

THE RESOURCEFULMANAGER'S GUIDE TO **HIRING**



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Hiring: Solidifying The Future

Of all the strategic tasks within an organization, there is probably none more important than recruiting and hiring employees. If you're on a recruiting or selection committee, or if you're the hiring manager for your department, you're entrusted with nothing less than the future of your organization. Every organization needs to renew itself from time to time to meet the challenges of a changing business environment. You do that through people. Every organization has some turnover. Even with less than 10% annual turnover, any organization runs the risk of becoming ossified. So, to stay ahead of the turnover curve, constant hiring and recruiting is essential.

There is a lot at stake

Good hires are the lifeline of an organization. They solidify the future. Bad hires, on the other hand, can cause untold damages.

HIRING MISTAKES CAN BE VERY COSTLY

It is quite common for businesses to underestimate the true cost of a hiring mistake, which can end up being several times the employee's annual salary.

The problem with putting a dollar figure on a hiring mistake is that the effects often reach far beyond the position itself, and may linger for a long time afterward.

Here are some of the direct costs of hiring mistakes:

- cost of recruiting ads
- commissions or fees paid to headhunters, professional recruiters or placement firms
- transportation or relocation costs paid to the recruit to come to the interview or come to work
- training costs for having sent the employee to job-specific training seminars
severance costs when the employee is let go

These are all costs the accounting department should easily be able to generate as being directly attributable to the hiring process.

But they do not tell the whole story.

INDIRECT COSTS MAY BE EVEN MORE STAGGERING

Perhaps even more important are indirect costs that are much harder to quantify, such as:

- **Staff time**, which is part of payroll costs. How many managers and colleagues were involved in the recruiting process from the beginning, drafting or approving the ads, reviewing resumes, interviewing candidates (either by telephone or in person), checking references, negotiating contracts concerning working conditions, salary and benefits? The staff time involved surely went well beyond the people in the HR Department, and when everything is all added up in man - or woman-hours, the figure is likely to be fairly hefty.
- **Productivity costs**, which are hard to calculate but very real nonetheless. In business, a team of people is typically only as strong as the weakest link on the team. Even just one bad hire is likely to drag down the productivity of the whole team.
- **Lost opportunity costs**, which are much harder to calculate, but can be vastly more significant. What lucrative sales contracts did the company lose because the employee who didn't work out screwed up an order? If the new employee was supposed to get a marketing campaign for a new product line off the ground, how much revenue had been budgeted from that new line that did not materialize, in whole or in part? How much time did the wrong hire set you back? How long will it take you to recover? Honest answers to these questions can reach some big numbers for most enterprises. Even smaller companies can be greatly impacted.

- **Morale and resulting turnover costs.** People like to work with other smart people who energize them and spur them on to greater heights. One member of a team who's not pulling his or her weight can demoralize a whole team and sour the good people forced to put up with the hiring mistake on the whole company ("who hired this yo-yo in the first place?"). The resulting dent in morale on the good people you wanted to keep can easily result in unwanted turnover, with all its associated costs.
- **Litigation costs,** which are extremely difficult to predict, but can reach deeply into a company's coffers. Of course you know you're terminating the employee for cause because they just couldn't do the job. But what if they decide to concoct some illegal reason why you fired them, claiming it was because of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age or some other protected area. The legal fees needed just to get these kinds of cases tossed out of court can be prohibitive, which is why so many companies will simply settle a case. And if the employee's attorney is skillful enough to actually get the case before a sympathetic jury, you could be staring down a seven-digit verdict — on top of whatever your own company lawyer is costing you.

IMPROVE YOUR ORGANIZATION BY IMPROVING THE HIRING PROCESS

There are both offensive and defensive considerations when it comes to hiring.

On the defensive side, you obviously want to avoid mistakes and lawsuits, which can cost employers dearly.

But if you just guard against making mistakes, you've merely eliminated losses and at best maintained the status quo.

In business there is no status quo.

If you're not advancing, you're regressing. Your competitors are not standing still. If you're not outpacing them in growth, you're losing the battle — maybe gradually at first, but surely in the end.

One of the most important things to look for in the hiring process is opportunities to improve the staff and improve the company's capabilities in general to take advantage of new situations that may present themselves.

