

Oops!

WE LOST ANOTHER ONE!

Meg Post

Working daily with the hiring needs of clients and the career needs of their employees, I am continually amazed by a seemingly lack of understanding on both sides. At the time of this writing, it is a candidates' market. Every employer is looking for the same great hire, good-enough talent simply cannot be found. Unfortunately, some companies out there think they know all of the talent that exists, and that if they don't know an individual, s/he must not be worth knowing! This is often a costly and not necessarily true assumption.

While the following may not be new, all involved in hiring need to hear it one more time: You are competing against each other for the most experienced _____ (your choice, fill in the blank) AND you are competing with outside industries feeling the same pinch in the search for skills that can translate into their business.

Time wisely invested on the front-end of the process will reap great results in attracting and retaining good employees. Consider the following:

- Know how to sell your company. Although it's never been enough to say "we have a great opportunity" or "we've had over 30 years as a leader in the industry," some companies still sing that familiar tune. Candidates, regardless of their title, need to know more. What can they expect

within the first few years with you? Be specific regarding growth opportunities. (i.e., the possibility of transferring into another department for increased learning and responsibility). Obviously, a company with a consistent history of salary increases and healthy bonuses and/or stock options will have an additional advantage.

- Avoid losing a great candidate due to poor communication. Hiring managers can eliminate this problem by giving timely and substantive feedback after an interview. The longer feedback is delayed, the more time candidates have to find another suitor.
- Make sure you know what today's market will bear, what kind of relocation package you need and what it takes to eliminate the current employers' counteroffer. Understand that you are at war with other firms looking for good talent. The company with the best people wins! Be decisive!
- Have your management team commit to a realistic job description. Continually changing job responsibilities will cause you to lose a good candidate's interest quickly. It's particularly confusing if a prospective employee hears different information from the company during the interview process.

- Develop an employee retention plan. Yes, it's cheaper to keep her/him by throwing more money on the table after notice is given, but it's an expensive short-term fix. If you are in the midst of losing a good employee you should already know why they are leaving. You or your management team should never be surprised. Before you are faced with another expensive vacant position, evaluate your current staff in a high turnover department (detailing and estimating in particular). Are you doing everything you can to keep them motivated?

Are you doing everything you can to keep your employees motivated?

While this information is not new, it's important to add it to your system of checks and balances. To a recruiter, it makes the difference between a company that's easy to recruit from and one that's not. Need I say more?

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