

What is the Worst Thing that can happen if you Recruit the Wrong Person?*

As an employer, you might ask yourself this question? I often ask it as an 'opener' to the recruitment and selection workshops I run. Hiring the wrong person can lead to a wide range of problems and costs for an organisation, not least the cost of recruiting someone who does not perform and /or leaves early.

Do you know how much your recruitment is costing? A recent survey in the UK and Ireland by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development estimated that the average cost of recruiting an individual ranged from £3,000 to £8,500. Hiring the wrong person and then replacing them can be expensive. In addition, in my experience, many of the costly staff issues faced by employers could have been identified during the recruitment process with a proper professional approach to recruiting,

Recruitment – is it working for you?

Attracting and recruiting key staff remains one of the key objectives for organisations, even in this currently depressed times. The same survey found that more than half of the participating organisations, particularly in the private sector, expected to continue to recruit in key talent/niche areas compared to previous years. Recruitment is still a key issue and getting it right today is even more essential for employers.

What can you do: improving the effectiveness of recruitment?

There are four key steps:

The key thing and an area SME's – and some bigger companies – commonly fail to do is to identify exactly what type of person is needed for the job or, to put it another way, what type of contribution they expect a recruit to make. This includes knowledge, skills and experience but also the personal characteristics (e.g. initiative) and personal motivation an individual will bring. This sounds simple but have you ever recruited someone you wish you hadn't? Skills without motivation will result in low morale and commitment; motivation without skills could result in disaster.

The second important thing is to be professional in finding them. This requires going to the right sources of likely recruits and communicating in the right way to attract them.

The third step is interviewing effectively. Various techniques and approaches will increase significantly the interviewers understanding of the candidate's personal qualities and motivation and how they will perform a job.

The fourth step is to employ them properly. There are three parts to this:

- a bespoke contract of employment which covers the key aspects of their employment and manages the key risks to the business. Crucial in this is a sound probationary or trial period and defined review periods during the first year;

- an induction process for the first few months, covering all the basic factual information but also important relationships and cultural aspects of working for the organisation;
- finally, some concrete performance goals or targets so you know whether they are performing or not.

A medium-sized engineering production company asked me to look at their recruitment and turnover to consider ways to reduce it. This successful, well-respected company was losing up to 30% of skilled production staff at one of its sites. This is high by any standards. In addition, a significant part of this comprised staff who left within six months of joining, well before the company had obtained an acceptable return on their investment and training in the recruits. Looking at the problem, it became apparent that the company did not really follow the steps above and did not approach recruitment systematically.

Their recruitment processes were revamped, including sourcing recruits through broader methods, raising their recruitment profile locally, interviewing training, new documentation and checking procedures. More tangibly, the number of people involved in the process reduced from nine to five, turnover fell, the cost of recruitment was halved and most importantly, the quality of recruits improved.

Employers continue to face difficulties in recruitment, even with the current level of employment. With the right process, getting it right and reducing the risk to your organisation is definitely achievable.

For further information on how to avoid costly mistakes and improve the effectiveness of your recruitment, Jim Gilhooley, Morlan Gil Human Resources Ltd will be running a recruitment workshop for the Chamber of Commerce on 1st March.

* The Worst Thing that can happen if you recruit the wrong person is that you might never know.

Jim Gilhooley

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