You rarely want to simply replace what you may have lost. You want to see if you can do better with every opening. At least the promise of something better needs to be present at all times.

You want to get people whose careers are still on the way up — before they make a ton of money and help some other organization grow. You don't want to get them when their careers are already on the wane and when they're probably at their maximum earning potential.

But there is another phenomenon you have to guard against in the hiring process if you're serious about looking upon every new hire as an opportunity to improve the business.

Hiring managers need to be on guard against the insecurity complex.

Consciously or subconsciously, many hiring managers are reluctant to get anyone on board who might at some point present a threat to them. They might not want anyone on their staffs smarter than themselves.

Such an insecurity complex can derail a company's entire hiring and recruiting process.

Carried to its logical extension, in such cases people who are 8s on a 1-to-10 scale will only hire 6s or 7s — never 8s, 9s or 10s; they would be too much of a threat to them.

In turn, those 6s and 7s will hire 5s and 4s — until the whole organization sinks into a sea of mediocrity.

Senior management should from time to time examine the recruiting patterns of hiring managers.

Are they willing to hire people smarter than themselves? Will they always go for the best hire, regardless of what it may mean to themselves?

First Things First: Before You Start Recruiting

It was legendary football coach Vince Lombardi who said: "If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail."

That's true in recruiting, as well as in football.

To get the maximum out of the recruiting process, there are a number of things the hiring manager should do before ever posting on a recruiting website, or running an ad in a newspaper.

The first question to ask is whether the open spot is merely a replacement for a person who left, or whether it is a new position.

In the case of a new position needed for expansion, you may look more at the person than at the specific job skills you need. You want a go-getter. If it's a new line of business you're launching, no one may yet have the experience, so you're looking for someone who has a proven ability to get new ventures off the ground.

You may be looking for a set of character and personality traits rather than specific skills.

There are a handful of well-established companies that can help devise tests that tell you something about character traits.

HIRING REPLACEMENTS: A 10-STEP PROCESS

In most cases, companies are looking to replace someone who has either left the company or has been (or is being) promoted or transferred to a different job, and the position needs to be filled.

There is an order and a procedure for how to go about recruiting the best possible candidate for the job.

Here is how to do that in *10 steps*:

1) WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION?

The usual suspects include someone from the HR Department to sort resumes as they come in and recommend only the most promising candidates to the hiring manager, the manager to whom the new employee will be reporting and at least one other senior employee.

If either manager interviews the candidate one-on-one, there are always signals that he or she misses. It's best to have another employee present to pick up on such signals.

If the manager is male and the candidate is female, it might make sense to have a senior female employee sit in on the interview to put the candidate more at ease and have someone else there

who can answer questions about company culture, etc., from the candidate's point of view.

For a similar reason, you might want to have a trusted younger employee present to help bridge a generational gap.

Be careful about including more than two people in an interview—a battery of people firing off questions can get intimidating.

2) OUTLINE THE POSITION

What is the job description and does it need to be updated?

Has the job changed since the days that the last employee did it?

Was the last occupant of the job right for the position or was there a mismatch that could have been prevented by writing a sharper job description?

In answer to job postings or ads, you always get a bunch of resumes from “professional applicants,” people who seem to apply to any and all job postings, regardless of the requirements.

So in your posting, try to give enough specifics to attract the people you really want to attract.

3) WHAT ARE THE NEEDED SKILLS?

Some unique skills that are specific to the job may have to be taught after the candidate is hired.

That's almost inevitable.

But you probably don't want to have to teach EVERYTHING.

You want to make sure the candidate has some basic skills. What are they, and how can you make sure the candidate in fact possesses those skills? Is a diploma of some sort proof enough? Can you devise a simple on-site test that will immediately give you a satisfactory answer?

4) WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE LEVEL YOU NEED?

Do you need people with a minimum number of years in the job? Has practice shown that one or two years is enough or do you require more?

The more experience you ask for, the more expensive the candidate is likely to become.

5) WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET FOR THE POSITION?

Your company may have a budget for the recruiting process itself, meaning how much you can spend on ads or job postings, how much staff time and resources you can occupy, and how long the process should take, all of which may determine how long you have to spend on filling the position.

And there will definitely be a budget for what kind of compensation has been set aside for the open position.

