

# Critical Touch Points of Recruitment

strategic HR, inc.



STRATEGIC HR, INC.

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# CRITICAL TOUCH POINTS OF RECRUITMENT

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Strategic HR, inc.* is an international management firm based in the Cincinnati, OH area assisting organizations in the service, manufacturing, and non-profit industries with strategic human resources management and organizational development projects since 1995. *Strategic HR, inc.* was the winner of the 2015 Woman Owned Business of the Year Award and 2013 Small Business of the Year Award by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce. We were also named the 2014 Emerging Small Business of the Year by the Clermont Chamber of Commerce. *Strategic HR, inc.* continues to be recognized and commended by clients for superior customer focused service and the ability to customize solutions to meet a client's needs.

Our core team's expertise encompasses a wide variety of human resource expertise. Our HR Wheel demonstrates the complexity of human resources and how we address the various needs of a business to help make them successful in every phase of human resource management – providing continued success for the organization and its stakeholders.



**Figure i** – strategic HR, inc.'s HR Wheel

# INTRODUCTION

Unless your business is entirely run by computers and robots, the people you hire are very critical to the success of your business, no matter what industry you are in. Regardless of the current conditions of the labor market, you need to select the right people for the job to ensure continued success.

Depending upon the size of your organization the task of recruitment may be the responsibility of Human Resources (if you have HR), the Office Manager, someone in finance, or even the manager that oversees the position you are looking to fill. The experience and knowledge of recruiting for these individuals may vary greatly. However, how well you understand the recruiting process has a significant impact on the outcome and the success of the hire.

For some, “recruiting” or “hiring” means purchasing an ad on one of the major job boards, or even running an ad in the newspaper, and hoping someone responds – a method we affectionately call “post and pray.” This means you are hoping you’ve written the perfect ad that will attract the perfect candidates and they will respond. As applicants respond, you review the resumes or applications, schedule interviews and make an offer. If you’re lucky one of the individuals you interview is an acceptable match for your needs.

Unfortunately, and especially depending upon the position and the industry, recruiting is rarely so cut and dried. All too often, you will find responses to your advertisement to be of the extreme – either too many candidates respond, and you find yourself having to go through 500 resumes of marginally relevant candidates, or not enough respond, and you either settle for a marginal candidate or the position goes unfilled.

The screening and interviewing process can be equally troublesome. Does the hiring manager or the team really know how to effectively screen and interview, or do they “rely on their gut”? While recruiting is more of an art than a science, and “gut” feelings may play a part in the final decision process, it is unwise to let such an important decision rest solely on instinct. There are a lot of best practices that can be employed to help you reach a more conclusive decision that is tangibly based. These best practices take into account the importance of consistency when recruiting which can keep you out of legal trouble – something frequently overlooked with hiring.

Additionally, one of the most significant challenges in recruiting is for the hiring team to make selecting a new employee a priority and to take the time to fully engage in the process. Timeliness in recruiting can mean landing a top candidate or losing them to the competition. While it may take weeks to find that perfect candidate, once found, you may only have days or even hours to act before the competition beats you to the punch. Plus, lack of engagement by the hiring team can alienate prospective employees creating a reputation that makes recruiting more difficult.

This book has been written to provide a framework for successful recruitment. Carefully following this process will enable you to have the best possible chance of making a great hire. Skipping important steps in the recruitment process risks the quality of your results and can impact how long you retain an employee. The cost and time to replace an employee far outweighs doing it right the first time.



# 1 GETTING STARTED

## 1.1 STRATEGY

So you know you need to hire? Start first by outlining and clearly understanding the strategy to avoid wasting time and money.

**Figure 1.1** – Recruitment Strategy

Once you determine the need to hire, it is crucial to outline and understand the **strategy** behind your hiring/recruiting process. Providing your team with a basic plan of how you intend to go about recruiting candidates can help prevent you and your team from running in circles; extending the recruiting cycle and creating excessive costs. Key questions to ask are:

### 1.1.1 WHAT IS THE POSITION YOU ARE FILLING? WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED FOR THIS ROLE? IS THERE AN UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION?

Knowing the “in’s and out’s” of the job details allows you to answer key questions ranging from where to post a job to how to go about selling or pitching the job to a candidate.

- What skills or qualities are “must haves”, “nice to haves” and “deal-breakers”?
- Think about any “gaps” that need to be filled – in abilities as well as skill level.
- Are there any specific programs, software, educational requirements or certifications needed?
- What about THIS job will appeal to the candidate? Why should they work for you versus your competitor?
- What is this job called in the world outside your company? (Be sure the title is easily found through keyword searches and is recognizable to others that don’t currently work at your company.)
- What are intangible requirements?

### 1.1.2 WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE, WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR IN A JOB OR AN EMPLOYER, AND WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

The strategies you might use to recruit professional or highly technical candidates or sales candidates would be entirely different than the strategy you'd use to hire the hourly worker or general labor.

- For the highly technical, you may find social media, niche job boards, professional organizations and old fashion networking the most successful.
- Individuals in sales or similar type roles tend to be highly networked, so you'll need to find a way to engage that network community.
- With general labor roles, online communication is often not convenient, so setting up a voice mail box for candidates to call and request an application may be just the ticket.

**Figure 1.2** – Target Audience

Put yourself in the candidates' shoes. Where would they look for a job? What would they want in a job and company? This information will help you determine your strategy for where you may find your ideal candidate, i.e. online, newspapers, outplacement centers, social media, and how you will sell the job to them? What does the job market look like for that sector? Is this profession in high demand? Are people in this role looking for new opportunities in abundance or will you have to pursue passive candidates through sourcing?

### 1.1.3 THINK LIKE YOUR APPLICANTS. WHAT INFLUENCES THEM? WHAT TURNS THEM OFF?

By knowing your candidates and placing yourself in their shoes, you can target your message to address their need for information. In addition to compensation and benefit information, decision making factors when considering a job change include: advancement opportunity, work/life balance, schedule flexibility, job challenges, work environment/culture, working independently, etc.

When comparing technical, sales, and general labor roles, do you think each one is influenced by the same things? Probably not.

- The technical candidate is likely to be looking for an organization on the leading edge of technology, development and advancement opportunities.
- A sales candidate may be more influenced by income potential, growth opportunity and the challenge associated with the position.
- Whereas the general laborer may be looking for a job with stability, appealing hours and competitive pay.

**Figure 1.3** – Influences

### 1.1.4 WIIFM: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? WHAT DO YOU PROVIDE CANDIDATES?

Recruiting is a two-way process: you want to find out if a candidate is a fit for the position, and the candidate wants to find out if your company and the role is a fit for them. This goes beyond the general list of employee benefits; it includes your employment brand. You need to define what sets your company apart from the rest and be able to communicate why someone would want to work for your company. This is tied to your mission, vision, values, goals and company culture and is not job specific, rather, it is company-wide. If there are specific perks or positives for a specific position, those should be highlighted too.

A company was trying to hire general laborers for a role that was dirty, outdoors in the cold, and consisted mainly of night time hours. When asked why someone would want to work for them, the company had no response. If you don't know the answer to the "why work for you" question, how can the candidate be expected to know?

You need to find out why someone WOULD want to work for you and develop your messaging around that – your Employment Brand. Sometimes it's helpful to ask your employees what they like about their job – maybe it's the teamwork, stable pay, the night shift premium, or some other reason. These are things you can share with candidates.

**Figure 1.4** – Everyone Has a Brand

## 1.2 EMPLOYMENT BRAND

Does your company have a defined employment brand? It should! No matter the size of your company or how frequently (or infrequently) you recruit, a well-defined employment brand is key to setting your company apart from your competition. Remember, recruiting your competition may not just include the companies you compete with in regards to products or services, but it also includes those you compete with for new employees. Not every company needs a Mechanical Engineer, but quite a few are looking for good Administrative Assistants and Accountants – and you compete with each and every one of them, regardless of industry or size, when it comes time to hire.

To define your employment brand, you need to reach deep into your organization and brand from the inside out. A brand cannot be created, rather it already exists and you just need to define it and communicate it throughout all recruiting channels, including:

- your website
- your email signature
- online job postings
- recruitment tools (interview questions)
- your career fair booth
- your application
- any other collateral materials that are used for recruiting.

**Figure 1.5** – Branding Impacts

An employment brand comprises your culture and your reputation as an employer – what makes you a great place to work. It’s what you “offer” your employees in addition to other tangible (and often expected) forms of compensation. Simply stated it’s a written description of the company culture.

An employment brand comprises your culture and your reputation as an employer – what makes you a great place to work.

**Figure 1.6** – What Is an Employment Brand?

Just like marketing (or branding) your product or services, your employment brand needs to be communicated consistently and accurately in order to serve as a true reflection of what it’s like to work for your company. It’s not just about the communication to your external audience that matters with an employment brand, but also how it’s incorporated into the experience of your current employees. Employment branding is not just a marketing tool for recruitment, but also an engagement and retention tool used to help employees to be more productive and engaged on the job.

### 1.2.1 STEP 1: DEFINING YOUR EVP

Your first, and biggest, hurdle is to define what your Employment Value Proposition (EVP) is – what you can “offer” as an employer. What makes you different from other employers? Why do employees want to work for your company? This step often starts with looking at the company’s mission or goals, as the employment brand is aligned with the corporate brand and encompasses the culture of the organization. You can’t arbitrarily create an employment brand – it is the state of the company as it currently exists – the values and beliefs that are exhibited and encouraged in your workplace.

You'll need to identify distinguishing characteristics about your organization that makes it the best place to work. The strongest brands have an EVP that communicates in actions and behaviors why you are the employer of choice and often evoke emotion and provide tangible benefits.

