

Article location: <http://www.fastcompany.com/resources/talent/bksje/recruitandre-recruit/061407.html>

June 14, 2007

## Recruit and Re-recruit

By [Beverly Kaye](#) and [Sharon Jordan-Evans](#)

Hiring is among the most important tasks you have as a manager. So get ready --you'll be doing a lot more of it. Baby Boomers (the largest generation in the workforce) are just beginning to leave the workplace and the search for their replacements will not be easy. Hiring is a critical managerial competency, and it doesn't stop with the job offer. Today, re-recruiting your best people is as critical as hiring them in the first place. In fact, research shows that you actually need to re-recruit your new hires for the first year of their employment and that they are easily enticed away during that time.

How do you know if a candidate will be the "right fit?" How do you measure fit, manage your biases, and make more objective hiring decisions? By "right fit" we mean a person whose skills and interests match the job requirements, and whose core values are consistent with the organization's values.

Do your homework, be prepared, and be clear about your wants and needs. As the manager, you have the clearest sense of the "right fit" for your department. Seems logical, doesn't it? Yet some managers see selection as a less important part of their jobs. They spend little time identifying the critical success factors for a position, preparing and conducting thorough interviews based on those factors, and evaluating and comparing the candidates before making a hiring decision.

### Here are some practical pointers:

- **Analyze the job:**

Get input from others to clarify the tasks, traits, and style required. Then create interview questions that will help you decide if the person has these skills or traits.

- **Create an interview guide with carefully crafted behavioral questions:**

Behavioral questions allow you to learn how candidates have handled certain situations. Their answers will help you predict their ability to handle similar situations in the future. Use the same questions for all candidates so that you can make fair comparisons.

- **Include others in the interview process:** Have potential team members, direct reports, and peers of these future employees interview them (ideally asking different questions from yours) and give you their input. Several heads are definitely better than one when it comes

to hiring.

- **Consider using personality and skill assessments to help you make the decision:** Get information from your human resources department about tools that might help you evaluate candidates' skills, work interests, and even values. Don't rely on just one tool when making your decision.

Beware! When candidates are few and your needs are immediate, you can fall victim to the dangerous syndrome of *desperation hiring*. One manager, who claimed to have always done a terrific job of interviewing, analyzing, and selecting candidates, said he had narrowed his interview questions down to one: "When can you start?"

If you're tempted to resort to desperation hiring, remember that today's hiring mistake is tomorrow's headache. You know how hard it is to rid your team of the wrong hire. Be prepared to *sell* your organization or team to candidates by addressing the key issues they raise. Treat candidates more like customers than subordinates.

Think carefully about what you and your team can offer, and be ready to give specific examples. If you are offering a great team environment, demonstrate that by having all team members meet and briefly interview your top candidates. Think about your team or organizational "wow" factors: those things that differentiate you from the rest. Whatever your unique selling proposition, recognize it and leverage it during the interview. One manager in a training-focused organization said it well: "I can't offer you a job for life, but I can offer employability for life -- here or somewhere."

Too often we choose the right people but fail to support them as they assume their new roles. Maybe that's why so many people leave within the first year on the job. Orientation and support are key pieces of the selection process and will ensure that you increase the odds of their success and contribution to the team.

Several organizations we know are requiring their managers to have a series of conversations with their new hires over at least the first year. The purpose of these conversations is to continually address the employees' needs as well as those of the organization and reinforce the employee's decision to join. In addition, the conversations are designed to build the relationship between the manager and the new hire, and explore ways to grow.

### **Here are some more practical pointers:**

- Have an "expectations exchange" with your new employees. Clearly define what you expect from them and ask what they are expecting from you and the team.
- Spend time teaching them about the organization they have just joined. Tell stories, share your experiences and knowledge about the culture and history.
- Involve your key people in the new hires' orientation. Expose new employees to others' views and stories as well as your own.
- Mentor them or find mentors for them as they work to close any skill gaps you identified in the interview process.
- Treat them well and introduce them to others on your team even before their first day. People with several options could be tempted by another offer before they show up for the first day of work.
- Be available to support them in this uncertain early stage of employment. That may mean seeking them out to see how they are doing and conveying that you are behind them all the way.

And finally, if you have done a great job of selecting, you will have a whole new stable of stars. Your long-term employees can feel less noticed, less appreciated, and perhaps even taken for granted as you carefully select, orient, and train these new folks. Avoid that dangerous

phenomenon by re-recruiting your talent. Show your current employees that they are important and critical to you and to the success of your team, especially as you recruit new team members.

Remember: If you're not recruiting your best people, you're the only one who isn't.

---