

## 5 Biggest Mistakes in Hiring

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The most valuable resources a company has is its people. Employees can either make or break a company. In fact, a maladjusted employee can set the direction and tone of your organization and lead it on the path to disaster. On the other hand hiring an employee with a positive attitude can create the opposite effect. Fortunately, poor employee selection can be avoided by following certain guidelines.

### Employee Selection

About a couple of months ago you hired Mary as a new employee. On her first day she was an hour late for work. The second day she called in sick. The third day she didn't show up at all. And, after putting up with her for the past week, you wish she would stay home more often.

What went wrong?

Several things actually went wrong. In fact, when you interviewed her for the position you probably made some or all of the five most common mistakes in employee selection:

1. Poor interview preparation
2. Inadequate questioning techniques
3. Asking leading questions
4. Hiring based on first impressions
5. Not checking references

### **\* Poor interview preparation**

Don't interview even one applicant until you determine the job specifications first. What does the position require and what does the applicant absolutely have to have? If we don't do our homework, we many times get fooled by an impressive resume or a quick smile. To combat this problem develop a job description and follow these suggestions

*\* Have the current staff develop their own job descriptions -This will help you review where the strengths, weaknesses and gaps are in the position. By analyzing this it will help you determine what type of person is best to fill the new position.*

*\* Make a list of the “must haves” and the “nice to haves”- You can’t have it all, but you must have an idea of what characteristics and traits are essential for the position.*

*\* Know what depth of experience you need - Set a range, but look at people from outside the range. For example someone with ten years’ experience doing the same job for the last ten years may not be as good as someone with five years of diverse experience.*

*\* Know the personality traits essential for each position - Different jobs require different personality types. Listed below are 17 key personality traits. When interviewing candidates ask questions and look for answers based on the traits that are relevant to you.*

*Drive*

*Motivation*

*Communication*

*Getting along with others*

*Energy*

*Determination*

*Confidence*

*Reliability*

*Integrity*

*Dedication*

*Pride*

*Analytical skills*

*Listening skills*

*Efficiency*

*Economy oriented*

*Knows procedures*

*Profit oriented*

### **\* Inadequate questioning techniques**

Asking “nice to know” questions instead of specific questions relevant to the job is a mistake many managers make. Questions such as, What is the applicants work history? How often has the applicant changed jobs? Why?, Has the applicant progressed in past positions?, Is the applicants knowledge, skills and abilities appropriate to the job?, and can you supply us with references? These are but a few of the questions you need to ask. In addition to the types of questions you ask, how

you ask them is just as important. There are five interview techniques:

*Open ended questions - Ask these to get more than just a yes or no answer. For example, "How have your past job experiences prepared you directly or indirectly, for this position?"*

*Closed ended questions - Closed ended questions are useful for getting specific answers. For example: "Do you mind working overtime?"*

*Leading questions - Leading questions imply what the answer should be. For example, "I'm sure you wouldn't mind working late would you?"*

*Sensitive questions - These allow you to explore delicate issues in a nonthreatening way. For example, "Could you please tell me why you left your job with the xyz company to seek employment elsewhere?"*

*Hypothetical questions - These questions help you explore the applicant's problem-solving and decision-skills. Gear your hypothetical questions to the job you are filling.*

### **\* Asking Leading Questions**

Leading interviewees to a response can be a major problem. For example, "This position involves a great deal of stress. How well do you handle stress?" The applicants immediately know that in order to answer this question right they should say they deal with stress positively.

Another mistake that can be easily corrected involves telling the applicant about the job and its requirements before you start the interview. Wait until all the questions are answered before tipping off the candidates.

### **\* Hiring based on first impressions**

One of the biggest mistakes interviewers make is basing hiring decisions on stereotyping and first impressions. Some people are naturally vivacious and charming. You like them immediately. The trouble is they may not be good workers. Other job candidates remind us of ourselves and since we tend to like people like ourselves our judgments can sometimes get blurred. And still other candidates are poised and self-confident. They present themselves well while others are nervous and ill at ease. The nervous people are not necessarily bad choices, it may just be the situation. The key is you must be objective and never prejudge.

**\* Not checking references**

I'm still amazed how many people don't check references. Make sure you check the references the person gives you and then ask for others. Review Google and other search engines and look at online services to that do quick and inexpensive background checks.

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