



October 2011 Newsletter

10 Steps to Reduce Your Chances of A Bad Hire

Happy October! At the end of last month I had the pleasure of speaking at a small business forum with Julie Hakman, CEO of American Checked. The topic was how to hire the right person and steps you can take to ensure the “right” hire. At Part-Time Pros and Tulsa Med Pros our mission is “to provide the perfect match between clients’ needs, desires and wants with associates knowledge, skills and abilities.” One of the most dreaded things I can hear from a client or professional is “This is not the right fit.” We do everything in our power to ensure the best match but we can’t bat 1000. While I certainly understand the pain a vacancy can cause, particularly one in a highly visible role, quick or loose hiring practices can often times backfire.

The cost of hiring a weak employee in many cases exceeds the cost of leaving the position vacant until you can get a top-quality hire. My recruiters rarely cave to pressure and find ways to council managers about their decision; however, when you don’t outsource you need to rely on your own managers to not rush the process. Following are 10 simple steps you can take, or pass along to your managers, to ensure you step back, slow down and hire the right person.

1. **Have a consistent hiring process.** It is imperative that each applicant go through the same process. Having a consistent process ensures that you are following your HR policies and procedures which protects the company legally. It will also ensure that your managers will be able to compare apples to apples if they know that each applicant has gone through the same testing and application process.
2. **Have a well written job description.** A well written job description allows you to screen the right people based on your needs. It allows you to clearly communicate your expectations to applicants. And, it will give you a document to refer to after a hire to track and measure performance. A well written job description truly allows you to have quality performance reviews.
3. **Have consistent interviewing/screening questions.** If each manager asks different questions there is no way to determine who the better fit is. Consistent interview questions are the only way to compare applicants for one particular job. If you want my favorite questions you can e-mail me. I am happy to share them.
4. **Have standards and qualifications.** You always start with a large stack of resumes. Having some company standards and qualifications that allow you to weed out the first stack will save you a lot of time and headache. It will also ensure that you are looking at only candidates who will fit your company culture.
5. **Check References.** So many times, hiring managers feel like references given will be glowing. We have found that over 30% of the time references are not good ones. Don’t be lazy, pick up the phone or send out the e-mail and check references.
6. **Check Social Media.** Every employee is a potential sales person for your company. The way a person acts, and behaves outside of work is a reflection of their personality. Make sure someone’s



Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter etc. are not reflecting a person who would be a complete cultural clash for your organization. I am all for diversity, but you will know who will clash with the organization and who won't.

7. **Call previous employers.** Just because someone or some company is not listed as a reference does not mean you cannot call past employers. It is important to verify that what a person puts on his/her resume is the truth and the only way to check this is by testing it.
8. **Run a background check and drug screen.** Your company may or may not have an HR policy on background checks and drug screens. If you do it for one, do it for all.
9. **Have a well written offer letter.** Make sure it adequately lays out their compensation, benefits, hours, at-will employment, etc. Going through this step will ensure that you are clearly laying out your expectations of the employee and also clearly laying out what you can and cannot do. Outside of birthdays, I hate surprises. Having a thorough offer letter reduces any chance of surprises and both sides will be happier because of it.
10. **Be ready for them on their first day.** A new hire's first day sets the tone for their performance. When you are excited about someone starting you get ready for them. If you are not getting ready for them are you really that excited about them starting, and are they the right person? Have their computer ready, e-mail set up, basic office supplies on their desk, phone ready, and be prepared to spend time going over company mission, vision and values on their first day. If possible, it is also a great idea to take a new employee to lunch to welcome them. This will help spring board a strong positive start so that if they are the right hire they will want to stay because they feel appreciated and feel as if they are now a part of a team.