### **1.2.2 STEP 2: COMMUNICATING YOUR BRAND**

Once you define your EVP it's time to start communicating that to your audience. When communicating your employment brand, it is often helpful to pretend that you are marketing your company's product or service and apply those same marketing principles to your employment message. What is your marketing department doing to attract and retain customers? Apply those ideas to attracting and retaining your "customers" – your employees. The employment brand is not only communicated externally (as a recruitment or other marketing tool) but also internally to reinforce the desired behaviors in the organization and to help impact productivity and retention.

Which comes first...the chicken or the egg? To communicate your brand you need to define a message that will resonate with the appropriate audience. But you must know your audience in order to create an appropriate message. That said, you will often have numerous versions of your message targeted for different media channels – even though the underlying theme of the message is consistent and always refers back to the identified EVP.

### **1.2.3 DEFINE THE AUDIENCE**

Who is the message intended for? In the case of recruiting, it's the people that you hope to attract to your company and hire. Are you reaching out to candidates actively seeking employment? Or, do you want to attract those who may not be looking for a new job but are exactly what you need in your organization?

The focus of your employment brand communication is to create a message about your company culture and EVPs that a potential employee might enjoy – those things that make the job seeker want to work for you as an employer of choice. You can determine who your target audience is by looking at those in your current workforce and determining which ones are the "A" players. Then create a list of those characteristics they have that you want in your new employees, establish how to determine if a candidate has those characteristics and where those possible candidates might "hang out".

### 1.2.4 DEFINE THE MESSAGE

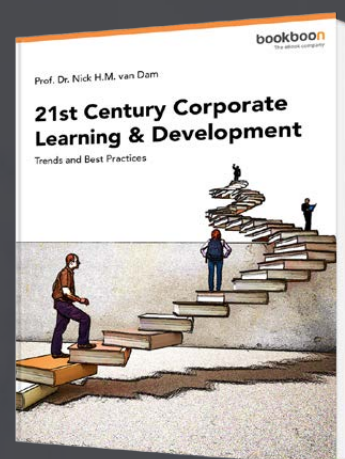
Your brand message needs to focus on the key issues that matter most to your audience – in the case of recruitment, the people you want to hire. But, remember, your communication of the EVPs must be articulate, honest and appealing to all. Don't create a brand that isn't you or you may find quick turnover soon after hiring an employee. Also, it is important to remember that your current employees are the best ambassadors for your brand. Make sure they understand (and believe in) the brand you are trying to communicate. When creating the different branding messages, it might be helpful to apply the Four D process used in Marketing to define your EVP. Make sure your message is:

- Desirable – something that your customers (your future employees) want
- Distinctive – show how your organization provides something that is different from your competitors (different from their current employment situation),
- Deliverable – what you offer potential employees must be accurate and truthful,
- Durable – the message should be one that is durable over time (not that it can't be tweaked and rewritten, but it must be a long standing attribute).

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While the employment brand is present on many levels, it is true that most of us learn about a brand from the organization's website. And as most job seekers are using the Internet for a large portion of their job search, it stands to reason that the company website is one of the strongest vehicles for the employment brand.

Searching the Internet will provide some really good examples of employment brands that you can refer to for examples.

- Target Corporation ([target.com](http://target.com)) has a simple, yet effective, message on their career page stating, "Don't just work somewhere, work somewhere you love." They express their commitment to employee satisfaction with, "Feeling happy, challenged and fulfilled at work is the essence of career well-being." They also showcase their commitment to community involvement and corporate social responsibility through opportunities for employees to volunteer in their local communities.
- Microsoft ([microsoft.com](http://microsoft.com)) is not only a behemoth in the IT industry; it also boasts a very strong and well respected employment brand. Their career page states, "Empower Your Future." Their search box doesn't just say, "search," but rather "search for awesome opportunities." To highlight their commitment to diversity, they have a link to "Explore our inclusive culture." They also share links to the latest technology and "insider" employee stories. Microsoft goes out of their way to permeate the job seeker's space.
- P&G ([us.pg.com](http://us.pg.com)) has a solid employment brand as well. Their career page challenges job seekers to ignite their potential and offers a link to a "Fit Finder Quiz" to determine where they could best apply their talents within the company. They also showcase building leaders from within, as well as their commitment to making a positive impact on communities and the environment.

Yes, these are multi-million dollar organizations with huge marketing budgets but the principles they use for their branding can be easily applied to even the smallest of employers on less grand budgets.

**Figure 1.7** – Sample Employment Brands

An employment brand isn't something that can be determined in an afternoon meeting. Neither is it a "program" that can be created and rolled out to the organization as a transformation initiative. The employment brand is a reflection of what your organization represents as a culture; it is deeply rooted and above all else is truthful.

On the outside, your employment brand is an expected employment experience, while internally it's how you treat your employees and a mirror image of your organizational culture. If after examination you find that your culture isn't creating the type of environment that creates a positive employment brand, then it may be time for a cultural assessment and transformation.

## 2 FINDING CANDIDATES

### 2.1 JOB POSTING

As mentioned earlier, finding candidates is a two prong process involving both posting jobs and sourcing for candidates. Creating the perfect job posting (i.e. advertisement) is where it all begins. You'll be using the job posting as your marketing piece to post the job and to share with passive candidates. The key will be making sure you've created a job posting that markets the job and the company successfully to that perfect candidate.

The first place to start is with an accurate job description. A job description defines the nitty gritty of the job – all the boring details that must be defined. If this is a new position, work on identifying the role of the job including a summary, list of key duties, and requirements (i.e. education and experience). This process will clarify what you are looking for in the perfect candidate, plus, it will ensure you are sharing the right details with the candidate throughout the entire process.

Because you have a job 'description', it doesn't mean you have a job 'posting'. The two tools are entirely different and serve a different purpose. The job description is an internal tool meant to provide details about the functions of the job. The job posting is the marketing tool that is meant to attract the attention of and sell to the perfect candidate.

It is important to note:

- a job description is an internal tool providing the details of the job
- a job posting is an external marketing tool to attract the perfect candidate.

**Figure 2.1** Job Description vs. Job Posting

But, nobody said creating a job posting for your open roles will be easy – it can be a challenge. The goal of the job advertisement is to attract a strong pool of candidates from which to choose from. To do this, you have to go beyond the basics of the job, beyond the job duties to be performed, and let potential candidates peak inside your organization and learn why they should want to work for YOU, and not your competition. There are a number of key elements to a great job posting.



Here's an example of a poor job posting:

### **Administrative Assistant**

ABC company is looking for an administrative assistant with 1 to 3 years administrative support, project management and event planning experience to work in sales department.

This position requires extensive sales tracking with priority software. Coordinate and communicate daily with Sales Managers on performance of accounts.

Able to prioritize is a MUST. Also requires good organization skills, multi-tasking and strong interpersonal skills.

Will need to type 60 WPM, have good MS Office skills with heavy emphasis on Excel. Bachelor's degree preferred.

Email resume as a MS Word attachment to [abccompany@email.com](mailto:abccompany@email.com) ONLY if you have 1 to 3 years current secretarial experience with good typing and Excel skills.

**Figure 2.2** Job Posting, Bad Version

Yes, this is an **actual** job posting copied from one of the major job boards – we only changed the company name and email. BORING! Here's an example of a much better job posting. Which one would you apply for?

### Seeking Administrative Assistant – ABC Company – City, OH

***Are you a Microsoft Office guru with a talent for creating spreadsheets? Do you pride yourself on getting everyone everywhere they need to be prepared, focused, and on time? Are you looking for that next great opportunity with a fabulous growing company? Look no further!***

ABC Company, a leading supplier of specialty chemicals, is looking for an experienced Administrative Assistant to join our sales team in City, Ohio. In this role, you will manage extensive sales tracking and coordinate and communicate account performance with sales managers on a daily basis. You will be the “air-traffic controller” of everything sales.

The ideal candidate will be a master at prioritizing and multitasking, and have:

- Bachelor’s degree preferred, and 1–3 years administrative support, project management and event planning experience
- Outstanding organizational skills
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with a customer service orientation
- Strong MS Office skills are a must, with a heavy emphasis on Excel and ability to type at least 60 wpm.

ABC Company is a small, yet fast growing, company that is committed to the continued success and development of our employees. We offer competitive pay and generous benefits, along with flexible schedules in a business casual environment.

If you meet the qualifications above and are looking for a place to call home where you can make a difference daily, apply online at [www.abccompanycareers.com](http://www.abccompanycareers.com) or email a current resume and salary requirements to [abccompany@email.com](mailto:abccompany@email.com).

Employer is EOE/M/F/D/V.

**Figure 2.3** Job Posting, Good Version

Isn't this much better? Can you get a feel for the culture of the organization? Does one job sound more enjoyable than the other? How you write your job ads directly influences the type of candidates you will attract and ultimately hire. If you are getting sub-par candidates, maybe you should review how you write your job postings.

In the world of recruitment there are a variety of definitions that may be unfamiliar to the casual recruiter. In a general sense a “candidate” is someone you are considering for a job – but that description can be broken down into more detail.

- Applicant/Candidate – someone who applies for your job opening
- Applicant/Candidate/Talent Pool – the group of applicants you have vying for your job opening
- Candidate – an applicant who is being seriously considered for the opening (has moved to the interview stage)
- Sourced Candidate (Lead) – a candidate that you find and reach out to for the job opening versus the candidate finding your job and applying
- Talent Pipeline – a group of applicants, potential candidates, who have expressed interest in working for your company even though a job opening that fits their skills doesn’t currently exist
- a candidate that is a final contender for the job and could receive a job offer
- Workforce – those employed by your organization

**Figure 2.4** Recruiting Definitions

Regardless of your style of writing, all job postings should include some basic elements.

