



HOW NOT TO HIRE

Abstract

Birds do it, bees do it...oh wait. Only HR has the fun of hiring. It is pretty similar to other processes where there's one winner and many, many losers. And yet the process is just as riddled with guilt and doubt. Keep reading to find out how to come out on top of the hiring process.

How NOT to Hire

It's 9 a.m., and a job requisition has appeared on your desk.

Fresh out of college, every person in HR thinks that hiring will be the highlight of their job—meeting new people, hearing their stories, giving the lucky one a great opportunity. It sounded great, until you actually posted your first job. If you posted that first job on Monster.com, you received over a hundred thousand resumes and cover letters. Even if you just posted on a niche site, you still had the first response within a few seconds.

While it's understandable to be a bit frustrated, you must persevere. After all, every requisition (and subsequent communication) has a huge impact on company brand perception. There are few other times when you will have the undivided attention of the reader of each and every email you send. Done right, hiring can create a positive brand perception with those who will be influencers in your company, and at your competitors. Done wrong, well...a person never forgets a callous rejection, and they *never* let it go.

First Act: You're the popular cheerleader

In so many ways, hiring is like dating and, if you work for the right company, you're like the popular cheerleader—everyone wants your attention. You'll get applications from Sheeva in Bangladesh looking for an investment of \$1million U.S. dollars and from Steve down the street, who just finished his shift at McDonald's and is hopeful to move into procurement management with your company. You'll also get the inevitable application from that cadre of people who have not yet found spellcheck (by the way, most hiring managers immediately drop their resumes in the "circular file", so you're not alone in that decision).

Strategy: Recycle all resumes except the five you're actually interested in. Ignore all other respondents.

No! How many horror flicks (and comedies) have been made about the geek getting revenge because he was cruelly rejected? You do not want that to play out in your professional life. And, truly, how many times have you received the automated response that is so impersonal it digs a hole in your heart?

Better strategy: Respond like a human to all human applicants.

No, we're not talking about Klingon or Formic resumes. Mass marketed resumes do not merit a response, but maybe Steve from McDonald's does. Remember, the high school geek often rises, and you want to be on his good side. You never know where a respondent will be in five years, and if he works for your competitor, you want him to have a good memory of your company. If he's your boss, you *definitely* want him to have a good memory of you.



Chandra says...

Yes, we know you have a job, and a life. But, if you spend 6 seconds reading the resume (industry average) and 15 seconds writing a response email—from one human to another—that's 20 seconds to begin building a relationship and maintain a positive perception of your brand.

The second act: The cheerleader on a power trip

Do you know why a cheerleader is always so perky? Because the lucky people she has chosen to be part of her retinue are eager to stay there and willingly supply lattes or whatever she needs. Now, that you're in the cheerleader's shoes and you have several applicants willing to go to great lengths to get your job, it's your moment.

Strategy: Stand in a chair and yell, "Dance, monkey, dance!" Require endless personality and occupation assessments; prepare interview questions like, "If you were a fruit, what kind of fruit would you be?"

No...as fun as it may be, it's wrong. (And, you should not torture applicants for facebook fodder.) Again, consider if you were in the applicants' shoes.

Better strategy:

- Communicate professionally and personally
- Provide accurate timelines
- Meet all timelines
- Be honest and upfront about the job requirements and benefits

Communication and realistic expectations are key. You want to keep the best candidates engaged throughout the screening and selection process. The choice candidates are unlikely to fetch your lattes and answer silly questions—they'll simply move on to the next job offer.

The third and final act: The first meeting

This is where things get really interesting. We've all been to Starbuck's and seen those tragic first meetings from an online relationship. One of the couple says something like, "Yes, my pic is about 10 years old, but I haven't changed that much" or "I just have to say, you have really great legs."

Again, it parallels well to the interview process. All the candidates you chose to bring in had great resumes, but the whole package...well, there are entire books written on this topic. In some ways, the interview is more important than the first date. If you choose poorly for the second date, you can bail at any time. You choose poorly in the interview process, and you may be stuck with a dud for quite some time.

Strategy: Let your gut feeling guide your hiring decision. If it's a no, spend the next half hour using all the worst interviewing questions, like how many golf balls fit in a 747, would you rather fight a tiger or a shark, what's the square root of 200.



Chandra says...

Your best candidates are not only working with you, they're most likely working with two or three other companies. If you are outrageous in your requests, they will infer that your company will be equally frustrating. And, if you leave them hanging, no matter how great the job is, they'll likely move on. Unless, of course you're Google. Then, you can do anything you want.

While, again, this will provide great facebook fodder, you may be letting your best candidate slip through your fingers. In an unstructured interview, the chance of making the right hire is only 30 percent, and that's mostly caused by the halo effect.



It costs \$7,000 to replace a salaried employee, \$10,000 to replace a mid-level employee and \$40,000 to replace a senior executive.

Source: Recruiting Times

We all like people like us, and so we instinctively look for similarities to tell us that person will be as awesome as we are. However, the halo effect can be false, duped by something as superficial as the same haircut or shoes.

Better strategy:

- Group interviews
- Work sample reviews
- Background checks before job offer

As you move through the hiring process, do not forget the candidate's experience. You never know who you will encounter in the hiring process. If yesterday's applicant is today's procurement manager or CFO, your company may suffer because of a poorly executed hiring process. Even if the candidate is not the best match for your position, acknowledge him or her.

You can provide your candidates with a positive impression of your company, whether you hire them or not. Communicate professionally with all candidates, communicate often, and communicate clearly. And always remember, they do not exist solely for your amusement. You were in their shoes once, and most likely will be again.

About KRESS Inc.

Since 1990, KRESS Employment Screening has been empowering companies to make informed hiring decisions. We are the source for quality background checks developed to suit your needs and delivered to seamlessly integrate with your HR processes.

Our goal is quite simple--to maintain long-term relationships that give our customers a real competitive advantage, and most of all, peace of mind. KRESS is an important team member for HR professionals locally, nationwide and internationally. Visit kressinc.com for more information.