Home Run Hiring

Best Practices in Finding, Interviewing, and Onboarding New Staff

By The Center Consulting Group Staff

Home Run Hiring
Best Practices in Finding, Interviewing, and Onboarding New Staff

Many leaders love the idea of adding a new team member but dread the thought of what it takes to find, interview, and ultimately hire that person. After all, it does take a lot of work to lead the process and then there is the risk of making a bad hire. From our consulting experience, a bad hire can easily cost $100,000-$250,000 in related expenses – not factoring in the damage to your reputation and that of your organization. This article will provide you with some practical and proven steps to do Home Run Hiring.

13 Essential Steps in Hiring Staff

Our consulting team has successfully guided a variety of non-profits, churches, and businesses through the hiring process. The following 13 essential steps in hiring staff are the foundation for an effective hiring process.

Assess the Organization

1. Assess the Organization
❑ Is the organization healthy enough to assimilate a new staff member?
❑ What is the health and readiness of the team the candidate will be joining?
❑ How ready is the hiring executive to commit the time required to make this process successful?

2. Build the Team

- ❑ Have you decided who from the staff/board will lead the hiring process?
- ❑ Do you have a labor attorney to provide you with legal counsel?
- ❑ Do you have a good human resource professional that can provide assistance?
- ❑ Do you have an outside consulting group that can provide guidance and help you test assumptions?
- ❑ Do you have an environment of confidentiality?
- ❑ Have you carefully defined the position you are planning to fill?
- ❑ How ready is the team to accept a new member?

Build the Team

3. Define the Position

- ❑ Is this a new position? If so, why do you believe it is needed?
- ❑ Why are you hiring for this position and not for another area in the organization?
- ❑ Are you filling current needs or future expectations?
- ❑ What is not being accomplished at the present time?
- ❑ Does this position fit the strategic plan of the organization?
- ❑ What is the job title?
- ❑ If this is an existing position, what did the previous person do well/poorly?
- ❑ Does the position fit within the "by-laws" or "constitution" of your organization?

Define the Position

4. Prepare the Job Description

[Sample job description included on page 11]

- ❑ How would you summarize the position in 30 words or less?
- ❑ What 3-5 competencies are most critical for a person to succeed in this position?
- ❑ What is most unique about the work environment in your organization that may influence the success or failure of a candidate?
- ❑ If you hired the right person for this position, what 3-5 outcomes would you expect to see in the next one, two, or three years?
- ❑ Does your job description include:
  - ✓ Title of the position?
  - ✓ Name or title of the person to whom the employee will report?
  - ✓ Educational requirements for this position?
  - ✓ Knowledge, skills, and abilities the employee will need to possess?
  - ✓ Supervisory responsibilities?
  - ✓ Primary qualifications and competencies?
  - ✓ Primary tasks/duties?
  - ✓ Expected outcomes and results?
  - ✓ Is this position EOE/M/F/D/V compliant?

Prepare the Job Description

5. Determine Salary and Benefits Package

- ❑ Have you acquired both regional and national compensation data?
- ❑ How will this position fit the compensation guideline/policy adopted by the organization?
- ❑ What will the total compensation package (salary and benefits) consist of?
- ❑ How flexible are you with the starting salary? What is negotiable?
- ❑ Will there be future salary/benefit increases negotiated up front?
- ❑ Have the budgetary impacts been reviewed and evaluated?
- ❑ Does this position require a contract? Who will develop one if it is requested?
- ❑ Will there be a signing bonus or other incentive?
- ❑ Will there be a relocation package available?

Determine Salary and Benefits Package

6. Define the Parameters of the Search and Hiring Process

- ❑ If you are a non-profit, have you reviewed your by-laws regarding hiring staff?
- ❑ Does your process reasonably align with the by-laws, as well as Federal and State laws?
- ❑ What is the time frame?
- ❑ What is the recruitment budget?
- ❑ Will you retain a search firm?

Define the Parameters of the Process

7. Communicate Regularly

- ❑ What and how will you communicate with your organization?
- ❑ What and how will you communicate with applicants?
- ❑ What and how will you communicate with lead candidates?
- ❑ How will those responsible for the search communicate with each other, the board or hiring executive, and the members at large?

Communicate Regularly

8. Create an Application

- ❑ Do you have a legal application?
- ❑ Is it thorough enough?
- ❑ Has it been reviewed by an attorney?
- ❑ Will a highly qualified candidate be willing to complete it?
- ❑ Will it include:
    - ✓ General information – name, address, etc.?
    - ✓ Work history?
    - ✓ Education?
    - ✓ References?
    - ✓ Salary History?