### 2.1.1 BASIC ELEMENTS OF JOB POSTINGS

1. *Job Title* – Often the actual internal job title is NOT the job title that should be used to market the job to a wider audience. The title may be too long, confusing, not adequately describing the job or is not recognized in the industry. This can be tricky.

For example, using the title Sales Manager will most likely get you candidates interested in sales. But using Marketing Manager could not only attract sales candidates, but also market research, marketing communications and public relations candidates. Likewise the title Designer might get you the graphic designer you are looking for. But it might also get you resumes for Web Designers, CAD Designers, Interior Designers, Industrial Designers, or even Mechanical Designers. The time it will take to make sure the title is appropriate for the audience you want to connect with more than makes up for the time you will spend weeding through all those erroneous resumes you receive. Be sure to use a title that is recognizable by the target candidates you are seeking. Do a quick keyword search on popular job boards to help you in determining a title that will be easily found by your potential candidates.

2. *Duties and Requirements* – Using the job description of the job, list the most important responsibilities and requirements that need to be communicated upfront in the job posting. Keep it very focused on the most important aspects of the job. Remember, many job seekers are searching on their mobile devices, so using targeted bullet points makes for an easier read. However, you should apply the KISS (Keep It Short & Simple) approach. You will lose a candidate if you provide a lengthy laundry list – such as one with 25 bullet points. Later in the employment process, you can provide the candidate with a copy of the job description that includes all of those details.
3. *Sell the Candidates* – Not only are you evaluating applicants, but they are also evaluating you. As in the example above, you need to sell applicants on why they should work for you. Why is your company a great place to work? What sets you apart from other similar jobs or companies? How does applying for this job better the candidate’s career?
4. *Provide a ‘Hook’* – Find a way to grab the job seeker’s attention. In our example above, *Are you a Microsoft Office guru with a talent for creating spreadsheets?* is a little more interesting than “Must be able to use MS Office”. The key is to differentiate your job and company from all the other postings that are out there for similar jobs. Also notice that we referenced both “Microsoft Office” and “MS Office” in the job posting to increase our keyword search relevance.
5. *Make it Personal* – Speak directly to the candidate in the job ad. For example, “**You** will be the “air-traffic controller” of everything sales.” Using “you” in the description helps the candidate envision being in the role and relate more to the opportunity at hand.
6. *WIIFM/What’s in it for Me?* – Unfortunately most candidates don’t really care what you want – they want to know what they will get out of a job. What are the perks that will appeal to your candidates? Are they looking for competitive pay, excellent benefits and a 401K? Do you offer flexible work arrangements? Does this role come with the opportunity for advancement?

You may need to get creative to provide an opportunity that sells well, but you must be realistic in your description, too. If it is a dirty job, tell the candidate it is a dirty job. Some may say you don’t want to ‘scare off’ your candidates. But neither do you want to waste time and money courting a candidate with a great sounding job only to find out they aren’t interested once they learn the real details.

7. *Company Information* – You know who your company is but not everyone knows who you are, what you do, where you are located, and definitely not why you are a great place to work. Make sure you include some details about your company to help the candidates get to know your business and culture. This is a good place to include a link to your website to provide them with more information than you can put in a posting.

NOTE: There are times (i.e. when you are replacing someone still in the position) when you may decide you want to run your ad ‘blind’, meaning there is no mention of your company name in the job posting. One thing to keep in mind is that when you run a blind ad, your response rate may be lower. Candidates can be a little apprehensive to apply to a job that doesn’t list the company name. Some fear opportunities are “fake” and others don’t want to work with third-party recruiters, who sometimes run blind ads. If you post your ad blind, keep an eye on the results and consider re-posting it and including your company name if you didn’t get your desired response rate.

8. *How to Apply* – Make the application process as simple and convenient for the candidate as possible. Provide either a link to your website career page and/or an email address to submit a resume. Consider whether or not candidates for this role will even have a resume to send or if completing an application is more appropriate. Whatever the steps for applying, be sure they are easy and you list them so the candidate doesn’t get lost trying to apply for the job and give up altogether.

You’ll notice we did not mention salary or other compensation in this list. In most cases, the job posting is not the appropriate place to share compensation numbers. This is information you can share further into the interview process. The most you may want to mention in your job posting is a simple overview such as ‘competitive compensation and benefits including medical, dental, vision, disability’, etc. You may find some job posting sources require you to include compensation, specifically providing a number, when using their posting sites. In these cases, you’ll need to decide whether it’s worth it to use the job posting source or not.

There is one exception to consider when NOT including compensation. Is your compensation competitive? If you already know you are paying much lower than the market, perhaps you are a non-profit or small business, it may make sense to include a salary range to eliminate getting a large pool of candidates that are far outside what you can afford. Remember, when you include a salary range, applicants will often think they are deserving of the higher end of the range.

We mentioned earlier that this part of the process can be a challenge. This is a lot of information to gather and capture in an enticing manner. But, it is critical to put your marketing hat on and address all of these elements in your job posting. You might find it helpful to consider creating different versions of the job posting for different uses.

For example, you can post the full ad with the most detail on your website for job seekers who want more information. Then you can use a shorter summary of the job, with a limited number of characters, for use with your social media. Or you may decide to include only the highlights of an ad that you post (or send to a passive candidate) to avoid overwhelming your audience with too much detail. If you decide to use different versions of your posting, you can always point them to your website where the more detailed version resides.

Are you a Microsoft Office guru with a talent for creating spreadsheets? ABC Company is seeking an Administrative Assistant with 1–3 years administrative and project management experience. Visit [www.abccompanycareers.com](http://www.abccompanycareers.com) for more information.

**Figure 2.5** Sample Short Job Posting

### 2.1.2 WHERE TO POST

Once you've created your job posting, now what do you do with it? There are a number of factors to consider as you determine where to post your job or source for candidates including: company location, local labor market, level of position to be filled, time and budget constraints, pay and benefits, and the company image.

In the next section of this book, we will talk about using the job posting (ad) to source for candidates, but for now, you still need to get the word out by posting your job (advertising) and spreading the word about your opportunity. There are many resources you can use to accomplish this; some are free and some are fee-based. Depending on your budget and the job, you'll need to decide the best places to share your posting. Some places to consider include:

1. *Company Website and Social Media Sites* – The very first place you should post your job is on your website – preferably in an obvious location such as on a jobs or careers page.

You need to consider: Is your careers page clearly marked? How easy is it for a candidate to find it and drill down to the job opening and apply? You risk losing your applicant for every click it takes for a job seeker to view your job opening or to apply for the job. Make it easy!

Posting the job on your website on a dedicated career page is a huge step forward, but if you can take it a step further, be sure to create an employment branded career section. Employment branding includes compelling reasons for someone to work for you (remember – what’s in it for me) and may include employee testimonials, photos, and information about employment with your company such as a sampling of benefits.

**Joe Smith, Sales Rep**

“I love working for ABC Company because the work-life balance here is great. I work with a lot of creative and friendly people, and have the flexibility to spend plenty of time at home with my family was well.”

**Figure 2.6** Sample Employee Testimonial

Your company social media sites are also excellent places to market your job opportunities. Plus, this can allow your employees to easily share your job openings with their own social networks. For your social media posts, you will want to use the short version of your job ad that takes readers back to the full job posting located on your website. See Figure 2.5 as an example.

2. *Referrals* – Referrals are the number one source for obtaining top candidates in recruiting. Think about who you can share the job posting with that may refer someone to you. Possible sources to consider for referrals are current employees, past employees, customers, vendors, and even the delivery guy. Remember it’s not just about who you share the job posting with, but who they ultimately share the posting with as well.
3. *Unemployment Offices/Outplacement* – Unemployment offices and outplacement firms love to get your job opportunities. It helps them find employment for their “customers”, and best of all, they are free posting resources to you.
4. *Schools/Universities/Alumni* – Most colleges, universities, and even vocational and trade schools have a career center. They too love to find job opportunities for their “customers”, their current students and even their graduate alumni. Be sure to create relationships with the schools that fit your job needs and share your job opportunities with them. It’s another free resource for you!

5. *Networking* – Networking continues to be another top source for finding candidates. As with referrals, you share the posting with your network who then shares with those in their network. You might want to think of creative ways to help spread the word through networking. Is it possible to provide employees with a business card to give to any potential candidates they might meet? Be sure to take advantage of using social media outlets to spread the word among your network. This also makes it easy for those in your network to share the job as well.

Be sure to target the appropriate network you use for the job you are filling. You'll want to research the target audience of the different networking sources you use. If you are hiring high-school aged employees for your ice cream stand, use a social media or networking groups that targets teens. That same networking group might not be appropriate for an accounting job, however, your accounting network might have connections (via teenage children) that would be appropriate for sharing the ice cream job – be sure to give careful consideration to targeting your audience.



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6. *Professional Groups* – Nearly every profession has an association that individuals can join. One of the perks of belonging to a professional networking group is sharing job opportunities. Some of these groups offer the option to share your jobs at no cost. But, don't be surprised if there is a fee. While your response rate may be a little lower than a traditional job board, you will likely get higher quality candidates that more closely mirror your needs.
7. *Job Board* – Although job boards are losing some of their impact, they may still be a great tool to spread the word about your job opening quickly and get responses almost right away. If you don't have the time to wait on networking and using free solutions (which can take longer to generate interest), give a job board a test drive. Consider testing a few to see which ones are the best for you. Their effectiveness will vary depending on the type of job, industry and location. Be sure to inquire if the job board offers a free trial for your first job posting. This may be a great way to give it a test drive without negatively impacting your budget.

