

Choose Wisely: What It Takes to Build the Team of Your Dreams

Resources for People in the People Business

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Have you ever thought you hired the workplace version of John Wayne, only to find out you've been duped and ended up with a Woody Allen? Poor hiring decisions are costly mistakes that can range from 150% to 300% of an employee's base salary. Financial losses include expenses associated with hiring and training, low employee morale and decreased productivity. Plus, poor hiring choices frequently lead to damaged client relationships, loss of new business and business in general, unemployment and more. The bottom line is that bad hiring decisions can make or break a business.

**WHY DID WE MAKE SUCH A BIG MISTAKE?
HOW CAN WE AVOID MAKING FUTURE BAD HIRES?**

The two most common hiring traps are hiring in a hurry and hiring the résumé rather than the person. Companies that don't have succession plans or fail to practice cross-training often rush to relieve the pain of the empty chair. Businesses that ignore the hiring process in the interest of expediting it are far more susceptible to missing important clues that could prevent a poor hiring decision. For example, studies on the behaviors of job applicants report that more than 65% of all candidates do not prepare their own résumés. Even more unsettling for prospective employers is that more than 45% misrepresent their credentials with one or more "tall tales." From reporting academic degrees never achieved and embellishing roles to listing completely fictitious positions, many of today's job seekers will do whatever they can to appear qualified.

A third and very common trap is to hire on the basis of job descriptions. These typically list a subjective interpretation of required skills and experience. By highlighting only hard skills, they leave out the most critical elements such as key performance objectives, behaviors, values, character traits and soft competencies — the defining criteria that lead to effective performance.

With the war on talent in full force, there is tremendous pressure on hiring managers to keep their organizations fully staffed and productive. But how does one meet these demands without falling into hiring traps? After more than

two decades as a recruiter, staffing agency owner, and leader of the KeenHire™ strategic hiring and retention initiative, I've developed an arsenal of practical tips and "insider" tools that empower business owners and HR executives alike with the ability to make informed decisions about their most important resource — their people. Today, I share these with you in a simple step-by-step format.

WHAT IS AN INTERNAL HIRING PROCESS AND HOW DO WE CREATE ONE?

If you hire someone you don't really know, for a position you have not thoroughly defined, chances are that neither the person nor the position will deliver. Hiring the right people requires implementation of a comprehensive internal hiring process that selects the best and eliminates the rest. And it all starts with benchmarking. Whether you are benchmarking the role, the top performers in that role, or key traits of the best performers in the company as a whole, the first step is creating the model of what right looks like. Companies that take the time to do so fully understand not only who they need, but also why they need them. These are the companies that excel in the employee-selection process and the capacity to build a "dream team."

WHAT RIGHT LOOKS LIKE

Before you evaluate your immediate needs, evaluate the company and team. This is called the Internal Human Capital Inventory and Assessment, and it involves:

1. Evaluating your core culture:

- Acknowledge and prorate your core values.
- Assess the character quotient of your company.
- Identify the non-negotiable character traits or core values for your company.

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2. Evaluating your current team:

- Identify your key players and what innate abilities and traits make them successful.
- Identify what's working on the team and what isn't.
- Identify what elements are missing on the team that would make a positive difference.

3. Implementing a system for evaluating and selecting new hires and internal promotions:

- Establish and cross-train to hiring protocol.
- Create companywide candidate-screening ground rules.

- Create a Comprehensive Position Requirement (CPR) for every role.
- Validate, select and utilize the right assessment tools.
- Create behavioral-based interview models for each role in the company.
- Establish a decision-making matrix.

SPECIFIC HOLISTIC HIRING TECHNIQUES THAT SAVE MONEY

With a treetop look at your company and a foundation in place to grow from, it's time to look at each role on a tree-trunk level. Focus on the needs of the business and how each role is attached to the key performance indicators of the company as a whole. When you are clear on the performance objectives for each role in the company and how those affect the big picture of service, sales, retention and profitability, it is much easier to determine who the best person is for each role. Here are some specific holistic hiring techniques:

1. Hire right the first time:

- Thoroughly define each role in your company.
- Define specific success outcomes that are expected in the role.
- Isolate the CAN DO (Intellectual Quotient).
- Isolate the WILL DO (Emotional Quotient).
- Isolate the FIT IN (Character Quotient).

2. Follow the hiring protocol:

- Train each hiring manager on the CPR for his/her positions.
- Conduct a preplanned behavioral-based telephone screening.
- Employ a cursory pre-interview assessment.
- Formulate a position-specific interviewing guide for managers to follow.
- Make hiring decisions according to the predetermined hiring matrix.

3. Set up an effective ramp-up process that validates your hiring choice out of the gate:

- Socialization – on-boarding.
- Manager – new employee meeting.
- Game Plan – expectations, communication, work style.

With established hiring procedures adhered to consistently, your company will jump over and past dangerous hiring traps, turn the tables on the mishaps of poor hiring, and reap the benefits that come with having the right people in the right roles.