



Match Employees with the Right Job

By Fred Owensby, Director, New Mexico Small Business Development Center at Doña Ana Community College

When it comes to hiring people, small businesses usually don't have the resources of large corporations, which have human resources specialists who are trained to recruit employees and to monitor their performance with regular performance appraisals. A small-business owner usually has to rely on gut instincts, observation and pointed questions when hiring a new employee and thereafter has to monitor how the employee is doing to make sure she is a good fit for the job and is performing at the height of her abilities. While large corporations sometimes tolerate the underperformance of mismatched workers, hiring the wrong person can be devastating to a smaller company.

Beyond appearances

A job applicant can look great on paper, with all the right training and experience and complimentary references. But that doesn't mean he'll be able to adjust to a specific business's internal culture or the demands of a specific job. Just because someone has qualifications doesn't mean he has the qualities needed to perform in a specific job.

Too many businesses hire the applicant who seems best for the job, then train him and hope he adjusts to the job and the workplace. A better approach for a small business is to consider what the job requires before looking for the person who can fill that spot. For example, filling a leadership position with a person who prefers to work alone on one task at a time can have chaotic results in a work group: Other employees can lose sight of the group's goals and become demoralized and disengaged.

Start with the job

While large corporations often use tests and other assessment tools in hiring, the person in charge of hiring for a small business can increase her likelihood of hiring the right person by taking the time to thoroughly evaluate the professional, behavioral and communication skills needed for an individual to succeed in a specific job. If the job calls for a generalist, for example, the company shouldn't recruit a specialist.

The small business owner can use in-house expertise to make this assessment by talking to the people with whom the new hire will work. Co-workers and supervisors are in the best position to

know what skills and behaviors the job requires, and that helps the interviewer know what kinds of questions to ask. If the job requires long periods of solitary work on attention-intensive projects, the interviewer should steer away from someone whose gregarious, chatty nature might distract others and lower workplace productivity and efficiency.

The most productive and motivated workers are those who fill positions that correspond with their passions. A person who lacks empathy, for example, would be a poor fit for customer service or for technical assistance for the company's computer network.

Once the employee is hired, the smart small-business owner should give him all the support he needs to be a top performer in the job but should also monitor his adjustment and regularly evaluate his progress.

To find workshops and business assistance, visit www.nmsbic.org.

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