For example, Workopolis is a great online source for jobs in Canada, while we have seen that Indeed.com and Monster.com can be great sources throughout the United States for professional jobs. However, for particular regions of the U.S., other job boards or online recruiting/networking resources may prove to be more effective. Social media sources, such as LinkedIn, are a great resource for many types of jobs throughout the world. New job boards enter the market constantly, and things change, so stay on top of it.

**Figure 2.7** Job Boards

8. *Traditional Sources* – As you consider where your candidates might look for a job, don't forget some of the more traditional media sources. Do they listen to the radio? Do they read the newspaper? Don't eliminate these sources if it is where your candidates might "hang out." But, don't waste the time and money on a newspaper ad if your job is targeting candidates that may prefer reading their news online versus a printed newspaper. Other options to consider, depending on your budget, include billboard ads and industry/trade magazine ads.
9. *Fliers* – Depending on the job you are trying to fill, a cost effective advertising option may be to create a flier to post on bulletin boards and kiosks (i.e. grocery stores, coffee shops or libraries) or to share at networking events, etc.

10. *Job Fairs* – Many cities, professional associations and schools will sponsor job fairs. Sharing your job posting at these events is an excellent way to attract applicants, review applicants who bring in their resumes and spread the word about your opening. The cost of attending a job fair can vary widely and some can be expensive.

When deciding whether or not to participate in a job fair, be sure to check out what other companies will be there (is your competition there?), what types of candidates the event is being marketed to (is your target audience there?) and if the sponsoring group has any past participation and attendance records that you can review. If not offered, be sure to request a copy of the list of attendees so that you can follow up with candidates who you may not see in person.

You can also consider hosting an on-site job fair at your company location, depending on the type of position and number of openings you are looking to fill. An on-site job fair can be effective for positions, such as warehouse or customer service positions, where applicants can be quickly assessed after submitting an application and completing a brief interview.

One final note about posting the job, don't forget to share the opening with your current employees, who might be internal candidates. You are missing out on a free source of candidates by not letting your workforce know you are hiring – both in terms of referrals and potential transfers.

Be aware of the morale issues of not informing your current workforce. How would you feel if you saw the perfect job for you, in your own company, posted for the public but nobody approached you about it? No one knows your operations better than your current employees.

The last thing you want to do is lose a key employee because they felt overlooked. If there is anyone you know that may be interested, at least consider sharing the opening with them. If they are not a fit, be sure to let them know why. It's a good practice to consider posting your job internally for a short time before posting it externally to allow for internal applications. Let the employees know how to apply if they are interested. You should always do what you can to keep your employees in the know and feeling valued.

## 2.2 SOURCING CANDIDATES

As we mentioned earlier, the “post and pray” method alone is not the best recruiting strategy. With a job posting, the majority of candidates you will reach with your posting are “active” in their job search or currently unemployed and seeking employment. You want to include this pool of candidates but you don’t want to miss or overlook the passive candidates that are currently working and might ‘consider’ a job change for the right opportunity. You will need to ‘source’, or find, these candidates who may or may not have their resume on the ‘open market’.

The key to successful sourcing is to identify the keywords that will help you find your candidates; most sourcing is conducted online. When sourcing, it’s a good idea to try a different combination of keywords until you find the best matches. It may take a few tries to get the right combination of keywords for each source you use to search, so be patient. Once you find the right keywords, save the list so you have the magic combination for repeating the search on that source for future needs.

What do we mean by keywords?

These are words or short word combinations that focus on the location, title, and/or skills and requirements of your opening. Using more keywords “tightens” the search, but may knock out too many candidates. The less keywords you use gives you more candidates but you will have to weed out mismatches on your own. In building your search string, two things to keep in mind are:

1. Basic Boolean search commands (i.e., AND, OR, NOT) do apply as you build your search.
2. If you want to only search for an exact phrase, use quotation marks around it. For example, if you want to find a marketing manager and not pull results that only have one of those words, use “marketing manager” as your keyword.

Let’s say you are searching for the Administrative Assistant featured earlier. Your keywords might be:

- Administrative Assistant (title)
- Support Staff (title)
- Sales Support (title)
- MS Office (skill)
- Excel (skill)
- 60 WPM (skill)
- Project Management (skill)
- Event Planning (skill)
- Sales Tracking (skill)
- Bachelor’s Degree (requirement)

**Figure 2.8** Sourcing Keywords

## 2.2.1 SOURCING RESOURCES

There are an unlimited number of resources that you can tap into to help you find candidates. Most sourcing takes place online, so it stands to reason that our three favorite resources are web based.

1. *Internet* – The World Wide Web is a huge database just waiting for you to tap into – and it’s free. Using your favorite web browser, along with your identified keywords and Boolean search operators, you can use the Internet to dig up resumes, publications, presentations, announcements, directories, employee lists, etc. that will identify possible candidates for you to consider for your openings. Once you find a name and contact information, you can reach out to share your opportunity.
2. *Resume Banks* – Major job boards (i.e., Indeed, Monster, Careerbuilder, DICE) and even professional associations offer resume banks – most often at a cost to users. Candidates looking for jobs can upload their resume for prospective employers to review. All you have to do is to search the site using the keywords you have developed for your opening. Both a pro and a con, often these resumes stay in the system “forever”. It’s possible when searching a resume bank you will find a candidate that is no longer available or their resume may be out of date and missing relevant experience. But if you find a potential match, you can often reach out to obtain current information and to ascertain interest.
3. *Social Media* – Social Media is another evergrowing tool at your fingertips, and like the Internet, it’s a free resource. As social media applications are always being added and fall out of popularity, it will be important to stay on top of the latest and greatest ones to ensure you are connecting with the “hot” social tool of the moment. Keep in mind the characteristics of the candidate you ideally want to locate – that will help you decide which social media outlets to target. Like other resources, utilize your keyword list to search through subscribers to find a potential match.

One of the hottest professional social media tools today is LinkedIn. It’s an excellent sourcing solution depending on your audience. Some fields, such as general laborer, aren’t prolific users, while sales executives are present in droves. Remember to research where your target audience is likely to hang out and use that resource. LinkedIn, like many social media resources, will take some time to develop.

Since LinkedIn is a network based solution, your success is directly tied to the strength of your network and those you are networked with. You’ll need to build your network connection to gain access to the candidates you wish to connect with and join appropriate groups to better showcase your opportunity with interested parties. Whether you elect to use a fee-based subscription to LinkedIn or use what comes free, LinkedIn provides you access to millions of great candidates.

**Figure 2.9** LinkedIn

The biggest thing to remember about sourcing is it's all about networking. You are sharing your job opportunity with those who may be interested and those who may not. But it isn't always about the direct contact you make with an individual – it's also reaching those who will in turn share with their network.

### 2.1.2 SOURCING ENGAGEMENT

One of the toughest things about sourcing is getting passive candidates to respond. There is no magic bullet to surmount this problem, and it seems to be getting more difficult by the day. We all want the best candidates and there are a limited number of 'A' players out there that every company is vying for. These candidates often get so inundated with recruitment emails, phone calls and social media messages that they cannot respond to all the requests, or simply lose interest in responding.

Our suggested best practice is to reach out via email to allow minimal intrusion and provide the candidate with multiple options for responding as they see fit (assuming you provide email and phone contact information). Then we suggest a follow up with a phone call to let the potential candidate know you have sent the email so they can check their spam box if needed, and to make a more personal connection. Then send a second follow up email or phone call to reiterate your interest.

Other creative options can be employed, such as sending text messages, e-cards and even snail mail pieces to attract their attention and get them to notice your inquiry. You don't want to unnecessarily 'stalk' your potential candidate and annoy them to the point that you damage your employment brand and future relationships, but you want to make the point that you are sincerely interested.

The best way to cold contact a candidate – reaching out to a candidate that you have no prior interaction with – is to be genuine.

The most sought after candidates have probably already received multiple contacts; yours is just another one in the bunch. Whether you are leaving a voicemail or sending an email, you need to make your message stand out and attract the potential candidate's attention. DON'T send a template email that looks canned and general. One, it might go straight to spam, and two, it will likely be deleted immediately without being read. Instead, customize your email to the candidate- perhaps mention something specific about their background that caught your attention or might make them intrigued by your opportunity. Because many emails are read via mobile devices, be sure to keep your message succinct. Likewise, don't leave a voicemail that is too vague or sales-y. Be specific about who you are, how you found the individual and what you are contacting them about – your great job opportunity. It's okay to not go into a lot of detail about the job – leave them with a reason to call you and a desire to learn more. But don't be too mysterious or you will not get a return reply.

**Figure 2.10** Cold Calling

# 3 EVALUATING CANDIDATES – SCREENING

## 3.1 SCREENING RESUMES/PROFILES

Now that you're starting to see resumes/applications, it's time to review your candidates for the job. This is where you get to know whether or not a candidate will be a good fit for the job and the organization based on what they present on "paper".

Because you developed an updated job description, your solid understanding of the position will serve you well. Screening resumes or applications is no easy task, particularly if you receive hundreds of them. You owe it to your company and the applicants to properly review each submission. Knowing your "must-have's" and "nice-to-have's" is the key to narrowing down the list of applicants into a more manageable group to scrutinize.

As you review the candidates, you have a few options to help you with the evaluation process. At a basic level, you can consider the requirements and needs for the job and rate each candidate as A, B, or C. Your "A" candidates are the top ones you plan to take to the next step in the process. Your "B" candidates are the "maybes" (let's see how the candidates in the "A" list pan out and we may go back to them). Your "C" candidates are just not a fit for your needs. The "C" candidates can be immediately dispatched; go ahead and inform these candidates they are no longer being considered (see Figure 3.1 for a sample message below).

