

# Hiring to Last

**Hiring the right person for the job is crucial in a small business. Here's what you need to know before, during and after the job interview.**



BY CHASON HECHT

**W**ould you hire all of your employees again? Unfortunately, a lot of business owners would say no. Hiring right the first time is one of your most important tasks, and the last thing you want to do is hire the wrong person — or hire the right one who winds up leaving for a better job.

**SAMPLE**

## Step One: Getting Started

To begin the hiring process, you need to ask yourself two basic questions: "What does someone need to be successful in this position?" and "What type of person do I work well with?" The first question becomes the job description, with clearly defined knowledge, skills and abilities. The second question is how you are going to distinguish everyone who thinks they have the answer to the first. Ensuring that they fit with your company, especially a small firm with a distinct culture, is just as important as their background. For example, someone who works for a large firm may have the experience required, but they also need to be able to thrive with fewer resources and handle more tasks, or they will not last.

## Step Two: Attracting Qualified People

If your budget prevents you from using executive search firms (which ask for 20% to 25% of the first year's salary), employee referrals are usually the best source of candidates (except retail positions, where collusion can increase theft). Otherwise, you are left with job boards, and not all job boards were created equal. When deciding where to post a job, it is

important to remember that larger job boards tend to attract entry-level and mid-career candidates. Niche websites and trade associations attract specialized and more senior-level applicants.

## Step Three: Screening the Résumé

When screening résumés, employers tend to "sort people out," but résumés should be used to sort people in. Unless they have the job skills and experience you need, they should not be contacted. Many managers rush to fill a vacant position. It is important to move quickly to look for candidates, but do not hire out of desperation. If you do, you may turn around in three months and wonder why you hired this person.

## Step Four: Conduct a Phone Interview First

Once you are armed with at least 10 résumés, it is time to start phone screening. Remember that many candidates exaggerate or withhold details on résumés, so calling is the most powerful antidote you have. It will save you much effort, before you describe the position, and before they come in for an interview, to ask:

- What is the perfect job for you right now?
- What don't you want to be doing?
- Why are you looking for a job? What don't you like about where you are?
- What do you do well? What are you not as good at?
- What is the salary range you need to be comfortable?

If you see a fit, begin to connect their future to your compa-

ny. Give them a sentence about the firm and where you are headed. Then provide details about the position, responsibilities, sample projects and resources, and ask, "Does this sound like something you're looking for?" Their reply is the first indicator of how long they will last and may help you avoid someone who is "shopping around."

#### Step Five: Make the Interview Count

Now that you know whether to invest in an interview, estimate one hour per candidate; also, for all but entry-level jobs, at least one other person should interview them as well. When you do, stick to the 90/10 rule: The interviewee talks 90% of the time and you speak the other 10%. Anyone can fit canned answers into your questions. So do not hesitate to say, "Tell me more about that" and "Would you do that differently today?" to delve deeper into the lessons they've learned.

Unlike mutual funds, one of the best indicators of future performance is past performance. This is why behavioral interviews, which reflect on past work experience, are so insightful. It is harder for a candidate to embellish decisions and details that already occurred. Situational interviews show how a candidate will deal with situations in the future. Both are very effective. The behavioral version would be "Give me an example of how you motivated a team to overcome a challenge." The situational version is "How would you motivate a team of five to overcome a challenge?" Link the hurdles this position will face to three

### TO THE POINT

Use employee referrals

Conduct a phone interview first and ask open-ended questions such as "What is the perfect job for you right now?" before bringing someone in for a face-to-face interview

During the in-person interview, remember the 90/10 rule: The interviewee talks 90% of the time, you speak the other 10%.

Go with your gut, and if the person seems right for the job, be sure to ask, "If we make you an offer, is there anything that would keep you from accepting?"

or four of these kinds of questions.

#### Step Six: Making the Offer

At some point in the interview process, your gut will tell you, this one is a contender. Now describe what this opportunity provides. Tell the candidate why people like working there and why they stay, and paint an accurate picture of the work so they have realistic expectations. To find out where you stand, ask the candidate, "If we do make you an offer, is there anything that would keep you from accepting?" Unaccepted offers delay the process and potentially cause other good people to be lost. If they bring something up, you can address it. If they are confident that they want this position, you have a green light.

Good employees need to know that this is the place for them. The best employees are not the ones who want a job but those who want this one. There

are extra steps involved in hiring right. Discuss the candidate's pros and cons with people you trust; because retention starts with recruiting, making sure they fit is worth it. It will take three to six weeks, but imagine how much time you will save never having to rehire anyone again. □

*Chason Hecht is an innovator, speaker and advocate for employee retention strategies. He is also a business owner and founder of Retensa, a leading provider of workforce solutions, which offers similar articles at [www.retensa.com](http://www.retensa.com).*

# SAMPLE

## Don't take a chance with your business.

**Take Action. Read THE REPORT. (It's free.)**

**TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY:**

Complete the **FREE SUBSCRIPTION CERTIFICATE** bound into this issue and just drop it in the mail!

Or subscribe **FREE** online at:

[www.nyreport.com/subscribe](http://www.nyreport.com/subscribe)

**THE NEW YORK ENTERPRISE  
REPORT**®