In many cases there will be a range. Of course you will try to get the person with the most relevant experience at the right price.

But it does no good to select an excellent candidate who demands an annual salary of \$85,000, only to be told later that you can't pay more than \$45,000.

6) IS AN INTERNAL CANDIDATE AVAILABLE?

Some companies post all job openings internally as a matter of procedure.

Whether your company has such a procedure or not, it's always a good idea to mentally check within the ranks of employees in other departments, or check with their managers, to see if anyone else inside the company could fill the spot.

You will save a lot of time onboarding people. Those already on the inside know the culture. And they may be fairly easy to replace in the department they're in.

7) DOES SHE HAVE A SISTER?

Before you take the recruiting process outside, you might ask your present employees if they know of anyone in their family or circle of acquaintances who might want to and could do the job.

If they recommend a relative or a friend, their own reputation is at stake — and if the person really joins, they'll also have a stake in making it a success, so it might be a win-win all around.

Of course this kind of inside candidate would still have to pass all your tests to make sure he or she can really do the job.

8) ARE THERE ANY DIVERSITY ISSUES?

This is probably more of a question from the HR Department, but in today's litigious society, the whole hiring process is fraught with legal perils. Is your department or company — or could it be in the future — under scrutiny for not having enough diversity?

In some cases, a special effort may be required to fill the next available position with an eye toward diversifying.

9) HOW WILL YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

You can learn a lot about people from social media these days. It can be both a boon and a curse for the recruiting process, for you may learn some things you wish you never knew.

Are those Facebook photos of long-ago college parties really relevant to current character issues and the candidate's ability to do the job?

And suppose you found out the candidate supports a particular political cause of which you or your ownership is not terribly fond? How will that impact your hiring decisions?

It's best to have a policy in advance covering the handling of information gathered from social media. Some large companies don't check social media sites directly, but have a recruiting or staffing firm do it for them to keep their distance from the process.

In any case, these decisions should not be made on a case-by-case basis, but should be handled consistently as a matter of policy.

10) WHO WILL THE NEW HIRE REPORT TO?

The person who will be the new hire's immediate supervisor needs to be part of the recruiting process. You also want to make sure the recruit and his or her manager can live in the same universe together and that they won't drive each other crazy.

The chemistry is important here. As the saying goes: If you want them to prepare a meal together, they first have to be able to agree on the ingredients.

9 Companies That Broke The Rules to Get Great Recruits

Traditional hiring methods do work. That's why they have stood the test of time. If you run a print ad, or post on Monster or CareerBuilder, or go to job fairs, you'll find candidates. And sometimes you may get buried under stacks of resumes, not all of them worthwhile.

For those who want to break out of the mold and try unique recruiting tactics, what follows are examples of nine companies that used unconventional methods to land great recruits. One of them may work for you.

1) PROOF THAT SOMETIMES FLATTERY WORKS

Contacting someone who is currently working for a direct competitor, telling the person you have followed their career for some time and really admire the way they do their job is a great way to get someone's attention.

It's Very Flattering

It's not just a recruiter calling who gets a commission for every person "sold" or "delivered" much like a bounty hunter.

This is a professional working in the same industry who's calling and that professional presumably knows what he or she is talking about.

Such praise means infinitely more.

Vero Beach 32963, a newspaper in Vero Beach, FL, needed a columnist.

The publisher called up the sports columnist for the rival daily and offered him a general column on community topics, saying he was convinced the columnist could write about anything, not just sports. The columnist joined and considerably boosted the stock of his new employer.

The columnist joined and considerably boosted the stock of his new employer. Proof that flattery will get you somewhere!

2) MANAGING A VIRTUAL KITCHEN TURNED UP GREAT RECRUITS

In attempt to recruit more Millennials, as well as attract applicants for international branches, Marriott International launched the “My Marriott Hotel” game.

Players manage a virtual hotel restaurant kitchen, purchase supplies on a budget and manage employees.

The game helped Marriott generate interest in the hospitality industry, increase brand awareness and identify talent across the globe.

According to Francesca Martinez, Marriott VP of Human Resources, players from 120 different countries are running their own virtual kitchens at any given time.

The game also successfully increased traffic to the company's career site.

Martinez approximates that one-third of users click on the “try it for real” button on the top corner of the game, which redirects them to the company's career site.