Another option for screening incoming candidates is to create objective criteria to help you rate the candidates. You can then either use a rating scale for each of these criteria or a simple 'yes' or 'no' designation. Some example criteria might be:

- Do they have the education or certification required?
- Do they have the minimum years of experience needed?
- Do they possess the XYZ skill that is a must have for the position?

Knowing what to look for as you review each resume will help. Consider the following:

- Minimum qualifications/relevant skills/technical skills
- Accuracy/neatness/typos/grammar
- Communication style/skills (writing, forming thoughts, clarity)
- Style/personality
- Quantified Results (i.e. for sales)

- Work History – dates/gaps
- Salary (cover letter)
- Accomplishments – increasing responsibility
- Career path

You are probably asking “how do I manage all of this information”? Many companies start out using current tools such as a spreadsheet and file folders. Depending on the volume of hiring you are doing, this may quickly become cumbersome. At that point, it is time to consider an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). There are many ATS solutions and they range in price from nominal to very expensive. You’ll want to think about what you need from an ATS and what other features are offered that might help you. Some typical features include:

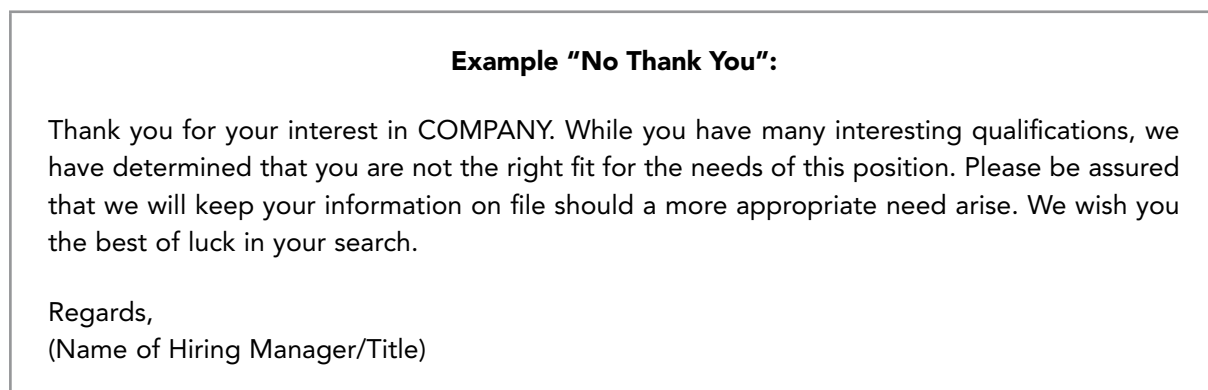
- Setting up each job opening
- Posting the job to your website from the ATS
- Importing every candidate that applies including their resume and matching them to the job
- Tracking where a candidate is in the recruitment process
- Creating templates to use to notify candidates through the process
- A method for corresponding with the candidates and tracking those communications

Using the tools you have, your key responsibility throughout the recruiting process will be ensuring the candidate has a great experience. Even if you don’t ultimately hire the candidate, they may become a client for you in the future or be a great resource to refer or NOT recommend you to other great candidates. Think about what would make the recruiting process great for you if you were a candidate. At a minimum, we recommend that you:

- Provide a response/thank you to each resume submittal.
- Give timely feedback and updates throughout the process
- Roll out the red carpet when the candidate is on site interviewing
- Do not treat the candidate as though they are “lucky you are considering them”
- Express your excitement throughout all communications whether email or calls

Remember, the candidate’s experience starts with the first connection – reading an ad or being contacted and runs through onboarding. Keep your sales and marketing hat on throughout the entire process.

Remember, it is important to build ambassadors for your company. Be sure you promptly inform candidates who are not a fit for the position. A sample notice might be:



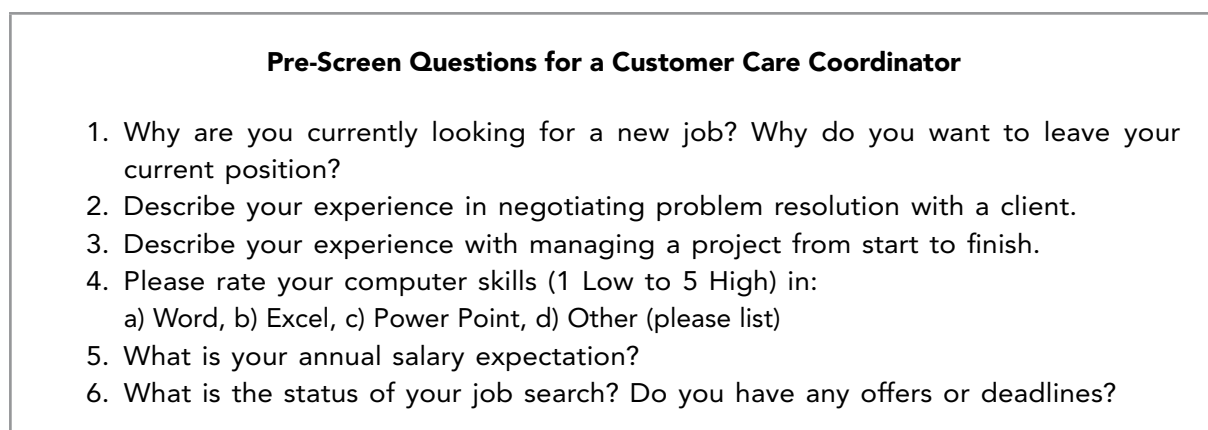
**Figure 3.1** Sample “No Thank You”

## 3.2 PRESCREENING

A pre-screen is a brief list of targeted questions sent after the resume/application is received, intended to clarify qualifications. This is a great opportunity to find out if candidates meet the “must have” requirements of the position, as well as an initial attempt to address salary requirements. Yes, it is another step in your process, but it is not time consuming and can immediately eliminate non-qualified candidates ultimately saving you time and money.

A pre-screen can be conducted by phone or in an email questionnaire. Since it is a pre-screener, it should be very brief, no more than about 5 key questions. Some possible questions to consider would be:

- What are your salary requirements?
- Explain your work history related to the job.
- Do you have experience with X?
- When are you available for an interview?



**Figure 3.2** Sample Pre-Screener



### 3.3 PHONE SCREENING

The phone screen, also known as a phone interview, is an opportunity to get to know whether or not a candidate will be a good fit for the job and the organization based on a one on one phone conversation, before you invest both your hiring manager's and the candidate's time in an in-person interview.

A phone screen can be anywhere from 15–60 minutes, and serves as a deeper discussion than the initial pre-screen. This is an opportunity to find out about the candidate's interest in the job, his/her qualifications skills and abilities. It's also a great way to gauge communication skills. Asking behavior-based questions that require the candidate to provide you with a specific situation, task or action taken and the resulting outcome will provide insight to whether they possess the required skills or experience.

The key is to ask questions that help you determine if the individual is a good enough fit to go to the next step of meeting in person. Your questions will vary from job to job but at a high level should at least include: work history, confirmation of qualifications, discussion on skills, salary, and availability. Don't just ask yes or no questions. Ask open ended questions that get the candidate sharing specific experiences. Use questions like:

- Tell me about a time when you...(i.e. had to deal with a challenging boss).
- Describe an example of...(i.e. your ability to work as a team player)

All questions on the pre-screen and phone screen should always relate back to the requirements for the job, e.g. leadership, communication, or other specific requirements. For example, instead of asking, "do you have someone to watch your kids while you work?" state the hours required, and ask the candidates if they are able to meet that requirement.

### Sample Phone Screen Template

#### Background/Why Position is of Interest (3–5 Questions)

1. If you could design your ideal job, what would it look like? (job/culture/manager)
2. Tell me about your current position. What do you like most and least about the position?
3. What skills/knowledge/abilities do you have that aren't evident from your resume?
4. Tell me about a manager/supervisor/team leader with whom you had the most effective relationship (why was it effective)?

#### Situational Questions/Describe Experiences (5–8 Questions)

5. Describe your project management skills. Please address experience with writing, reporting, tracking, and other supportive roles.
6. Give me an example of when your "plate" was full with various projects but you received another important assignment to add to your plate. How did you react and respond to this situation?
7. Reporting will be critical in this role whether it is a proposal, presentation, or client update. Describe your experience in this area.
8. There are times when we are placed under extreme pressure on the job. Tell me about a time when you were under such pressure and how you handled it.
9. Describe your communication skills...how do you communicate best with your internal customers and external customers?
10. Describe the most difficult conflict you have had with a customer (internal or external) or vendor. What did you do? What did the customer do? What were the results?

#### Summary (3–5 Questions)

11. What are your career goals – where do you hope to be in 3–5 years?
12. If we were to contact your most recent supervisor, what would he/she say about you regarding your attendance, quality of your work, attention to detail, etc.?
13. What are your salary requirements?

**Figure 3.3** Sample Phone Screen

Following a phone interview, it is effective for the person that conducted the phone interview to capture an evaluation of the phone interview including:

- Overall Impression of the Candidate
- Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Recommend for Interview (yes/no and why)

After phone interviewing multiple candidates, it will be hard to remember any specifics about each candidate. If you capture it immediately following the phone interview, it will help you as you move through the process. You can also consider conducting a short video interview using a tool, such as Skype. This video interview can then be sent to the hiring manager for review at his/her convenience.

