



When You Are Hiring Less, You Must Hire the Best

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The era of unlimited hiring that ended about 60 months ago when the world economy tumbled to near Depression depths has seemingly passed. We have returned to the days when employers are now believing new business demand will keep pushing onward and upward, and are adding employees without much consideration of how those new hires will affect the top or the bottom lines. The biggest concern may be having a body in a customer service seat, out in a sales territory or available to process new patient admissions. Qualifications and compatibility appear once again to be taking a backseat to the perceived urgency to fill a position, and to a belief that “good people” are still the hardest thing to find. “Is the candidate breathing?” seems to be the screen most people are required to pass through to get hired in most search and selection processes.

When the economy slowed, excess payroll was shaken out and eliminated, and most employers adapted their staffing needs to more demanding standards. The general description became short and concise: get more production with fewer people.

The diminished tolerance for new hires that do not quite fit in or miss baseline standards of productivity is driving many Human Resource Departments and Recruiters to implement a greater use of outside support in making these critical personnel decisions. And despite the fact that there are many qualified and talented people in the marketplace, the ever-increasing need to get more profit from fewer and fewer people justifies the commitment to hire not just good, but best fit applicants. General standards historically show that hiring just on first blush impression and resume review produces a successful, long-term hiring outcome around 20% of the time, a less-than- acceptable rate in the new economy. With the proper implementation of reference checks, technical competence testing, job match for general skills and compatibility matches for Behavioral Styles and Work Place Motivators, that paltry success rate can be raised between three and four times. In any ROI (Return On Investment) calculation, those numbers make sense.

As in most things that produce higher levels of success, the key to successful hiring is a consistent process that operates the same way no matter what the time of year or how high a demand there is for that new body. Engaging a recruiting and selection firm in a full-time manner keeps the funnel full of high quality candidates, builds bench strength for the entire organization and allows opportunities for an All-Star to wander onto your roster. Trusting fate and hope to find these A players when you need one most is nothing short of unrealistic and perhaps even irresponsible.

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