



Executive Recruiting  
Outplacement  
Human Resource Consulting  
Professional Assessments  
Training and Development

## **Attracting (and Retaining) Qualified Candidates**

Numerous articles have been dedicated to the impending labor shortage, war for talent and retirement of baby boomers. Although we've all read the stories and heard the commentary probably more times than we can count, it doesn't diminish the importance of the issue and its potential effect on your organization.

Many companies believe that when they're ready to hire, candidates will be available. Candidates there may be, but will they have the skills you're looking for? If there really is a talent shortage, what can businesses do to increase the chance of success in hiring, and keeping these elusive stars?

### **Job Requirements**

What should the position do for your company? What skills, knowledge and abilities are required? Creating and keeping an up-to-date job description will assist in crafting targeted advertisements and interviews. Gain input from supervisors, department colleagues and incumbents in maintaining the job description to account for any changes in the role or additional responsibilities. Applicants should be well aware of the obligations of the role and how they can best fill those before walking through your door.

### **Recruiting Strategy**

Where and how you market your position can greatly affect the number and caliber of applicants you receive. Using the internet to post openings has become one of the most popular ways to market, but may also create an overwhelming amount of interest from both serious candidates and those that are "just looking." A well-rounded recruiting strategy has a far reaching, but targeted focus. Networking with clients, colleagues and the professional community may uncover your ideal employee, often individuals that are currently employed and may not be looking. Utilizing experienced, outside recruiters will also open the door to skilled candidates and add expertise throughout the process.

### **Interviews**

Not only are you interviewing candidates, they are interviewing you. Creating a behavioral interview that utilizes the job description and position expectations will ensure that you're gaining relevant information. Interview questions and plans should be prepared beforehand and not a "shoot from the hip" approach. Not only can poor planning make you look disorganized and incompetent, it can also increase your chances of asking inappropriate and possibly illegal questions. Administering assessments can also provide additional objective information in the selection process.

### **Offers**

You've finally found the perfect candidate, but how do you get him/her to sign on? Knowledgeable, experienced individuals, especially those in high demand professions, often have bargaining power when it comes to accepting an offer. When is the last time you've researched the market for competitive compensation? Are you basing pay decisions on the previous candidate or what this role can do for your company? Before going into any negotiation, know what your company can afford in salary and how flexible you can be regarding benefits and other perks. Losing a candidate at this stage in the game is costly in both time and resources, and forces you back to square one.

### **On-boarding**

Forgetting about a new hire once they're on-board can be an expensive mistake. Take the time to plan an orientation period to acclimate the new hire to colleagues, clients and the company overall. This often takes several weeks or months, but goes far in ensuring a smooth transition. Assigning a mentor or partner to introduce colleagues and processes can also assist on both the professional and social sides of the workplace.

Not long ago, with what seemed to be a deep pool of qualified candidates, organizations expected a dog and pony show from applicants to prove their worthiness. Although much of the burden is still on candidates' shoulders, it is now in the organization's hands to develop a hiring strategy that will entice these highly skilled, qualified individuals in the door. With plenty of demand and a possible lack of supply, preparing now may reduce or eliminate the shrinking pains of the future labor market.