

Human Resources Recommendations

Recruiting and Interviewing

As our economy improves, hiring or re-hiring employees with the right skills requires extra effort from managers and HR personnel. The employee workforce propels company growth and creativity. It is also the greatest expense for companies (payroll, insurance, benefits, etc.) Proper hiring or rehire of former employees is critical to a company's success.

Did you know that a "bad hire" could cost you up to five times salary in direct and hidden costs and could negatively affect the productivity of other employees? Further, bad matches at hiring could cost 30 to 250 times salary in resulting turnover. It is only wise to consider the following ideas and tips during the recruiting and interviewing process.

First, a full job description that identifies all essential or important job duties gives a solid base for both recruiting and interviewing of candidates. The job description should include all job functions, physical job demands, and required skills. A good job description also could help you develop probing questions and reveal a candidate's qualifications and abilities for the job. A quality job description could improve the quality of your candidate pool, increase efficiency and lower the cost of hiring by helping candidates self-screen based on relevant requirements.

Your company probably could look for its next employee by using some or all of the following recruiting approaches:

- Internal sources (promotion or transfer from within a company)
- Internet job sites (e.g., CareerBuilder, JobFinder, Monster, Net Temps, Indeed)
- Social networks (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace)
- Campus recruiting
- Job fairs
- Newspaper ads
- Professional placement agencies
- Competitors
- Word of mouth (including employee referrals)

Regardless of how formal or informal your hiring process, it is critical you follow current regulatory standards. Some companies could be at risk for fines and possible litigation due to improper and discriminatory hiring practices. This could happen during recruiting, advertising, postings on social networks, or during the interview. Recruit and hire with governmental regulations in mind.

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Human Resources Recommendations

Recruiting and Interviewing (Continued)

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) bans recruitment and interviewing practices that discriminate or limit employment opportunities based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. In fact, the EEOC reports the hiring process is responsible for more fines than any other area of employment practice. With new tools for recruitment such as social networks it is important to follow proper hiring procedures. The potential problems of using social media include incorrect identification of the candidate and possible manipulation of information by other parties. Through use of social media, information could be discovered that could include disclosure of disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or other characteristics that may not be used to discriminate in hiring decisions.

To help prevent problems, consider outsourcing social media searches as part of a background investigation, or assigning the task to someone who is not involved in the hiring decision. Other common causes of prohibited discrimination in recruiting include, lack of access for disabled applicants, improper newspaper ads, or word of mouth recruiting in a non-diverse workforce. Employers could also run the risk of lawsuits for negligent hiring if they fail to use reasonable care in investigating an applicant's background, and as a result, hire an individual who harms others in the workplace and where indications of behavioral issues were in a person's background. Interviews need to be appropriately conducted.

An interview may be the first chance for the manager and applicant to meet face-to-face and form an impression. While interviewing prospective candidates, it is up to the manager's business judgment to determine who should be hired or promoted.

With that said, however, an applicant's race, gender, age, family status or other factors should not affect his or her chances. This means an organization cannot treat people differently in the interviewing, hiring or promotion process. Employers also cannot use criteria that have a discriminatory effect without being able to prove that the criteria are job-related. A good way for a company both to achieve business goals and to comply with the federal or state laws is to hire and promote based on job-related ability. The best way to ensure this is to measure candidates using uniform and consistently applied qualification and selection standards based on the essential functions of the job.

Tips for hiring managers:

- Can I demonstrate a job-related reason for asking the question?
- Will the answer to my question, if used in selecting the candidate, adversely affect and/or screen out minorities or members of one sex?
- Ask the same questions of ALL candidates, to the extent possible.
- Establish written objective criteria for evaluating candidates and apply those criteria consistently to all candidates.
- Remember that the employment policies and practices for your company need to be administered without unlawful regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, veteran status, or age.

Employers often use tests and other selection procedures to screen applicants for hire. Just make sure they do not violate the federal anti-discrimination laws if they disproportionately exclude people in a particular protected group.

Lastly, obtaining personal information (e.g., financial, health and personal history) of job applicants is a part of the recruiting and hiring process. Employment law and regulation restricts the use and disclosure of certain information collected to screen or test applicants. Be sure your policies protect this information from disclosure to others.

Following these procedures could prevent costly hiring mistakes.