3) RECRUITED THE NEIGHBORS TO BOOST RETENTION

A long commute is a morale downer for any job. People who live near the office tend to stay longer, reducing turnover costs.

Retention starts with recruiting, so at one point Facebook offered an additional \$600 monthly subsidy for employees who lived within a mile of the company's Palo Alto, CA, campus.

What better way to keep employees more productive than by having them live close by?



4) LOOK FOR TALENT WHEN DINING OUT, SHOPPING

If you are recruiting more on personality traits and less on actual job skills, you may be able to look for great people in unexpected places.

Quicken Loans did just that to find people who fit its corporate culture, the company's Director of Talent Acquisition told the New York Times.

The company once sent employees out to observe restaurant and retail employees, and to offer interviews to those who really stood out for their customer service skills.

"Too many companies focus on industry experience when they recruit. We can teach people about finance. We can't teach passion, urgency and a willingness to go the extra mile," the director said.



5) USE SELF-SELECTION TO FIND OUT WHO'S REALLY INTERESTED

Some companies have added another step between resume-submission and a personal interview to find out who's really interested.

A consulting startup, I Love Rewards Inc, which has now evolved into Achievers, described in an interview with the Wall Street Journal how the company invited 1,200 applicants for entry-level positions to an open house, but only 400 actually came.

The added effort of attending the open house reduced the numbers in the screening process, and also enabled the company to see how people interacted in groups.



6) POKER NIGHT: A WAY TO SPOT KEY TRAITS

When Susan Hailey was VP of Talent Acquisition at Caesars Entertainment, she launched the MBA Poker Championships in Las Vegas, inviting MBA candidates from top-notch business schools like UCLA and Duke University.

Both full-time and part-time MBA students, as well as alumni are invited to participate. Participants must have some familiarity with poker, and real cash prizes are given, with a portion donated to the Alzheimer's Association.

Besides the element of fun, recruiters look for risk-taking and analytical skills. Landing your dream job is always a question of a little bit of luck, being in the right place at the right time, so this strategy adds a new dimension to getting lucky.



7) SPEED DATING: THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

At Travelodge's UK operation, a recruiting VP was struck by the fact that most hiring managers admitted to having made up their minds in the first few minutes of an interview whether they liked the candidate or not, and whether they were going to offer the candidate the job.

The company took that to its logical extension, so that when it had to hire 30 staffers quickly, it conducted three-minute interviews, jokingly referred to as a "Flirtatious Encounter," according to a company press release.

Travelodge Resourcing Manager Ruth Saunders said hiring managers would decide whether or not they liked the candidate in "the first minute and a half of meeting them" anyway, so they might as well dispense with the rest of the time.



8) WRAP AN RV WITH AN AD

Amy Rees Anderson, a founder and managing partner of REES Capital, told Forbes magazine the tale of how she went after employees from a specific competitor.

She said she wanted to target new hires that already had a job, preferably with certain companies she admired in her area most likely to have a similar culture.

To reach these people, she wrapped an RV in a banner with the words "Now Hiring" in big letters around it to create a mobile hiring center.

The RV then drove to public parking lots used by employees of these targeted companies at lunchtime and staffers handed out hiring flyers from the RV to people walking by.