Create an Application

Identify Applicants

9. Identify Applicants

There are many different ways to find new candidates. Below are the six most common ways.

1. **Internal Recruiting** – looking at the people who are already on your team to determine if any of them are a good fit for the position you are seeking to fill. The benefit of this approach is you already know the person's character, knowledge, skills, ability to meet the demands of the job, and how well they fit the culture.

2. **Internal Postings** – notifying all employees of the opening to see if anyone is interested in applying. This provides employees with a chance for growth or to find positions that may be of greater interest to them. However, this also puts employers in the position of damaging morale by turning the employee down if they are not a potential fit.

3. **Personal Networking** – informing your network of friends, key influencers, and business associates of what you are looking for and seeing if they have any leads. It is estimated that about 80% of positions are filled this way. This approach is personalized and allows for greater pre-screening since someone already knows the potential candidate. However, your network may not be big enough for this to work every time, and you may have too many positions to fill using this method.

4. **External Postings** – utilizing such methods as Social Media, Indeed, Monster, LinkedIn, Facebook, or posting boards that focus on a particular type of organization. For example, a pastor looking for a position may use a site such as MinisterSearch.com or ChurchStaffing.com. A human resources professional may use SHRM. The benefits of these types of postings is you increase the likelihood of applicants due to the broad visibility, but you also have a lot more work to do sorting out those who are a poor fit.

5. **Hiring Coach** – partnering with a consulting group like The Center to help guide you in this process and manage some aspects of it for you. This type of firm can help you network candidates while still leaving you in the driver's seat since you will retain some of the responsibility of finding candidates. However, the firm can post for you, pre-screen applicants, and identify the high potential candidates which will minimize the time commitment for your hiring executive.

6. **Search Firm** – employing a professional search firm to source candidates for you. The benefits of using a search firm are they do the work for you, have a large network, and often will guarantee resumes. However, there are downsides. This can be a very expensive process so you need to be sure it is the best approach before you sign on. Additionally, sometimes search firms just send resumes to show that they are providing candidates instead of sifting through for top

candidates (quantity over quality). They are also less adept at finding candidates who are the right cultural fit for your context.

To find candidates:
- ❑ Is there anyone within your organization that should be considered?
- ❑ Does anyone in your relational network come to mind for this position?
- ❑ With whom can you network to identify names of potential candidates?
- ❑ Are there any organizations that may have connections to possible candidates?
- ❑ Will you post the position? Internally or externally?

Interview Applicants

10. Interview Applicants

While interviewing your candidates, utilize behavioral based questions since past behavior is a solid indicator of future performance. Behavioral based interviewing is the technique where the candidate is asked to talk about specific achievements or situations in his or her work career. This technique emphasizes behavior, not general statements. Instead of asking, "Are you a strong leader?" Say, "Describe a situation where you were a strong leader." Or simply ask for specific examples after you ask a question. The following list includes some of the most helpful questions for you to choose from when preparing for your interviews.

Questions to start the interview
- How did you learn about this job and organization?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What 2 or 3 things are most important to you in your new position?
- How would your friends describe you? Your previous employers?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

Questions about work history
- What did you enjoy most about your last job?
- What did you enjoy least about your last job?
- Describe a time when you experienced failure and what you learned from it.
- What idea did you develop and implement that you are proud of?

Questions to determine fit
- What are your long-range goals?
- What kind of leader are you? Please give an example.
- Why do you think you would be a good fit for this job?

- What was the most useful criticism you have ever received?

Questions about teamwork
- What kinds of people do you enjoy working with?
- What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with?
- Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a coworker.
- What is the difference between a manager and a leader?

Questions to determine drive
- What motivates you to do your best?
- What is your ideal job?
- How do you like to be managed?
- Tell me about a project that you were passionate about.

Questions to understand stress management
- Tell me about a time when your employer was not happy with your job performance.
- What do you do when you have to make an important decision?
- What would you do if your boss gave you a direct order to pursue a policy that you disagree with?

Questions about money
- What value can you add to our organization?
- What do you think you are worth?
- On what criteria do you believe you should be evaluated and compensated?
- What rewards are most motivating to you?

Questions to identify if a candidate is disgruntled or prone to violence
- How do you deal with coworkers or supervisors who do not show you proper respect?
- How do you handle rejection?
- What are some things that your supervisor did that you disliked?

Questions to wrap up the Interview
- Based on what we have discussed, how do you feel about this job?
- Do you have any questions?

Questions you may be asked as the interviewer
When getting ready to interview a candidate, not only do you need to prepare the questions you will ask the applicant, but you will also need to

be prepared for any questions they may ask you about the position and your organization. The following are a few of the questions you may be asked.

