

Effective Hiring (Abstract)

by Charles A. Handler, Ph.D.

Anyone who has ever had to make a hiring decision will tell you that it can be an extremely difficult exercise. Why is it that something that is so essential to an organization's effective functioning – and seemingly “business as usual” - so difficult?

To answer this question, we need to first take a look at some of the things that can make hiring frustrating. These include:

- **High applicant volume**
High applicant volume can also be extremely frustrating if the right tools aren't available to help separate the best talent from the merely adequate and the unqualified.
- **Shortcomings of the resume**
The resume is an omnipresent and seemingly essential part of the hiring process; frustratingly enough, it is also an extremely unreliable recruiting tool
- **Time crunch**
The reason that a hiring requisition is opened in the first place is because there is work to be done! The longer this work remains unattended to, the further away the company is from meeting its strategic goals and objectives
- **Vague requirements**
One of the most common issues limiting the effectiveness of hiring decisions is a lack of a clear understanding of what skills, knowledge, experience, and competencies are required to perform the job in question
- **Narrow focus**
It is often difficult to convince those managing new hires to focus beyond the immediate technical need to ensure that an applicant has other values and traits that are essential to job performance.
- **Lack of standardization**
Effective hiring requires a standard process that is followed by all persons making hiring decisions.
- **Legal compliance**
Leaders default to their own well-worn hiring process - and sacrifice enhancements to

the hiring process - because they incorrectly assume that they will assume greater legal risk.

- **Technological Challenges**

Technology is an important but sometimes daunting challenge when it comes to creating a complete hiring process.

All of the issues above make talent acquisition stressful because each is a factor that can lead to errors in judgment that increase the likelihood of making a bad hire (or at least reduce the likelihood of an above-average hire.)

While there are many steps to most hiring processes (i.e., resume evaluation, recruiter/HR interview, hiring manager interview, background check, and often many more), the very first steps taken in the hiring process are perhaps the most critical. For instance, if you are not able to remove unqualified applicants early in the process, the possibility of less desirable employees getting hired is greatly increased.

So, while best practices for hiring can involve a wide range of activities and processes, effective hiring starts with attention to a few key guidelines. These include:

- **Understanding and documenting job performance requirements**

Doing this right requires taking the time to understand the various qualities that add up to success for the job in question: experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, etc.

- **Using scientifically-based measurement**

Effective hiring requires the use of science-based objective tools and less use of poorly conceived, faddish, and unreliable methods, to provide accurate information about candidates.

- **Creating a standardized process**

Effective hiring requires that all applicant evaluations follow the same steps and that all applicants are judged using the same data. Moreover, legal compliance is enhanced by treating all applicants in a similar manner.

- **Supplying decision makers with accurate data**

All of the things discussed so far should be oriented towards providing decision makers with the ability to systematically make decisions based on quality, job related information.

THE SOLUTION

Building a good hiring process requires that one understand the correct time to use various predictors within the process. In most cases, this involves configuring predictors around key decision points relative to the time and expense required. No matter what specific predictors are included, a good hiring process manages the flow of information in a manner that provides the following:

- **Recruitment branding and attractive web presence**
Good hiring starts with a web presence that provides potential applicants with a strong message about an organization and the benefits and challenges that it provides.
- **A good candidate experience**
It is critical that each step in the hiring process be clearly communicated to applicants and that the various steps in the hiring process are carefully explained. It is also important to be sensitive of how much time is asked of candidates during the hiring process and to match the level of time asked of a candidate to their advancement through the hiring process.
- **Screening out**
Front loading the hiring process with predictors that can quickly identify unqualified applicants allows hiring personnel to spend their time screening in those applicants who have the best chance of being successful.
- **Screening in**
In-depth assessments are more costly and time consuming than less intensive predictors but they provide relevant, high quality data about candidates that have already been identified as having the best potential for success.
- **Process based approach**
A benefit of configuring predictors in a manner that allows them to be deployed above is the ability to create an efficient process that collects relevant, quality data at each step.

Overall, the benefits of quality-based hiring are available to any organization; it is up to the leadership of companies both small and large to facilitate the implementation of these tools and reap the benefits of more talented employees