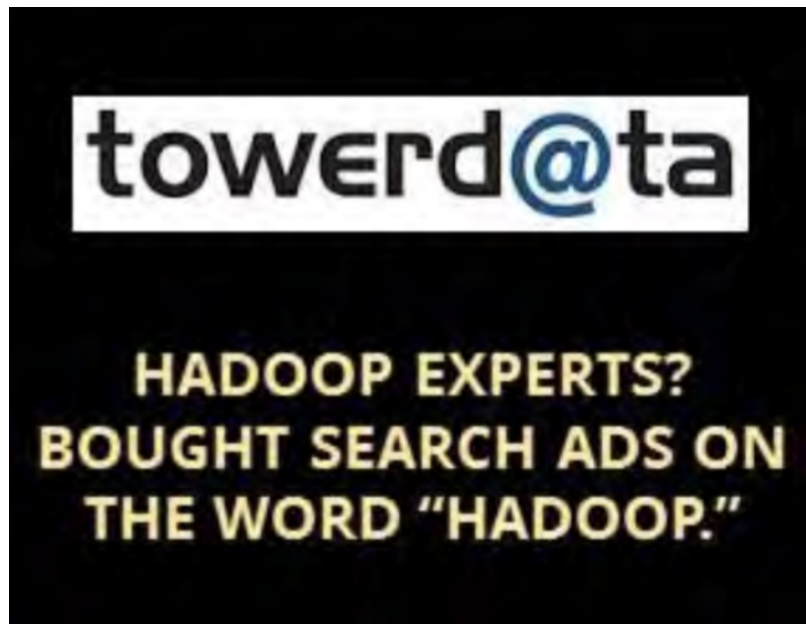


9) ADVERTISE WHERE YOUR IDEAL CANDIDATES ARE LOOKING

Advertising a job only where your ideal applicant hangs out may be preferable to general job sites.

Software developer Towerdata, formerly Rapleaf, was always looking for people interested in Hadoop, an open-source software framework that supports applications running across multiple distributed computers.

So the company purchased ads to appear whenever people searched for keywords associated with Hadoop.



DOS AND DON'TS OF THE HIRING INTERVIEW

The interview is where the rubber meets the road to find outstanding candidates who have the potential to improve your organization — and to weed out the pretenders who may talk a good game but can't or won't deliver.

Many hiring managers decide within the first few minutes of the interview whether they like a candidate or not, and then spend the rest of the time proving to themselves that the candidate is right for the job (if they liked him or her) or talking themselves out of hiring the person (if they didn't like the person at first).

That's a dangerous practice.

Some candidates have become very good at interviewing simply because they've done it a lot — meaning they either lose a lot of jobs or they get rejected a lot.

And there's probably a reason for that.

People who appear too glib and too likeable may make a good first impression, but skillful interviewers should be able to unmask the pretenders with follow-up questions.

It's essential to use the best techniques to identify the good candidates and avoid the losers.

Here are **10 goals** to keep in mind during the interview to ensure the best possible outcomes:

1) EXPLAIN THE HIRING PROCESS

To get the candidates to be more at ease and lessen the tension, explain early on during the interview what your company's interview process is.

Explain:

- whether it is a first or final interview
- who else the candidate will meet
- what role those people will play in the decision-making process
- what tests will be given or required
- how long the candidate can be expected to be on the premises, etc.

It helps relax the candidates to know exactly what they're in for.

2) FIND REASONS TO SAY 'YES,' NOT 'NO'

Keep an open, positive mind to the candidate's potential fit.

If you want to find a reason NOT to hire someone, you will always be able to do so.

Instead of trying to find reasons why the candidate won't work, try to find reasons why it COULD work.

3) ALWAYS BE SELLING

You're always selling during the interview. You're playing up the advantages of working for your organization.

Don't give the candidate the chance to reject you.

If there's any rejecting to be done, let you be the one to reject the candidate.

4) GET CANDIDATES TO RELAX AND REVEAL

Don't make a job interview feel like an interrogation.

It should be more like a friendly conversation to get to know a possible future family member.

Don't cross your arms. Present an open stance, be relaxed, smile a lot, and get candidates to talk about something else besides their resumes and job experience.

People reveal more about themselves and their character when they're relaxed.

5) DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ ON A RESUME

The statistics are well known: More than half the résumés submitted contain information that isn't entirely true. Or at least some facts have been embellished.

How to smoke out the real truth? Two ways:

- Focus on what the résumé DOESN'T say as much as on what it does say. Are there gaps in the résumé? The candidate could be trying to omit a job on which he knows he will get a fatal reference because he was fired for stealing or some other offense.
- More likely, the candidate may have overblown his or her role in a project or in specific achievements. A résumé entry like "Led new customer service initiative" may mean no more than having stood at the door and handed out surveys. To ferret out the truth, ask candidates what they actually did on a job or a project, and encourage them to be as specific as possible.

6) PLAY THE MOVIE FORWARD, NOT BACKWARD

Many hiring managers start asking candidates to describe their last job, which is logical because it's probably what prepared the candidate most for the current job for which you're considering him or her.

The candidate is sure to come prepared to talk about that job, so you will probably get well — rehearsed (and maybe somewhat embellished) answers.

