

LESSON 19: Business Performance

Hiring Great Talent

INTRODUCTION

Nearly every person in entry-level management and above, in every size and type of business, occasionally finds themselves involved in the process of either hiring or firing an employee.

Hiring and firing of employees is a fundamental part of the business world. Employees are hired to produce a product or deliver a service. And invariably, many are hired who didn't fit the job, didn't integrate into the workplace culture, or happen to cross set workplace boundaries and need firing.

Unfortunately, most employers and managers see the practice of hiring and firing as two separate processes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

HIRING AND FIRING

Hiring and firing are inexorably linked. If management did a perfect job of hiring, then there would be no need to ever fire an employee. If we take the time to write out all job expectations, have only qualified job applicants apply, and can perfectly evaluate each candidate's compatibility, aptitude, and commitment, we would have a perfect company. When everybody gets along, is technically qualified, and is committed to their work, there would never be any reason to fire anyone.

THE TRADITIONAL PROCESS

Unfortunately, the traditional hiring process is far from perfect. It usually is heavily focused on past job skills and experience. In hiring a person, we don't have insights into their character. We do not know an employee's ethics, work attitude, or ability to fit into the workplace culture.

Furthermore, job applicants' capabilities are most often not identical matches for our job descriptions. No two people have the same mix of education, personality traits, and life

experiences, and our job descriptions are not designed around the intangible asset's employees bring to the workplace. Employment decisions are seldom "cookie cutter" decisions where you find a candidate who meets perfectly every desired and needed criteria.

With that in mind, there is a basic process that, when followed, gives the employer the greatest chance of being successful in hiring *good* employees.

HIRING PROCESS

- **Define the job in detail before beginning the hiring process.**
- **Plan your employee recruiting strategy. Decide if advertising in trade journals, using online recruitment services, or employing professional employee search services will produce the largest list of qualified employees.**
- **Review credentials and applications carefully. Focus on trends of favorable activities as opposed to looking at individual events. Involve other current employees in the hiring process.**
- **Ask the right job interview questions. Asking open-ended questions about their past behavior in response to a situation is usually the best indicator of how they will respond in the future. Plan all questions with the intent that each question targets a specific response. Use personality testing if applicable.**
- **Check backgrounds and references, if applicable. Consider researching social media for additional information.**
- **Intentionally decide to hire. Collaborate with the others involved in the hiring process and be objective in looking at the positives and negatives.**
- **Extend a job offer. Consider adequate benefits, salary, bonus compensation, stock offerings, etc.**

SPECIFIC HIRING ISSUES

Poorly Defined Job Scope

The one common hurdle in finding a "best-fit" new employee is a poorly defined job description. The specific description of a job potential employees find intriguing is the foundation of the entire search process. It drives the advertising for applicants, and as a result their resumes are tailored to meet that specific description. In effect, the job interview and its processes are based on the specifics and accuracy of the job description.

Vague descriptions and generalities may cause qualified candidates not to apply, as well as project the image that the company does not know what they are doing; therefore, it is probably not a good place to work.

Social Media and AI

To supplement information garnered through interviews and references, employers now have two added options. The first is the ability to go online and see what information the job applicant posted in the public domain. Facebook, Twitter, and other social platforms can provide valuable insights into the nature and character of the job candidate.

Second, employers now have at their disposal [talent identification and assessment tools](#) that allow organizations to make data-based human capital decisions. These AI tools are available to use in searching for and evaluating the applicant's character traits, compatibility, and aptitude, often completed without the potential employee knowing they are a job candidate.

The decision to use these options rests in the employer's opinions about the ethics of looking at an applicant's Facebook page, for example, and the employer's feelings about the veracity of personality testing and artificial intelligence in providing valuable insights.

Hiring Christians

Some people question whether they should only hire Christians. This is a tricky subject because legally you cannot discriminate against someone due to their religious beliefs. Although it's important that we abide by all laws, it also is important that we hold to our values, which is legal.

