

Hiring the Best People and Keeping Them! (1,311 words)

If you have ever suffered through a bad hire, two decisions were made. First, not hiring the right person. Secondly, hiring the wrong person. To make sure that doesn't happen again, create a system, provide exceptional training, invest in employee retention, reward and recognize staff.

Create a System: There is a system for hiring the best people. Here are some ideas. Be sure to review equal employment opportunity guidelines. You want to be sure you have reviewed employment laws so you don't ask illegal or inappropriate questions. Your organization's reputation is on the line. Advertise in a way that provides a reasonable opportunity for everyone to be aware of the job opening.

To get a sense of the professional and personal qualities of the interviewee, take some time to really review application forms, resumes', and letters of recommendation. Consider an objective test that measures relevant bona fide occupational qualifications that has been validated by the equal employment opportunity commission.

When you meet face-to-face, try to give the impression that the interview is your day's top priority. Here are the ideal qualities of an interviewer: warm, thoughtful, sensitive, good listeners, empathetic, and show interest. So, greet the applicant by name and provide an orientation: there will be questions from you, information about position and organization, and questions from them. Inform them how long the interview will take.

During the interview be sure to include a competency component that reflects key skill and knowledge requirements. Be sure to include some sort of behavior-based activity during the interview similar to behavior on the job. Include some questions about critical incidents or hypothetical situations to inquire about how they would handle such work situations. This will assure you that they "can do" the job, "will do" the job, and "fit" the organization. Ask open-ended questions to get the conversation started and move to more specific questions, like a funnel. Be sure to have an interview guide so you ask the same questions in the same order to everyone. Now sell your organization, its reputation, and advancement opportunities. Clarify the next steps in your selection process and end the interview with a feeling of goodwill. As you can see, there is more to it than just fogging-up a mirror.

Provide Exceptional Training: The first few days or weeks at a new job can leave a person feeling alone, uncertain, and worthless. When it comes to hiring the best people and keeping them, think about better training for the first couple of months, then people will feel valued, included, and special right away.

Do something special before the employee arrives the first day to let them know you are expecting them and you are glad to have them join the team. A phone call, a letter, a banner at the entrance, or a sign that welcomes them by name, can have a lasting positive impact. Go through whatever paperwork or forms that need to be filled out. Tell them when they will get their first paycheck. Give them a tour of your entire facility and

introduce them to the other employees and mention how they support each other. Use the introductions as a way to compliment the current members of your staff. Provide an overview of the full training, what will happen today, this week, this month, and this year.

Engage other employees in the process. Have someone assigned in advance to be available when the new person has a question, when you don't happen to be available. Make sure you have several employees scheduled, ready and waiting in the wings to be lunch buddies for the next week or two. Prepare other employees to catch the new employee doing something right that first week to bolster their confidence.

Have someone in upper management call or stop by and welcome them to the organization that first week. Have a note delivered, or an email sent, the day they receive their first paycheck, again, welcoming them to the team. The first thirty days are critical to set the stage for the rest of their career life with you. Think about how to create a welcoming environment so the training sticks, and the employee sticks around, too.

Invest in Employee Retention: Some organizations suffer from high turnover. It's like a revolving door. The organization doesn't seem to be hiring the right people, for the right reasons, to do the right jobs, and employee retention is difficult. The most critical step is hiring the right person in the first place. Nothing worse than hiring the wrong person; and punishing them, by having them try to do the wrong job. That is miserable for everybody. So hire the right person in the first place.

Once you have hired someone, give recognition for every job that is well done. I would rather "overdo" than "underdo" appreciation and recognition. Communicate openly with your employees as often as possible, one-on-one, face-to-face, in staff meetings, responding to questions asked in the newsletters, scheduled quarterly evaluations, and at organization-wide events.

Continue to develop your own conceptual, interpersonal, and technical skills and be a role model for life-long learning. Be sure to support others' educational opportunities and advancement. Be the best listener in the organization. Consider others' ideas and follow-up and follow through with discussions and decisions. If you want to improve employee retention, then recognize and reward longevity, with anniversary cards, vacation time, pay increases, special events, newsletter articles, snazzy shirts, pins, plaques, picnics, or parking spots.

Project a positive leadership style and get to know the people you lead and learn what motivates and excites them. Maintain high standards of professionalism and expect only the best from your staff. Provide the tools they need to be successful. Then you can promote from within. And when you have done everything you can to help a struggling employee; kindly let them go, or you will lose the most productive people that have been picking up the slack. It is expensive to have a revolving door with employees leaving

shortly after they are hired. Cut costs by investing some time and money in these retention strategies and enjoy the long-term benefits of employee retention.

Thoughtful Rewards and Recognition: Many organizations believe a paperweight or a plaque is a rewards and recognition program. However, some rewards aren't very rewarding. And some recognition activities aren't very motivating. Keep in mind that every recognition action can have a value in reinforcing positive job performance. Some of the best recognition programs, recognize the best performers, in a number of areas, and is based on many measures, and several different performance dimensions.

Reward and recognition can be as simple as posting names and pictures on a bulletin board, in a newsletter, or announcing great work at weekly staff meetings. What makes recognition attractive as a reward is the feeling of accomplishment. It feels great when a person's peers and leaders are made aware of his or her outstanding performance. Recognition should be appropriate to the significance of the contribution or achievement. Sometimes there are symbolic awards, with low monetary value, like plaques and trophies that provide profound, heartfelt personal reward. Other times there are financial rewards that are valuable motivators.

Many organizations have a structured or systematic program recognizing milestones of longevity. Some organizations participate in award programs sponsored by local, state, or national associations. The key is to create a reward program that really is rewarding, and a recognition system that is motivating. It might be wise to ask your coworkers for some ideas. Rewards and recognition can go a long way in supporting retention and promoting outstanding performance. Think of unique and creative ways you can recognize your staff and the outstanding contributions they deliver to your organization.

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