

Hiring Is Only Step #1: Next, Up the Odds of Success

If you are involved in hiring, you understand the process all too well. First, too much time passes by as we put up with mediocre performance. Or we dither on filling a position that needs filling, probably because we want to be sure we have the sales before we invest in the infrastructure. Or we just don't like pawing through a pile of resumes, the interviewing and the "time drain."

Then, finally, we jump – gotta hire that perfect person ASAP! Which means, all too often, we are in a rush. There is much written about not being in a hurry when hiring; in this chapter, the idea is to slow down and make productive the on-boarding process after the hiring has been completed. Let's go through effective on-boarding, step-by-step.

The Reality for the New Employee

Think of what the new employee experiences on his or her first day. It is much like what you or I might experience if we walked into a unfamiliar shopping mall. We have no idea where we are and no idea where the stores are located which would like to visit. So what do we do? We look for the "big board" with the mall map (the mall directory) and the "X" which marks our location. Once we are oriented, we can then become productive.

The Reality for the Company

Once we commit to hiring a new employee, regardless of the reason, we want the new employee to create a positive result. The better informed the new employee, the more likely we are to get a positive result. The better we orient a new employee, the more likely we are to get a positive result. And certainly the more welcome a new employee feels, and the more comfortable he or she is to be part of the new company, the more likely a positive result.

What Should the Company Do To Create A Win For Both Parties?

Helping an employee to feel welcome and getting them up and running quickly is not rocket science. Step #1 is the company developing a clear, understandable on-boarding plan (OBP) which includes current employees who will assist in on-boarding the new hire.

As part of the plan, but unique for each new hire, a "buddy" should be appointed to coach the new hire on important aspects of the company and help the employee to meet and integrate with other employees. A well-matched buddy will coach the new employee on company traditions, unspoken rules and how employees really get things done in the firm.

The basic on-boarding plan for the first week and the following several weeks should to be sent to the new employee before he or she reports for work. It also makes sense for the supervisor, buddy and key teammates to meet and review the on-boarding plan and their respective responsibilities, before the new employee reports for work.

On The Arrival of the New Employee

On the day that a new employee arrives for work, the receptionist should be briefed and expecting the new hire. As soon as the new employee arrives, his or her supervisor and buddy should be notified and both should meet the new hire in the reception area, then escort the new hire to his or her office or work area. Thus begins the new employee's first day.

First Day Activities

The new employee's office or workspace should be fully set up, including an operating computer, telephone and any other equipment required for the position. This allows the new hire an opportunity to access information on the company through web and "Read Me" information, but is a demonstration that the company is ready for the new employee and wants the new employee to be part of the team.

Once settled, the new employee's buddy and someone from the IT department should brief the new hire on the equipment, processes, systems and procedures. If there is anything else key to success for the new employee, that should be covered in this session.

Once the appropriate information relating to the new employee's office and operations has been shared, the buddy should take the new employee on an office tour. After the office tour has been completed, it is usually appropriate for the new employee to spend time with his or her supervisor, to meet with HR and fill out any necessary forms, and to meet (better yet, have lunch with) teammates and those with whom the new employee will be working closely.

The First Week

During the first week, the new employee should meet with other employees with whom he and or she will be working closely, including key members of the staff and heads of departments with whom the new employee must relate. The first week should also include or end with a meeting with the new employee's supervisor, in which the supervisor describes the organization and how it works, reviews the new employee's job description, establishes 30-, 90- and 180- day expectations, and clarifies what is required for success on the job.

The Next 90 Days

Typically the new hire will begin to feel comfortable at about 45 days, and at roughly the 90 day mark the team will have accepted the new employee. In terms of effectively integrating the new employee, he or she should be given short and long-term tasks that help to familiarize the new employee with the organization and how it works, and allow the new employee to demonstrate their capabilities to the rest of the team.

The new employee's performance could be reviewed frequently, with an emphasis on the positive and with the objective of assisting the employee who become increasingly effective. As part of this process, both the new employee's superior and those with whom the new employee works should maintain an "open door" policy and a welcoming approach.

Summary

Set the new employee up for success. Plan their first day, first week and first 90 days. Share with them the plan, before they arrive, so they know what to expect. Make them feel welcome, and educate them on what they need to know and do to be successful. You hired them to perform and add value – a little time up-front and early-on will pay big dividends!

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