This is counter-intuitive, but you might learn more if you ask the candidate to start with the FIRST relevant job they ever had.

It may well have been a formative experience, and the candidate doesn't expect the question — so you're likely to get more honest answers.

7) ASK ABOUT REAL ACHIEVEMENTS, NOT HYPOTHETICALS

Many well-intended hiring managers try to paint a picture of situations the candidate would encounter on the job if he or she would be fortunate enough to get hired and then ask what the future employee would do when faced with such circumstances.

The candidate will surely try to tell you what he or she thinks you want to hear.

Hypothetical questions and answers have proved to be of little value in predicting future behavior.

It is much better to learn what the candidate did in a previous position. Try to find a close analogy with the possible future job, and ask the candidate what he or she actually did in a circumstance like that.

A natural follow-up question is how it worked out, and what they learned from such a high-pressure situation.

8) LEARN HOW MUCH THEY WANT THE JOB

The worst thing that can happen is you make a firm job offer, and the candidate runs to his or her current employer — or another possible future employer — and asks them to match or improve your offer, thus negotiating a better deal somewhere else.

If that happens, you've just wasted your time, and you may feel as if you've been played.

Always try to find out how interested the candidate is in really taking your job.

Are they likely to get a counter-offer from their current employers?

Do they have any other irons in the fire in the job search that you're competing against? (If they say "yes," you may want to suspend the interview until they've really decided they want to work at your company.)

9) GET THEM TO DO THE TALKING

You are selling the advantages of working for your company, so you do want to answer their questions about your company and the job being discussed.

But be careful not to do too much of the talking. You want the candidate to do most of the talking.

One way to achieve that is to constantly ask for feedback from the candidate:

- "How does that sound to you?"
- "What are you hearing me say?"
- "After hearing this, tell us why you would want to work here and why you would be a good fit," etc.

10) INVITE THEM TO ASK QUESTIONS – AND LISTEN TO WHAT THEY ASK

You often learn more from the questions the candidates ask of you than from the answers they give to your questions, which often are well rehearsed. Example: “My main shortcoming is that I tend to work too hard.”

Invite them to ask copious questions, urging them on if necessary with a “Come on, you must be curious about this place and what it’s like to work here. Ask away. Let us help fill you in.”

If they ask only about the hours and the pay, that tells you a lot. You probably don’t want them. They’re likely to be clock-watchers and all they want is a paycheck.

What you want are people who really think your company is exactly the place they want to work.

THERE ARE LEGAL PITFALLS TO WATCH FOR, TOO

Everyone involved in the hiring process should know there are questions you must never ask during a job interview.

You can't ask people about their age, marital status, pregnancy or plans to have children, health conditions, sexual orientation, etc.

Asking such questions and then rejecting the candidates is an excellent way to invite a lawsuit, or get the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the Justice Department as a permanent pen pal to have to justify your hiring practices.

These kinds of questions help create a case against your company for discrimination in the hiring process, alleging that you refused to hire someone because they were female, too old or some other illegal reason.

These days you also have to watch out for disguised illegal gender tests.

Some companies decided they didn't really want women in jobs requiring hard physical labor, so they asked women applicants to prove they could lift 50 lbs.

Trouble was, some female applicants were able to prove that the actual job required lifting only 25 lbs., which they could do.

Result: Big trouble for the company for illegal employment bias.

WHY NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION ISN'T ENOUGH

The first days and weeks on the job can be bewildering for a new hire.

They need to find the best way to get to work so as not to be late and make a bad first impression. They need to find out where their desk, cubicle or workstation is located and who their immediate neighbors are. They need to establish some kind of routine for their lunch breaks – do most people in the office brown-bag it or do they go out, and if so where? Do they seem to go out in groups or alone?

What seems to be the dress code (even if there isn't a formal one, since most people don't want to stand out by being either over- or under-dressed)?

The things that are often the most important to new employees on how to get acclimated to the new environment are not easily captured in any official new orientation.

New employee orientation should cover paycheck frequency and arrangements, company policies on vacations and other benefits, where and how to call in sick, company sign-up forms, log-in procedures for the company computer systems and the like.

But orientations don't frequently address the culture issues which new employees are often find themselves feeling their way through, and which may actually cause the greatest anxiety about starting a new job or career.