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### 3.4 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

An employment application is a great tool to gather consistent information from each applicant. Depending on where your business resides, you may have very specific legal requirements about when in your recruitment process you can, should, or must have each individual complete an employment application. Plus, the regulations may also dictate what you can and cannot ask. Be sure to research your legal requirements to ensure your employment application is compliant. Some of the general information you could consider gathering on the employment application include:

1. Position Information:
  - Date of Application
  - Position Applying For
  - Salary Desired
  - Date Available
  - Type of Position (full-time, part-time, temporary)
  
2. Personal Information:
  - Full Name
  - Social Security Number
  - Address
  - Telephone Number
  - Best Time to Call
  
3. Education Information
  - High School – Name, Address, Degree, Major (if applicable)
  - College – Name, Address, Degree, Major
  - Graduate School – Name, Address, Degree, Major
  - Technical Certifications, Licenses, Registrations
  - Membership in Professional or Technical Associations
  
4. Military Service Record
  - Where
  - When
  - What

### 5. Employment History

- Dates of Employment
- Employer Name and Address
- Supervisor Name and Contact Information
- Job Title
- Ending Salary
- Duties
- Reason for Leaving

### 6. Professional References

- Name, Contact Information and Relationship with at Least 3 References

### 7. Certification and Authorization

- The legalities on what you have the candidate sign vary by your laws. At a minimum, you are asking the candidate to sign agreeing everything submitted is true.

You'll find this information helpful through the recruiting process as well as with on-boarding the hired candidate and adding him/her into your employee system.

Also, you will need to retain these records. At a minimum, we recommend you retain all the employment applications from candidates for one year upon completing the recruiting process for your open position. Check your legislative requirements to determine the exact time you are required by law to maintain these records.

## 4 SELECTING CANDIDATES

### 4.1 INTERVIEWING – GOALS

The interview allows you and your company to speak to a candidate in a face-to-face setting, probe further on his/her qualifications, observe his/her level of professionalism, and finally, observe communication skills.

How many face to face interviews you do with each candidate may vary depending on the job opening and your organization. For a management role, you may have multiple interviews with the candidate to allow different levels (reporting boss and direct reports) and different areas (people who will work with the person) engage with the candidate. For any job, you may want to consider at least two interviews to ensure you get a true perspective of a candidate and let the candidate really get to know you. The process is too time consuming and costly to repeat again simply because you didn't take enough time during the interview stage.

To ensure consistency and control of the interview, an interview guide should be created for each position. The guide will include the questions you plan to ask as well as provide you a way to evaluate the candidate after the interview. Some of the key pieces of information you will need to focus on gathering during the interview include:

- Communication Skills
- Qualifications
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Career Goals
- Self Awareness
- Motivation
- Work Ethic
- Preparation
- Professionalism/Poise
- Punctuality
- Cultural Fit

## 4.2 INTERVIEW TYPES

An interview is one of the best opportunities for the company (Human Resources and/or the Hiring Manager) to meet directly with a candidate to determine their fit for the company and the role, as well as sell the candidate on why he/she should want to work for you. Most often at this stage, you'll want to hold the interview face to face; however, with technology you could consider doing a video interview if the person isn't local.

A few types of interviews include:

- 1) *Telephone* – As mentioned earlier, it is much more cost effective and timely to do a telephone interview first to help verify qualifications and assess the candidate's interest.
- 2) *Structured* – A structured interview is a pre-established set of questions in a specific order. This is helpful if you have a lot of information to obtain and limited time or even more than one person doing the interviews for the same job to ensure consistency.
- 3) *Unstructured* – An unstructured interview is more of a “discussion” interview that is more free flowing. This can be hard to manage but is a good way to see how the candidate is going to handle an open environment with little structure.
- 4) *Behavior Based* – Conducting an interview that requires the candidate to answer questions based on previous experiences/behaviors can be very helpful to determine how they may perform in the future. In this type of an interview, the candidate is told to answer each question by describing a time he/she did what is being asked and what the result was.
- 5) *Panel* – A panel interview can be effective if you have a number of individuals that need to be involved in the interview but don't want to take an entire day for the interview. Most often, the panel members take turns asking questions. Keep in mind this can be a very stressful interview for a candidate, especially if they are not a strong extrovert.
- 6) *Stress* – Remember the “good cop” and “bad cop” stories you see in the movies? Well, this is an interview format much like that. You will have an interviewer that will intentionally produce stressful situations or questions to push the candidate and see how they respond under pressure.
- 7) *Task Oriented* – Some jobs provide a situation where a candidate could be asked to do a working interview where the candidate actually performs a task, responds to a case, or even prepares a presentation based on a scenario provided. For example, a labor job may be easiest to just hire the candidate for a few days to see how they handle the role. Or for a sales position, the candidate may have to present or sell you a product or service.

### 4.3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are different types of questions you could use in the interview. Sometimes the best is a combination of the types. These types could be applicable for both phone screen and face to face interviews:

- *Behavioral questions* – require a candidate to provide a specific example from past experience demonstrating a qualification.

For example, “Tell me about a time you were working on a project and things didn’t go as planned. How did you change your approach to still get the desired result?” This type of question helps to demonstrate the candidate’s problem-solving skills.

Behavioral based questions help determine if the candidate has the skill set by having them share a past experience that demonstrates that skill. Plus, it is harder for the candidate to provide a “candid” answer that they think you want to hear because they have to use an example.

- Tell me about one of your responsibilities in a previous position where you were responsible for keeping track of a lot of details. What were some of the specific things you did to make sure everything was correct and nothing was missed? (Attention to Detail)
- Describe a time when you were entirely responsible for a project. What were some of the obstacles that you ran into and how did you overcome them? What was the end result of the project? Was there anything that turned out differently than you expected? (Project Management)
- Describe to me a time in a previous position where you had a lot of competing priorities that all had to be done at the same time. How did you prioritize them and still make sure everything got done on time? (Multi-tasking)

**Figure 4.1** Sample Behavioral Questions

- *Traditional questions* – can require a candidate to demonstrate an understanding of a requirement, but typically do not require providing a specific answer. Be careful, candidates become very skilled at answering “traditional” questions from researching the best answers. So, they may answer what they know you want to hear.



- How do you manage projects?
- How are you at managing details?
- How are you at multi-tasking?

**Figure 4.2** Sample Traditional Questions

- *Situational questions* – present a specific scenario that the candidate has to respond with how to handle, based on knowledge and prior experience. Think of situations that individuals in this role have or could possibly encounter that are important for this candidate to be able to do to be successful on the job.

As the project manager, you will need to ensure your team works together collaboratively. However, we do have employees that don't get along. What would you do to help get your team working effectively together?

**Figure 4.3** Sample Situational Questions

- *Open ended questions* – in order to get a candidate to begin conversing with you, you may choose to ask open ended questions. These types of questions can give you flexibility but also can be hard to control. Some candidates may be very long winded and others may be very short. You'd be looking for something in between. You need to have a purpose behind this type of question and retain control. A sample question may be something as simple as: "what experience do you have with project management?"
- *Yes/No Questions* – Do you just need to know a definite answer? Yes and no questions can provide this response. However, they are VERY limiting. Many candidates will only answer with "Yes" or "No" and you'll need a good interviewer to know when to probe further. A sample question may be: "do you have experience with project management?"
- *Bizarre Questions* – you need a reason why you are asking these types of questions. You probably have been asked them in your career and just wondered why. Your candidates will do the same thing. So, don't just ask a bizarre question but have a purpose. Some sample questions are: If you could be an animal what would you be and why? If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you buy first? You may be asking these types of questions for creativity. Be sure there is a job related reason.

## 4.4 THE INTERVIEW

The interview is a critical part of the hiring process both for the company and the candidate. As such, it is important that it is handled the best possible way, and not just something you jump into just because the candidate is in the lobby.

### 4.4.1 PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Why waste your time and the candidate's asking questions that you should already know? Prior to an interview, be sure you've prepared yourself by:

- Reading the candidate's resume, cover letter and any other documentation.
- Reviewing the job description and job posting so you know the critical components of the job and what you need to find out about the candidate.
- Creating an interview guide or at minimum, a plan so you know what you are going to ask the candidate.
- Creating an inviting interview space. For example, do you have a chair for the candidate? Are confidential papers put away or out of the way? Is your phone turned off? Is your computer shut down? Be sure to remove any distractions.
- Preparing any necessary documents or handouts for the candidate, including an interview agenda, company materials, etc.

### 4.4.2 OPENING AND SETTING THE TONE

Making a great first impression on your candidate is critical. Remember, the candidate is interviewing you as much as you are interviewing him/her. As you kick off the interview, keep these points in mind:

- *Start on Time:* Be sure you start the interview on time. The last thing you want to do to that perfect candidate is make them wait 5, 10, 15, or 30 minutes for you. Remember, they too are taking time out of their schedule to meet you.
- *Build Rapport:* When you greet the candidate, set them at ease and establish rapport even with small talk. For example, you may have heard there was bad traffic on the way to the office or you both have something in common.
- *Introduce Yourself:* Before jumping in, be sure to share who you are and what your role is and set the stage for what to expect in the interview. Provide the candidate with any handouts that you've prepared for him/her (i.e., interview day agenda, company materials, etc.)

### 4.4.3 GATHERING INFORMATION AND PROBING

The bulk of your interview is going to be based on what type of interview you've decided to conduct (see section 4.2) and the questions you've identified that you need to ask (see section 4.3). Having this information prepared in advance and as a guide through the interviews will help to ensure that you obtain all the information you need and that you are consistent from one interview to the next.

### 4.4.4 CLOSING THE INTERVIEW AND SELLING

Remember, the candidate is evaluating you and the company too. Don't let your ego get the best of you. The top candidates have lots of options and yours isn't the only one. When you close the interview, give the candidate time to ask you questions. Also be sure to share the next steps in the process and thank the candidate for their time. You need to sell the candidate as much as the candidate needs to sell you.

