Frontline

Recruitment & Retention for the Modern Workforce (Part 1)

One of the biggest issues that our industry is facing today is the recruitment and retention of qualified and valuable employees. Businesses are facing a multitude of factors that are preventing them from being able to maintain and grow staff, some of these include: an aging workforce that is phasing out, a generation coming into the field that is less focused on manual labor and more focused on technology, small talent pools due to locations in rural areas and a prevalence of drug use that eliminates most candidates via drug testing before they can even reach the final stages of hire.

For these reasons, when companies are able to find capable workers, it is essential that they have a plan in place to actively retain those individuals. Understanding what engages employees can help during all phases of the employment cycle—from recruitment to training to performance assessment and beyond.

This month, let's take a look into recruiting basics that will provide a guide to designing an effective hiring strategy for your business. Next month, TPM will provide a look into retention essentials.
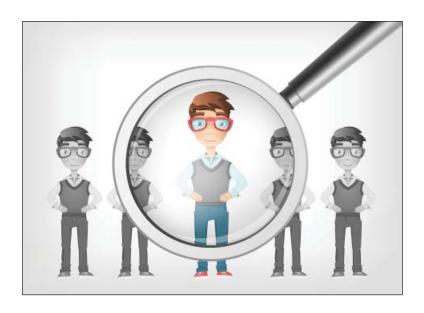
Recruiting

Recruitment refers to the overall process of attracting, selecting and appointing suitable candidates for jobs within an organization. There are several ways you can go about the recruiting process. But first you must decide on the type of employees you would like to recruit.

If you are looking to bring a tremendous amount of experience and time tested ideas to your business, you would tailor your recruiting process to target seasoned professionals. If you are looking to bring more energy or an alternative perspective to your company, you would tailor your recruiting process to target recent graduates.

Recruiting Seasoned Professionals

When recruiting seasoned professionals you should increase visibility in relevant professional associations, seminars and other activities to draw competent and involved employees to research your company. Another option would be to establish an employee referral program. This is a very effective source, especially if those making the referrals are good performers. Your current employees have a vast network of professional acquaintances and people usually make friends with people similar to themselves. This process also ensures that the job candidate understands the culture of the firm through his or her relationship with the referring employee.

Recruiting Recent Graduates

When tailoring your recruiting efforts to target recent graduates, you should organize and attend job fairs to meet with potential applicants to encourage qualified individuals to apply for jobs. It would also be a good idea to consider the values of the millennial workforce and decide if your business aligns with those values. And if they do, make the values evident to recent graduates.

Recruiting All Potential Employees

A good way to attract potential employees to your business is to establish company values that are attractive to your target workforce. People are increasingly concerned with the social behaviors of companies and want to work for companies of which they can be proud. Very often, the best applicants are those who have conducted a thorough and systematic job search.

You should make the work culture of your business available to them through the internet and remember that you want employees who want to work for you, not employees who just want a job.

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Another good way to attract employees is to incentivize potential applicants. One incentive you could offer is a sign-on bonus along with a time commitment to the company, of course. You could also create a good benefits package that can include a health plan, a flexible work environment, paid vacation, etc.

Making the Most of the Interview Process

For effective interview questions, maintain a laser-like focus on your job requirements. Questions should unearth useful information about candidates' relevant experience—and how they would use that experience to help you achieve your goals.

Develop Effective Questions

Start with the job description. Focus your questions on the essential job functions and required knowledge and skills listed.

▲ Check the candidate's resume for projects similar to work you need done. Note any questions you have for the candidate.
▲ To draw out the candidate, prepare mostly open-ended questions (those that require more than a yes or no or simple factual answer).
▲ Limit the number of questions you prepare. That will give you time to ask follow-up questions when you need more information.

Sample Interview Questions

Below are sample interview questions, along with a brief explanation of the purpose they serve. Note that all questions, except for the last, are open-ended.

Question: *"I see that you reorganized the SharePoint system at company X. Tell me more about that experience, including challenges you faced and how you overcame them."*

Purpose: You want a creative problem-solver who can help you streamline project files on your intranet. By having them explain how they handled a similar project, you get a better sense of how well they would handle your project.

Question: *"We need a team player who can also assume a leadership role from time to time. Talk a bit about roles you've assumed. When do you think you're at your best?"*

Purpose: This question should yield information about a candidate's confidence and initiative, comfort level in taking the lead on projects, and ideas on how they feel their strengths could best be put to use.

Question: *"If we were to offer you the position, when would you be available to start?"*

Purpose: A straightforward factual question that gives you needed information on the candidate's availability. It can also help you gauge their level of interest.

Timber Products Manufacturers Association ——————

A note on the importance of job descriptions: Job descriptions are an essential part of hiring and managing your employees. These written summaries ensure your applicants and employees understand their roles and what they need to do to be held accountable.

Job descriptions also:

▲ Help attract the right job candidates
▲ Describe the major areas of an employee's job or position
▲ Serve as a major basis for outlining performance expectations, job training, job evaluation and career advancement
▲ Provide a reference point for compensation decisions and unfair hiring practices

Overview

A job description should be practical, clear and accurate to effectively define your needs. Good job descriptions typically begin with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job such as:

▲ Individual tasks involved
▲ The methods used to complete the tasks
▲ The purpose and responsibilities of the job
▲ The relationship of the job to other jobs
▲ Qualifications needed for the job

Don't be inflexible with your job description. Jobs are subject to change for personal growth, organizational development and/or evolution of new technologies. A flexible job description encourages employees to grow within their position and contribute over time to your overall business.

Job descriptions typically include:

▲ Job title
▲ Job objective or overall purpose statement
▲ Summary of the general nature and level of the job
▲ Description of the broad function and scope of the position
▲ List of duties or tasks performed critical to success
▲ Key functional and relational responsibilities in order of significance
▲ Description of the relationships and roles within the company, including supervisory positions, subordinating roles and other working relationships

Additional Items for Job Descriptions for Recruiting Situations:

▲ Job specifications, standards, and requirements
▲ Job location where the work will be performed
▲ Equipment to be used in the performance of the job