1. What kind of person are you looking for? How will you select them? What skills and experience are needed?
2. Why is the position open? Why aren't you filling from within?
3. What duties and responsibilities does this job include? Is there a job description? How much freedom would I have to determine my objectives and deadlines?
4. How many people will I supervise? To whom will I report?
5. What kind of support does this position receive in terms of people and resources? Where does this position fit into this organization?
6. What problems might I expect to encounter?
7. What is the normal salary range for this job? How would my performance be measured and rewarded? Promotions, advancement, etc.
8. What is the work environment/culture like?
9. Is there anything else I should know about the organization?
10. Anything else you want to know about me?

(Adapted from *The Manager's Book of Questions* by John Kador)

11. Check References and Background

❑ Has your attorney created a Hold Harmless Release Form?
❑ Do you have a signed Hold Harmless Release Form from each candidate and References?
❑ Are you aware that the research process must be consistent with all candidates?
❑ Are you planning to conduct additional background checks such as the following and do you have the appropriate signed releases for them? (These releases are specific documents required by the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Attorneys can provide them, or often the third party doing the background search will provide them.)
   ✓ Criminal background check
   ✓ Driver's License verification
   ✓ Credit check
   ✓ Drug screen
   ✓ Financial background check
❑ How will the reference checks be conducted?
   ✓ Telephone
   ✓ Requested in writing
   ✓ Face-to-face
❑ Are you planning to verify credentials? If so, how?
❑ Have you developed an Interview Protocol for References that incudes what questions will be asked?

Check References and Background

12. Assess Compatibility and Fit

❑ How are you planning to determine if a candidate is a good fit for your organization?
❑ Have you assessed the following areas:
- ✓ Culture?
- ✓ Job description?
- ✓ Leadership?
- ✓ Fit with the supervisor(s) and team members?
- ✓ Technical knowledge, skills, and abilities

❑ Are you planning to use any assessment tests or surveys to assist you in determining fit? For example, The Center Consulting Group provides the following pre-hire assessments:
- o **The Pre-Hire 360°** is designed to assist you in acquiring feedback on a candidate from their personal contacts, professional contacts, and self. If integrated into the hiring process for your organization, the Pre-Hire 360° Report will provide you with insight into your critical hiring decisions.
- o **The TTI Success Insights® Talent Insights Report** increases the understanding of an individual's talents by providing insight to their behaviors (DISC) and motivators. Understanding strengths and weaknesses in these areas will lead to personal and professional development and a higher level of satisfaction.
- o **The Work Style Profile** focuses on traditional personality traits and real life, job-centered behavioral characteristics that are important to most positions of leadership and management.

Assess Compatibility and Fit

13. Hire and Rejection

❑ Who will write the letter of hire?
❑ What will or will not be included?
❑ Will the candidate be offered an employment contract?
❑ Will the candidate be required to sign a Confidential Agreement or a Non-Compete Agreement? Has your legal counsel reviewed these agreements?
❑ What is a reasonable timeframe to expect a candidate to respond?
❑ Does the offer letter suggest an implied contract?
❑ How will you communicate with those you are not planning to pursue?

Hire and Rejection

The Most Common Causes of Why a New Hire Fails

A bad hire can cost your organization a lot of money and time. Below are the four most common reasons a hire fails. Sometimes these causes are unavoidable, but the more thorough you are in the hiring process, the better the chances of a successful hire.

Hiring Essentials

Character

Competency   Compatibility
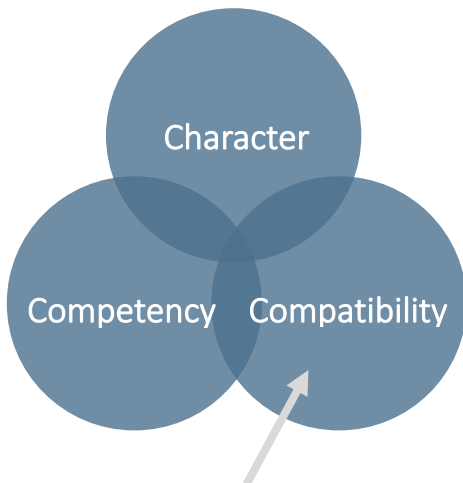
While competency and character are obvious elements to any good hire, **COMPATIBILITY** or "fit" is the most common cause of failure.

1. **Undiscovered character flaw –** the candidate and/or references did not disclose a behavior or event that could have serious consequences to the organization.

2. **Not compatible with the organization, team or supervisor –** the chemistry or fit is not working. Assessing fit is one of the most difficult parts of screening and hiring.

3. **Misaligned expectations –** the employee understood one set of expectations and the employer understood another.