### 4.4.5 DOCUMENTING AFTER THE INTERVIEW

You will not remember what you talked about with this candidate an hour from now, a day from now and definitely not a month or more from now, especially if you are interviewing multiple candidates. So, it is important for you to document the responses to questions and your overall impression. It is not recommended that you write on the resume or application. These are both considered "legal" documents. Plus, be sure your documentation is job related and does not include inappropriate notes (i.e., older female, pregnant, too many children, or black).

Until you get experienced at interviewing and even after you are, check to make sure you are doing the right things to ensure you are conducting successful interviews. Below are a few questions to ask yourself as a self-evaluation:

1. Did I prepare by reviewing the Job Description?
2. Did I understand the competencies required?
3. Did I review the application before the interview?
4. Did I ensure there were no interruptions?
5. Did I focus on interviewing instead of trying to do other things during the interview?
6. Did I have well prepared introductory remarks?
7. Did I try to make the candidate comfortable?
8. Did I communicate questions clearly?
9. Did I listen carefully to the candidate's answers?
10. Did I avoid talking too much?
11. Did I avoid making any snap judgments?

12. Did I look for hidden meanings in what was being said?
13. Was I encouraging to the candidate?
14. Did I paraphrase answers to check my understanding?
15. Did I work from general to specific subjects?
16. Did I smoothly transition from one subject to another?
17. Did I ask open-ended questions?
18. Did I know the promotional potential of the position?
19. Did I follow the interview plan?
20. Did I receive enough information to make a decision?



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# 5 VERIFYING CANDIDATES

## 5.1 ASSESSMENTS – PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Even if you have the best gut instinct, using other tools in the hiring process to verify if a candidate is truly a good fit is important. The more resources you use the better chance you have for making a good hiring decision. But, don't rely on one tool as the magic bullet.

It takes many tools in your recruitment process to make a good decision. Do not rely on one tool or piece of the puzzle as the ultimate deciding factor. For example, an assessment is one tool to consider in making your hiring decision, not a definitive answer.

**Figure 5.1** Many Tools Needed to Decide

Assessments and tests can be used in the recruitment process as a scientific method to evaluate the potential fit of a candidate for a particular job. They can also be used to assess current employee strengths and weaknesses for development. Keep in mind, an assessment is one tool to consider in making your hiring decision, not a definitive answer. Timing of the assessment can vary depending on the role and type of assessment. Some assessments may be best completed concurrently with the application/resume submission while others are valuable at some point during the actual interview process. It is, however, critical that an assessment is used consistently for all candidates at the same stage in the hiring process.

Different Types of Assessments:

- Personality (i.e. Myers Briggs Type Indicator, DiSC)
- Behavior Based
- Talent
- Physical Exams
- Cognitive
- Aptitude
- Emotional Intelligence
- Proficiency (Math, Language, Keyboarding, Computer Skills)

**Figure 5.2** Assessments

In each of the different types of assessments detailed in Figure 5.2, there are a number of tools and providers. You'll need to figure out what you hope to gain from the assessment to determine which one is the right tool for you. As you evaluate the various tools, review how the assessment is taken and what your output or report provides. Some assessments are simple paper and pencil tools, whereas many are now online providing instant results. The cost of assessments can range from free to \$500 or more per individual taking the assessment.

Be sure the assessment tool(s) you select are job related. We often get caught up in a tool that we “like” but it may not measure the true ability of the candidate to be successful. For example, an introverted individual actually can work in an extroverted environment. Don't get too entrenched in what you think a person's personality or behavior should be. Use the tools to evaluate and then probe further.

Again, the final word of caution as mentioned above, use the results of any assessment to better evaluate your candidate. If strengths or weaknesses are identified, investigate them further. Think about what additional questions you need to ask the candidate or the candidate's references based on the assessment results.

## 5.2 BACKGROUND AND REFERENCE CHECKS

Background and reference checks are valuable tools that provide information to the company prior to hiring the candidate. Generally, the last step or nearly the last step in the hiring process is when you should conduct the background and reference checks. However, it is crucial that the information obtained be considered appropriately. **Any information obtained in a background check or reference check must only be considered as it relates to the candidate's ability to perform the specific role for which they are being considered.**

A background check is a formal investigation often performed by a third party to provide you with a summary of the following candidate information if requested by your company:

- Employment history
- Education
- Driving record
- Criminal record
- Credit report – contains more personal information about a candidate, including but not limited to whether a candidate has filed for bankruptcy and how a candidate pays his/her bills (typically used for roles related to financial tasks)

Surprisingly, some companies will skip conducting a background check. The question is “why”? For a very nominal fee you can confirm if the candidate has anything in his/her background that could lead to a problem on the job. For example, we had a client hiring a Plant Manager, and they were not going to do a background check. When we confirmed education, we found out the candidate did NOT have the engineering degree he listed. Would that matter to you? What if you didn’t know the person was a registered sex offender and would be working alone with teenagers? Are you prepared for the liability you could face for not finding out?

The type of information you can discover in a background check is hard to predict. In many cases, it will be nothing. But, for the times that there is something, it is better to know and make an effective decision as it relates to the job.

Be sure you are aware of your country’s legal requirements around background checks. For example, in the United States, background checks are regulated by the Federal Trade Commission who in turn enforces the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). In which case, ***it is absolutely imperative that you and your company understand all requirements as outlined by the FCRA before conducting or seeking a third party to conduct a background check.*** Certain release forms and communications must take place between you and the candidate(s) to ensure that you are protected should a candidate take legal action.

Remember the background check is a tool in your process, but is not the deciding factor. If something is discovered in the background check, find out more before making a rash decision. How long ago did it occur? What were the circumstances? Is there more to the story than the report shares? Will the identified problem impact the individual on the job?

A reference check is conducted after the candidate is requested to furnish a list of professional references that can be leveraged in the recruiting process. Essentially, a reference check probes the authenticity of the information provided by the candidate (work history, dates, and responsibilities). It also allows the employer a chance to probe the character of a candidate. Some candidates will try to give you “personal” references. For a job, you only need or want professional references; individuals that can share their experience of working with the candidate.

Examples of questions to ask during a reference check:

- How long have you known the candidate and what dates did you work with the candidate?
- In what context do you know the candidate – professional or personal?
- Can you describe for me the candidate's overall performance as it pertains to attendance, leadership, and initiative/drive?
- In your opinion, is the candidate a good fit for this position? Why or why not?
- Is the candidate eligible for rehire?

**Figure 5.3** Sample Reference Check Questions

Although many people tend to feel that a candidate will only provide references that will speak favorably about the candidate, you may find that asking very specific questions can actually help you to learn more about them. Are you uncertain if the candidate is strong enough in a skill set? Ask the reference to tell you what the candidate did on the job with them related to that skill set. Also, be sure to pay attention to the non-verbals the reference provides. Does the reference hesitate or struggle with an answer? Would the reference rehire the candidate if given the opportunity? If not, why not?

## 5.4 DRUG SCREENING

For employers who promote drug-free work environments, the use of a drug screen is an important recruiting tool to ensure a safe, secure and productive workplace. Conducting a pre-employment drug screen is recommended prior to making an offer of employment, and is typically outsourced to third parties who specialize in collection and analysis of biological samples.



## 6 MAKING THE OFFER – HIRING

### 6.1 EMPLOYMENT OFFER

Congratulations! You've found a candidate to fill your company's open position – he/she has passed every step in the recruiting process. Now you're ready to make an offer.

Offers can be presented in a variety of ways. We would recommend you start with the verbal offer. It is your opportunity to share exciting news with the candidate. Share your excitement with the candidate through the way you present the offer.

A verbal offer would be given over the phone. This is a great way to expedite the offer process, particularly if a candidate is speaking with multiple companies. Be sure you:

- Communicate all details of the offer to the employee: salary, vacation, and benefits (medical, retirement or other) at a high level.
- Be prepared to answer the question, “Is this offer negotiable?”
- Follow up with a written offer to solidify the verbal offer

A written offer is the formal and legally binding method of presenting an offer. It contains all pertinent information relating to the employment offer, as well as all of the necessary and legally binding clauses that disclose the terms (including an “at-will” statement if appropriate to your location) of the offer to the employee. A written offer should contain the effective start date, pay rate (typically stated as an hourly rate or a monthly salary), pay frequency, vacation days, paid time off/sick day allowances, benefits (including but not limited to medical, dental, vision, and retirement), and finally, a signature line allowing the candidate to formally accept the offer in writing.

If the hiring manager can make the verbal offer and sign the written offer, it will be received best from the candidate. However, if time is limited, Human Resources can make the verbal offer. Be sure you excite the candidate about the company and the offer. Also, avoid emailing the offer if you can. If you've made it verbally, the candidate has the details they need. Mailing a written offer will arrive in just a day or two anyway. Plus you can make the written offer exciting and personal by sending more than a piece of paper (i.e. company logo wear, flower, signed card from the staff).

## 6.2 ON-BOARDING

Now that your company and the candidate have agreed upon and accepted the terms of the employment offer, it is time to bring your new employee on-board! This is probably one of the most important steps of the entire recruiting process. You've spent a lot of time and money up to this point and you don't want to have to recruit for this position again, do you? So, let's onboard right:

### 6.2.1 MAKE ON-BOARDING MEMORABLE

Do you remember your first day on the job? Were you nervous? Excited? Did you have any hesitation about whether or not you made the right decision? Let the new employee know how excited the company is to have them be part of the team. For example, we had one client that created a poster board for the new employee with their picture. Using the picture helped other employees know who the person is. Plus, the employees would write welcome messages to the new employee on the poster. What can you do to make your new hire's first day memorable and positive?

