

Successful recruitment of employees can make or destroy a business

South African business owners often complain about the lack of skilled labour in this country. However, many do not realise the role that a below-par recruitment process plays in attracting and securing the wrong candidates. So how can business owners make sure they avoid costly hiring mistakes?

 By [Kathi Clarke](#) 26 Jul 2013

Step 1: Employees are the backbone of any business and recruiting the wrong candidates can destroy it. As a business owner, you continuously need to be on the lookout for talent as opposed to only recruiting when a gap or need arises.

Step 2: To make this manageable, a systematised recruitment process which attracts a larger pool of applicants on the basis of who they are as well as what skills/abilities they have, and which allows them to deselect themselves in the early stages, will get you off to the best start. It will also inevitably save you time in the long run.

Most employers make the mistake of limiting the recruitment process in the beginning to make it "manageable" and then sift potential employees based on skills and past experience as the first screen. While these are important, what is critical is the fit with your organisation's culture. So Step 3 is about shortlisting a person based on who they are as the primary prerequisite followed by their competencies - you can always teach skills but not disposition!

Job description, marketing, application forms

Step 4 is to have a clear plan of what needs doing in the business and who will do it. This provides an essential foundation for writing a clear job description which details explicitly the 'what and how' requirements of the role.

From there, Step 5 is to be different and design an ad that speaks to the type of person needed to suit the role and not just what they need to do. Remember that this ad is as much a "marketing tool" as a product/service ad is to a prospective customer; you want to compel talent to work for you rather than your competition!

Step 6 is to request that candidates fill out an application form which details why they think they are right for the job and why they want to work for you. Not only will this give you easily comparable information, but if you make this downloadable from your website, you'll have the added advantage of boosting your Google rankings! Interestingly many potential applicants will deselect themselves at this stage because they can't be bothered to fill out a form - you'd be surprised how many!

Once the applications have been vetted according to the job description and type of person needed, Step 7 is about creating a shortlist of the best of the bunch and arranging a face-to-face interview in which you ask questions designed to elicit examples of behaviour and not opinions. Additionally follow a format suited for the role - for example a group interview works well for a sales job where individuals need to demonstrate that they persuade better than others.

Past employers, personality profile, final interview, contract, induction

Before the final interview, Step 8 is to firstly talk to all the candidates' previous employers. Start by verifying CV experience like job title, reason for leaving and salary and then ask if they'd re-employ the person. How this question gets answered will tell you a lot!

Step 9 is to invest in a dispositional test or personality profile to establish their "fit" to your business culture. Step 10 is to discuss all of this in a final interview along with your offer regarding a package. Any questions about salary before this point are premature as the worth of the candidate and their level of interest in what you have to offer needs to be established before negotiating a salary.

Step 11 is to ensure you have a detailed contract in place which lists the role and responsibilities of the new employee and then to "use" this and your great job description to monitor and manage their performance.

The final step, Step 12, is not to dump the new recruits into the deep end, rather set them up for success in their new job from the outset by taking the time to induct new employees properly - show them the ropes; introduce them to the team and customers; give them the manuals that detail how things get done. Importantly, check in with them on how it's going so that they can be glad they chose to work for you!

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