4. **Poor emotional and relational skills –** this has proven to be a serious and common cause for failure. The candidate does not know how to form and sustain healthy relational chemistry with the supervisor or others in the organization.

While it is not easy to assess character or competency, it is "easier" than assessing fit or compatibility. Why? Because character flaws can sometimes be identified by way of quality reference checking (if the references are truthful!) and competency can often be assessed by references, credentials, and work history. However, compatibility with you, the team, and the organization cannot be known for certain beforehand since you cannot really know until you have extensive time together. In other words, it is a bit of a gamble for both you and the candidate!

Legal Issues

There are also a number of things to keep in mind from a legal perspective during the hiring process. For example:

- Whether this is your first employee or your one hundredth employee, does your organization have appropriate policies and practices in place, such as an employee handbook, operational policies, mandatory employee posters, and on-boarding paperwork (such as I-9 verification forms, W-4 forms, etc.)?

- Have all individuals who will be involved in the hiring process been properly trained on applicable employment laws (such as the anti-

discrimination laws) and conducting legal and effective interviews? Likewise, are interviewers instructed to keep notes on candidates interviewed and to ensure that the notes never indicate an applicant's age, race, gender, national origin, or other specific identifier either outright or by code?

- In considering compensation for the position for which you are hiring, have you reviewed the exempt or non-exempt status of the position under the Fair Labor Standards Act?

- If criminal history will be a consideration at some point in the hiring decision, have you considered whether your organization is subject to any "Ban the Box" laws? Or whether your organization is subject to any other laws regarding criminal history of applicants?

- Do your offer letters, employee handbooks, and other key documents clearly communicate that employment with your organization is at will?

- If you are considering researching a candidate on social media, consult with legal counsel regarding the potential pitfalls.

Conclusion

Most leaders, boards, and consultants would not be foolish enough to say they always hit a "home run" when it comes to hiring. There is no guaranteed way to make perfect hires. But there are proven ways to increase the likelihood of success. We believe that, when followed, the suggestions we have shared in this article will reduce the potential of hiring the wrong people and increase the probability of hiring people who will succeed in making a positive contribution to the mission of your organization. If The Center team can be of assistance helping you with your hiring process, please contact us at 215.723.2325 or www.centerconsulting.org.

Sample Job Description:

Director of Operations

Summary: The Director of Operations is responsible for working with the owner in ensuring business effectiveness of this organization by overseeing mission-critical internal and business operations.

Responsibilities:
- **Business Success:** Provide leadership and management to ensure that the mission and core values of this organization are put into practice on a daily basis with staff, clients, community, and vendors.

- **Leadership:** Serve as a member of this organization's Management Team.

- **Human Resources:** Oversee implementation of all HR functions including effective hiring, evaluations, terminations, and benefits.

- **Facilities:** Oversee all day-to-day operations of the facility including maintenance, space utilization, and security.

- **Technology:** Proactively oversee all office technology and handle all technology related issues including phones and computer systems in coordination with the third party IT support firm.

- **Financial:** Ensure the financial operations including processing of Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, and perform various accounting duties including collection and submission of staff receipts and reimbursements and maintaining accurate records.

- **Stakeholder Relations:** Represent this organization with clients, vendors, the community, customers, and business partners.

- **Special projects:** Work with the owner in both evaluation and implementation of special projects.

- Other duties as necessitated by change or conditions.

Profile:
- Systems thinker
- Ability to communicate effectively – in person, over the phone and via email – with staff and vendors
- Excellent organizational and time management skills
- An ability to handle multiple projects and stress
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Strong attention to detail
- Proven team player
- Willingness to take initiative
- Ability to work independently and make decisions
- Highly adaptable to a fast-paced and dynamic work environment
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications
- Demonstrated ability in Word and Excel
- Proficient in QuickBooks
- Financial and Accounting acumen

Education:
- Bachelor's Degree (B.A.) or equivalent, required
- Financial/Accounting experience
- Five years of administrative/office support experience, preferred

Supervisory Responsibilities:
- Supervise approximately 12 -15 employees.
- Direct, coordinate, and evaluate these employees.
- Carry out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws.
- Other responsibilities include interviewing, hiring and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints; and resolving problems.

Reports to: Owner of organization

Include a request for salary requirements

EOE/M/F/D/V

If you are a Christian leader of a church, non-profit or business and would like to further advance the effectiveness and health of yourself or your organization, we can assist you through our proven guidance and relational approach. We provide customized solutions for your complex problems. Our solutions include coaching, assessment, communications, crisis guidance, planning, staffing & HR, succession planning, and personalized coaching retreats. For more information, call our office at 215-723-2325 or visit our website centerconsulting.org.

THE CENTER
CONSULTING GROUP