### 6.2.2

Your new employee is excited to start his/her new position. Make the most of that energy. Combine the mundane tasks of paperwork (See Figure 6.1 for sample checklist) and going over procedures with getting to know new co-workers, shadowing, touring the facility, etc. Make them feel part of the team and let them know that you're also excited to have them on-board.

Below is a potential list of items to discuss with the new employee and obtain for their employee file. Again, refer to the legislative requirements of your location to be sure you are in compliance.

- Application for Employment/Resume
- Offer Letter
- Job Description
- I-9 (United States Employment Eligibility Form)
- Health Insurance Enrollment Forms
- Medical and Emergency Contact Form
- Employee Handbook Acknowledgement
- Required Tax Forms (i.e., in the United States this is a W-4 Form)
- Payroll Information Direct Deposit Authorization

**Figure 6.1** Sample On-Boarding Checklist

### 6.2.3 BE READY!

The last thing you want to happen is for the new hire to show up the first day and nobody is ready for them. To ensure that everything is ready for the new hire, you should:

- Have all necessary training materials at your disposal.
- Ensure the new-hire's desk, phone, computer and printer are set up and ready for use on day 1 – don't try to organize everything the day of the new-hire's start date
- Consider assigning a mentor/buddy to the new hire. This may be an employee that can be there to show the new hire the ropes of the company.

### 6.2.4 PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING

- On-boarding training during the first week of employment seems obvious, but you also need to consider refresher or “next step” training sessions throughout the first year of employment.
- It typically takes an employee a full year to reach productivity levels expected of him/her in his/her role – get your new hires there faster with frequent and useful training!

### 6.2.5 SET MILESTONES AND GOALS; THEN RECONNECT

- Ensure that you have defined success to your new-hire – what does it look like to you and your organization? What are the key milestones your employee can strive to achieve in the next 30, 60, and 90 days? Where should he/she be after 6 months on the job?
- Reconnect on a frequent basis for progress checks and provide solid feedback to your new hire.

To ensure success, create an on-boarding plan that may include:

- Pre-Arrival Paperwork (See Figure 6.2)
- Plans for Day One
  - Paperwork
  - Company Overview
  - Enrollment
  - Policies
  - Key Staff
  - Tour
  - Staff Introductions
- Subsequent plans for Week One, Month One, Quarter One.

**Figure 6.2** On-boarding Plan

Yes, this is a lot of work to do but you don't want to repeat the recruiting process again. So, let's get your new employee on-board as positively as you can. This will help:

- Improve Engagement
- Reduce Turnover
- Create a Positive First Impression
- Productivity
- Return on Investment

### 6.3 CLOSURE – NOTIFICATIONS

Your recruiting job is almost done. Don't forget to follow-up with all of the candidates involved in the process. Because so many companies don't do this, your company will stand out. Plus, it will help if you decide to consider those candidates again in the future.

Position Filled Message to Candidates Example:

Thank you for applying for the \*\*\* position with \*\*\* Company. As you might imagine, we received an overwhelming number of applications for this opening. Unfortunately, this position has been filled and you are no longer under consideration.

We appreciate the time you invested in applying and will keep your resume on file for future reference should your skills and experience match any future hiring needs.

Best of luck with your search and thank you for contacting us about employment!

**Figure 6.3** Sample Position Filled Message

### 6.4 REFLECTION

Congratulations, you've filled your job! But, you aren't done yet. You need to reflect on how this process worked and what you can learn from it.

To begin with, it will be important for you to measure your cost to hire as part of this evaluation process. The cost to hire varies from organization to organization and depends on the factors an organization chooses to include. Nevertheless, the general rule of thumb is that the cost to replace an employee is 50%–150% of his/her annual salary. Depending on the number of individuals the organization needs to hire/replace, this cost could have a big impact on the bottom line.

Since there isn't a universal formula for calculating recruitment costs, you will need to determine what costs you want to track and attribute to your hiring. There are many direct and indirect costs that you may consider including in the calculation. Below are some of the basic costs that you need to consider:

#### 1) Sourcing

- Paid ads
- Resume banks

#### 2) Screening

- How much time and expense does your administrative staff expend to open, respond, and route resumes to the hiring team? The best way to do this is to figure out an average cost per resume and track how many resumes you receive for each job to be able to calculate the administrative cost per job.
- How much time does your hiring team/recruiter spend screening through resumes? This may also be an average cost per resume received for the job.
- If your organization conducts preliminary phone interviews, how many were conducted and how much time was spent by the recruiter to prepare, conduct, summarize and communicate the results of those interviews?
- Do you have an automated applicant tracking system? This is an indirect cost that you may choose to pro-rate across your hires for a specific period of time, somewhat like depreciating a new computer on your taxes.

#### 3) Interviewing

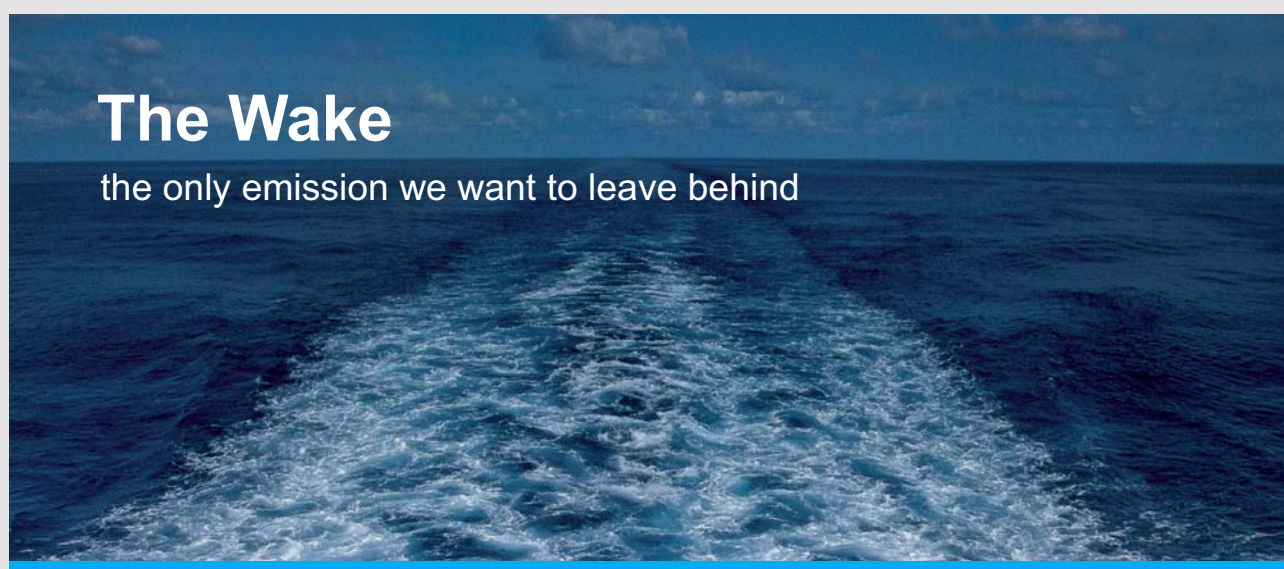
- o Did your hiring team or the interviewee incur any travel expenses that were reimbursed by the company?
- o How much time was spent scheduling interviews?
- o How many staff members were involved in the interviews? How long per interview? How many interviews? What is the average cost of the interviewers' time?

#### 4) Hiring

- o How much time and what was the cost for follow-up with candidates during negotiations and to notify those that were not hired?
- o What was the cost of referral fees from a recruiting agency or an employee referral?
- o What costs will the company be paying for the new hire to relocate? Some costs may include moving company, airplane tickets, hotel accommodations, temporary housing, house hunting visits, assistance with selling/buying a home, or spouse/dependent assistance.

- o What was the cost for background investigations and/or reference checks? Drug screens? Assessments?
- o If there was a signing bonus, how much was it?
- o What costs does the company typically incur to bring someone onboard – orientation, mentor, benefits enrollment, computers, cell phones, uniforms, etc.?

Not every hire will incur all of these expenses. Also, your organization may choose not to track some of these costs, but this list is a starting point to help you identify your recruitment costs per hire. The key is to identify what recruitment costs you are going to track and then consistently track them for all your hires to have an internal comparison from one hire to the next.



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However, just like when you hire someone, you do not make your decision based on one criteria but rather many combined tools. Measuring the success of your recruitment cannot rest solely on the cost. There are other measures you need to consider as you evaluate the overall success of your recruiting and what you can do better next time.

1. How long did it take to fill the position from start to hire date? What could you have done to reduce the time to hire and not have impacted the quality of the hire?
2. What was the impact on productivity while the position was left vacant? This is a very difficult calculation to conduct especially depending on the position. However, it does have an impact on the hiring manager and the organization as a whole. If it can't be quantified, at least keep it in mind.
3. How satisfied was the hiring manager/organization with the hire? This assessment can be done following the hiring but should be repeated again 3–6 months after the employee has been on the job to get a real sense of how successful the hire was.

The key to any analysis is to reflect on what worked and what could have been done better or differently the next time. So, do not just track the costs and set them aside. But rather, be sure you review your cost analysis and each of these other measures to identify what you can capitalize on next time and what you need to do differently. For example, what was the success of your recruitment sources? Which ones provided the most candidates and more importantly the quality candidates? Which ones did not? This type of evaluation will help you to streamline your next hire, improve the quality, and reduce costs.

Employees are the “human” resources of the organization. Each employee is critical to the success of the company or you wouldn't hire him/her. Be sure you are hiring the best in the most efficient time frame while maintaining your costs.

We often get busy moving on after recruiting and don't take time to capture this information. Do it now while it is fresh on your mind and document so you can refer back to it for the next hire.

Again, congratulations on filling your job!