If you desire to run a business according to biblical values, it is legal to hire people who can uphold your values. In fairness to all parties, your values and mission should be communicated clearly to any prospective employees. It's not very considerate to hire someone into a culture that would not be comfortable for them. Therefore, sharing your expectations and including your values is important. Although you cannot ask about someone's faith, by communicating your values clearly and asking whether they believe they can uphold your values will eliminate many people who may not fit your organization.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you had success in finding and hiring quality employees? What processes worked well and what didn't work? Why?

- 2. Do you always find employees who fit your job description, or do you continually compromise and hire the best you can find?

When you have compromised were you able to train them to fit and then adjust your staff? Or, did you accept not having what you need as being the new normal?

- 3. Do you think it is ethical to research a potential employee through social media and use their posting to form an opinion about their potential as a future employee?

Would you want a potential employer to look at your Facebook postings?

- 4. Many businesses rely on personality testing to determine compatibility and aptitude for specific jobs. Are these tests accurate, appropriate, and a fair way to evaluate potential employees?

Have you ever taken one of these tests? What was your reaction?

- 5. What is your philosophy on hiring Christians? What are some ways you can assure prospective employees know what the day-to-day culture of your organization will be like and whether it will be a culture they can blend into?

HIRING GREAT EMPLOYEES

In the previous section, we discussed the traditional process for hiring *good* employees. These are all important items to consider. If our objective, however, is to surround ourselves with *great* employees, we will need to take an unconventional approach and an additional look at the traits of those we are considering. These traits are the 4 C's of hiring—character, calling, competence, and chemistry.

Character. First read **1 Samuel 16:7**. A person's character should be our number one consideration. While all other traits are vitally important, a new employee's character is the most important. It is possible to train a person in nearly all aspects of their job, except their character. You always want employees with integrity, trustworthiness, and moral fiber.

Calling. First read **2 Peter 1:10** and **Romans 12:4**. Is the person you are about to hire passionate about their occupation? Do they share your mission and the mission of your business? Employees who are passionate always put in the effort to make sure the job is done, is done right, and is ready for the next challenge.

Competence. First read **Exodus 31:1-11**. Finally, we get to talk about if the employee can technically handle the job you are looking to fulfill. Determining their true competence, however, is often difficult. Consider outside testing or using probationary employment status before assuming the employee can do what they say they can do.

Chemistry. First read **Romans 5:3-5**. Working alongside someone is like going on a long journey; you will be working together through both the highs and lows of a business's economic cycle. Consider if your new hire is a person who you and your existing employees will enjoy working next to for a long time.

CASE STUDY

Assume for a moment you are the owner of a small tech company and have decided to add staff. Being a small company, your employees are not specialized in only one area but are required to have multiple skills and be willing to cross-train with other employees.

Since the job is difficult to define, the owner decides to write a generic job description and see who applies. The ad is placed on LinkedIn and Indeed, and hundreds of resumes fill the owner's mailbox. Frustration mounts, however, as most of the resumes have little or no computer programming experience, are from non-US citizens who will require sponsorships to work, or are trained in settings where the educational quality is questionable.

In a near panic, the owner calls in two of his company's computer programmers to be a part of the interview process. He then assembles an array of interviewees with the best resumes

gathered from the online ad. With little preparation, interviews are conducted all on one day by the owner and his two most senior programmers. After the last interview, both programmers regretfully tell the owner that they are not interested in working with or training any of the candidates they just interviewed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What did the owner do right?

- 2. What did the owner do wrong?

- 3. Was the process used by the owner fair to all the job applicants? Was it fair to existing employees?

- 4. At what point in the owner's process could he have made subtle changes and saved himself time and effort?

- 5. If you were the owner of this tech company, how would you have approached finding and hiring your new employee?

- 6. Assuming you are one of the employees asked to sit in on the interview, how would you handle and respond during the interview process? What would your opinion of the owner be at this point?

