotations, internships and job redesign. Another approach is to try some creative recruiting strategies, such as starting an internship program or partnering with a professor in your field. Try not to settle—you will probably regret it.

BUT I GET ALONG WITH HIM SO WELL!

After a friendly chat, many people seem likable. That doesn't mean they are acceptable candidates for marrying your daughter or baby-sitting your children. The point is, being likable isn't enough. When managers are overly swayed by how much they like a candidate, they instinctively avoid asking difficult, probing questions. These managers end up hiring the person based on personality and that can spell disaster when it comes to performance results.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO KICK HIS TIRES.

Buyer's remorse is an ugly thing. You wouldn't buy a 40 year-old house without an inspection, or a used car without looking under the hood. The problem is, by the time we are ready to offer someone a job, we like the person enough to believe everything they say. Sometimes managers are so eager to hire a person, they will even shrug off a reference that is damning with faint praise. (Okay, I admit it. I did this once...but only once. I paid for it, dearly.)

BUY-DON'T SELL.

Some managers are so eager to hire, they do more talking than listening during the interview. They blab on about the great benefits and exciting challenges that await the lucky candidate. The problem is

that a smart interviewee can manipulate the conversation and have the manager convinced that he or she is the perfect person for the job by using the manager's words in response to his own questions.

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