The first few days, weeks and months are critical in the onboarding process because disillusionment can set in quickly.

A new employee, left to his or her own, can quickly start feeling isolated and get a nagging feeling that they may have made a mistake taking the job.

The disillusionment may be so strong that they abandon the job.

In many cases, new employees have simply walked out the door one day and not come back. Often, they still have good relations with the job they just left, where the company is glad to take them back, or they had another job offer that

is still open, so they know they can have a soft landing somewhere else.

If that happens, effort and resources you have poured into the recruiting process will have gone to waste and you'll have to start all over again.

And it didn't have to happen that way.

IN THOSE FIRST CRITICAL MONTHS

When people start a new job, their enthusiasm is sky-high.

Everything sounded right about the new job; they believe it's a good career move for them, and they liked the people they met during the recruiting process.

In short, the new workplace sounded, looked and felt like a good place to work. Then, the inevitable disappointments set in:

Maybe not everyone is as nice as the people that the new hire met during recruitment.

The job itself may turn out to be harder than it seemed at first, and it is taking the new recruit longer to get the hang of certain aspects of the job.

The new recruit may start to doubt himself or herself.

As a result, the enthusiasm for the new job is on a downward slide from that initial high.

As the new hire's competency levels increase, and as they become more familiar with the company culture, ideally that enthusiasm level starts climbing again.

But it's important to catch them as the enthusiasm level reaches a low at the point of the greatest frustration with the adaptation process.

One factor that can help most to make the onboarding process go smoothly as possible, and avoid those inevitable early disappointments, is a mentor system.

The mentor should not be a direct supervisor, and whatever is discussed between mentor and mentee is confidential — unless the mentor sees an immediate need to communicate something to a supervisor (example: any hint of sexual harassment must be immediately reported).

The mentor can help put things in context for the new employee, and share some tips on how he or she or others overcame initial difficulties, and which supervisors are not as bad as they seem and that their bark is worse than their bite.

180-DAY ONBOARDING TIMELINE

Onboarding is not a one-day or one-week process.

It takes time for a new employee to become comfortable on a new job. And even longer for them to fit into your company's culture.

The first six months are critical. Given the time and expense of hiring and recruiting, there's simply too much at stake to throw a new employee into the pool to see if he or she will sink or swim.

Here's a quick overview with a progressive timeline of an ideal onboarding process:

DAY 1:

- New employee spends time with HR to complete the process to get on the payroll (he or she should have been told to bring a blank check to be voided to set up direct deposit)
- Is told what the pay frequency is (amazing that many companies forget this!)
- Gets copies of company policies, signs for receipt if needed, and company directory
- Gets building access keys or cards, gets briefed on security/ phone systems
- Is assigned a greeter buddy who takes new employee around the workplace and makes introductions, shows locations of bathrooms, lunch room, lockers if any, etc.
- Some companies organize a welcome lunch with a small group of employees
- Is shown a key part of the job the new employee will be doing

DAY 5:

- Direct supervisor has one-on-one sit-down with new employee to check how things are going.
- Any needs? What's going well? What's not going so well? How can anyone help?
- Time to introduce new employee to mentor/buddy.
- More senior employees are often asked to start producing weekly written reports (first impressions are often valuable and may lead to changes in procedures; it takes a fresh pair of eyes to question why things are done a certain way.)

DAY 30:

- Direct supervisor conducts interim one-month performance evaluation.
- Outlines strengths shown initially and prioritizes next steps, points out where help is available for any problem areas.
- Supervisor checks in with new employee's mentor to see if any issues have arisen through the mentoring channel that need to be addressed for successful completion of onboarding.
- Does new employee appear to be happy to have chosen new job?
- Does new employee feel challenged enough?

DAY 90:

- If all's going well, new employee is told about and invited to participate in — extracurricular activities like company —sponsored volunteer initiatives, company sports teams, bridge clubs, etc.
- Participation in extracurricular activities increase sense of belonging and job satisfaction.

DAY 180:

- If all is still going well, new employee is introduced to concept of “job enlargement.”
- Everyone in the department takes on some additional task, an administrative task for the department, a cross-training assignment, or other additional duty.
- People who put more of themselves into a job believe they get more out of it, too.
- Interim six-month performance evaluation listing achievements and next steps to be reached at one-year mark.

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