

Five Good Ideas about Hiring the Right Person
Suzie Addison-Toor, Engage Consulting
Wednesday, February 20, 2008 - 12:00 to 2:00 PM

1. Understand your organizational culture

This is about the values of your organization. It is about your organization's attitudes towards training and staff development. It is about how people communicate. How does this relate to hiring? The people you hire should share the values of your organization – so it is important that you are clear on those values before you start the hiring process.

2. Engage your staff team in the hiring process

This is in itself a good indicator that your organization is inclusive and is serious about empowering and training its staff. Internally, involving staff at all levels of the organization – from the front line to senior managers – is a way of building loyalty, providing training to emerging talent within your organization and fostering a spirit of cooperation. What it says to candidates is that your organization listens to its staff, collaborates with them and respects their input.

3. Build the right tools

You need to know the job requirements and then build the right hiring tools around them. This involves gathering information on what the job will entail. One way of doing this is sharing the job description with your staff to see if they think it is accurate. This is especially pertinent amongst staff employed in similar roles or who will be reporting to the new member of staff. Why not ask them what they think the candidate's top five attributes should be? This will give you a lot of useful information on the competencies and behavioural traits needed to successfully fill the role, as well as on gaps within your organization. At the end of this process you take the information and use it to build your tools in order to effectively screen candidates, choose interview questions and check references.

4. Pay attention to the 'gaps' and your 'gut'

It is unlikely that you will find the perfect candidate so pay attention to where her/his gaps lie. There are two types – those around values and those around skills. A gap in values may indicate that the candidate is not a good fit, and will not be happy in the culture of your organization. A skills gap may mean that you need to offer training to the candidate in question so that they can fill the role fully. In terms of your 'gut', it is important to trust your intuition and emotional responses to people. Remember though, to try to marry this with the objective data gathered on candidates using your recruitment tools.

5. Always be on the lookout for top talent

The non-profit talent pool is shrinking as baby-boomers retire and competition becomes fiercer, particularly for senior positions. So try to encourage everyone in your organization to always be on the lookout for talent. If you, or one of your colleagues, meets some-one who they think would be an ideal person for your team, make sure you take a card and keep their information in a 'talent database' or something similar. Then, make sure you keep them engaged with your organization (e.g. sending them the newsletter, inviting them to events). If an opening does come later you should contact them and encourage them to apply.