

7.20: Recruiting and Selecting Qualified Job Applicants

Learning Outcomes

- Describe effective strategies for recruiting and selecting qualified job applicants.



There are several steps in the recruitment and selection process. They include advertising for and sourcing candidates, reviewing applications, screening candidates, conducting interviews, and making an offer. HR works closely with hiring managers during the interviewing process.

Managers know more than anyone else about what a particular position involves and what kinds of skills an employee needs to do the job effectively. They may be the one to request the creation of a new position. They are very likely to be asked to help define an existing job or a new job. They, with the help of HR professionals, will describe the tasks and responsibilities of the position, as well as the qualifications required.

First, HR professionals go through a process of job analysis. They ask questions, observe workers, conduct surveys, and determine what, exactly, is required to do the job well. What qualifications will an employee need for the job? What skills are necessary? Are there physical skills or requirements?

Job analysis is a first step toward creating a job description and job specification. The job specification is a statement of employee characteristics and qualifications required for satisfactory performance of defined duties and tasks comprising a specific job or function. A job description is more than just a paragraph describing the responsibilities of the job; it's also an important document that should contain specific information and statements. For example, a job description should state that the employer does not discriminate against potential employees based on age, race, gender, or other personal qualities. In addition, the job description should describe the level of education, experience, and knowledge required for the position. These types of statements are important for several reasons. First, they make it easier to decide whether a particular candidate is really a good match for the job. Second, they provide documentation to show why one candidate might be chosen over another. Discrimination lawsuits that go to court are very expensive, so well-crafted job descriptions can save an employer a great deal of money.

Now the HR department takes over. It's up to them to reach out to find qualified candidates, screen possible applicants, and select individuals who meet your needs. You will then interview a small number of highly qualified individuals and choose the person who best fits your department's needs.

Here is the process of recruitment and selection that starts once a job description has been finalized:

Advertising Openings and Recruiting Candidates

How do you find the perfect candidate for a job opening? There are several techniques. Advertising in newspapers and trade publications can be effective. Most recruiters also use online sources to find job candidates. For example, sites such as Indeed, Monster, and CareerBuilder are very popular. Employers can list jobs on these sites and can search through resumes to find potential employees.



Social sites are also a good way to seek out qualified candidates. LinkedIn is a website that allows employers and potential employees to share information about themselves. Facebook offers opportunities for employers and potential employees to find one another. Often, recruiters search these sites to find qualified candidates, and reach out to selected individuals about job openings. HR also considers candidates suggested by existing employees, talks to people who walk in to inquire about jobs, reaches out through college recruitment events and job fairs, and contacts individuals who have received certification through programs such as Udacity. Another option is to work through recruiters called “head hunters” who find individuals with the right skills and invite them to apply for a particular position.

In many cases, jobs are opened up to internal candidates before they are advertised to the wider world. When that happens, jobs are advertised through company newsletters and bulletin boards and candidates go to HR to apply for the job.

Screening Applicants

Very often, people apply for jobs for which they are not fully qualified. To narrow down the applicants, HR screens applications. They look carefully at resumes, skills, and level of experience to be sure the individual really meets the criteria for the job. They also do background checks on applicants who appear promising, checking on possible criminal records or other serious issues. They may also use keyword filters to review large numbers of resumes for mention of specific skills, educational levels, or management experience. Keyword filters are necessary—but at the same time they can be a problem. Software may eliminate individuals who really are qualified for a job or include individuals who use the right keywords but don’t really have the skills they need to jump in and do the job right.

Watch the following interview between Peter Cappelli of the Wharton Business School and *The Wall Street Journal* to find out more about why qualified applicants have a hard time getting through some screening tools.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

Preliminary Phone Interview

Quite a few job applicants look “good on paper,” meaning that their resumes are impressive. Once you actually speak with them, however, it may become obvious that they don’t really meet the requirements of the job. Alternatively, a moderately attractive applicant might turn out to have personal qualities and abilities that are better than they appeared on paper. Preliminary phone interviews allow the HR department to select only the most promising candidates for in-person interviews with the hiring manager and other members of the hiring team.

Face-to-Face Interview and Selection

After preliminary interviews are completed, HR can provide the hiring manager with a set of promising applicants who have the skills, credentials, and background to fit the manager’s needs. Now the hiring manager can sit down with each candidate and get to know her through a personal interview. Often, hiring managers will conduct a second interview after narrowing down their options to just a few candidates. They may also include other team members in the interviewing process and/or conduct tests to determine whether candidates have the level of technical skill they need for the job.

It takes some skill and knowledge to interview a job applicant effectively. It’s important to do the job right, though, because the costs of hiring someone are substantial, and many hires leave within one year. Some effective interviewing techniques includes the following:

Planning and preparation. Before starting an interview, it’s important for a manager to have read the applicant’s resume, prepare questions, and know what he wants to learn during the interview. It’s also helpful to set a time limit for the interview.

Understanding the job. In some cases, managers don't have direct experience doing the job for which they're hiring. When that happens, it's important for the manager to talk with people who are doing the job now as well as direct supervisors and teammates. What are the most important qualities, skills, and qualifications required for the job? Are there specific situations for which the new hire should be prepared? Knowing about the job makes it easier to ask the right questions.

Connecting with the applicant. Most people are nervous at job interviews, and it's important to set the applicant at ease so she can put her best foot forward. Instead of just saying "Don't be nervous," good managers spend some time chatting with the candidate and explaining the interview process.

Active listening. Managers want to learn about the candidate, so active listening is very important. Managers need to show that they're interested by nodding, asking follow-up questions, smiling, or otherwise using body language to encourage the candidate to share more information.

? PRactice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/12219>

The Job Offer

Once the hiring manager decides who she'd like to hire, the HR department makes an offer. Typically, a job offer includes information about salary and benefits as well as details about the job requirements. If the candidate is interested, he will need to sign a contract or otherwise accept in writing before taking the job—usually a letter or email is acceptable until the employee's first day.

Because the process can be complicated, it's important to have very concrete reasons for choosing one candidate over another. For example, saying "Mary fits into the team better than Sally" is likely to lead to Mary's feeling that she has lost a popularity contest. A better option is to have a checklist of qualifications that can be shared with job candidates. If you can show Sally that Mary has stronger IT skills, more management experience, and important marketing knowledge, it will help Sally understand why Mary really is the better person for the job.

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