Effective Hiring and Onboarding

Solution

What...

EFFECTIVE HIRING – The timely actions taken to select the best new employees from a pool of qualified applicants.

EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING – The activities that make new employees feel welcome and prepared for their jobs.

Why...

Choosing the wrong employees can erode the team, impact patient safety and the quality of work, and waste time and money.

On the other hand, choosing the right employees can boost morale, team performance, and results.

Once hired, the faster new employees feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the work of the team.

> " *People are not your most important asset. The right people are.* "
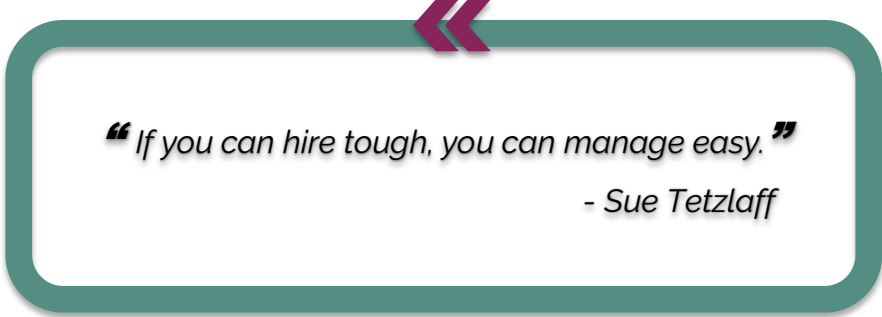>
> *- Jim Collins*

How...

Hiring and onboarding efforts are bigger than any one person or department, and include activities that:

▶ **Build a larger pool of qualified applicants**
▶ **Make collaborative hiring choices**
▶ **Foster a sense of welcoming, support and belonging**.

> *" If you can hire tough, you can manage easy. "*
>
> *- Sue Tetzlaff*

Building a larger pool of qualified applicants

Ideally, your organization will have a large pool of qualified applicants for each open position as they arise. This allows the organization to be very selective as to who to hire.

Organizations certainly don't want to be in the position of "selecting the best of the worst" because their applicant pool only contains poorly qualified applicants. Nor do organizations want to be in the position of hiring the one and only applicant for a job - versus the best applicant - because there are too few to choose from.

Core activities of a human resources department is to support hiring managers by engaging in activities to solicit applicants and to make it easy for people to find information about the organization, its open positions, and how to apply quickly and easily.

In addition to the efforts of human resource professionals and hiring managers, everyone in the organization can play a role in continually building a larger pool of qualified applicants by:

▶ talking positively about our organization in the community
▶ encouraging friends and family to apply
▶ consistently behaving and performing at work in such a way that makes this a preferred place where others would want to work

> ❝ *Build a reputation as a great place to work and great applicants will be drawn to you like a powerful magnet.* ❞
>
> — *Sue Tetzlaff*

Collaborating to make great hiring choices

When it comes time to make a hiring choice for an open position, human resources, management, and a panel of current top-performing employees can join forces to optimize the outcome of the selection process.

Even with the very best processes, tools, and techniques, it is likely that organizations will encounter some "hiring mistakes." Hiring is a "human process" – not an exact science, which compels organizations to adhere to a thorough and well-designed process to improve the chances of making the very best hiring decisions, more often.

During times of hiring pressure (e.g., high vacancy rate, critical need), organizations should avoid the temptation to shortchange the hiring process by lowering hiring criteria and/or skimping on the steps to thoroughly evaluate candidates.

> ❝ *Hiring people is an art, not a science, and resumes can't tell you whether someone will fit into a company's culture.* ❞
>
> — *Howard Schulz*

A Selection Mindset

When preparing to hire for an opening position, consider expanding your "selection mindset" or criteria to go beyond the typical qualifications related to degrees, certifications, experience, and skills. To expand your selection mindset, consider the following:

▶ Think of your very highest performing employee. Who is that person that you can consistently rely on? What makes them amazing? Add these top attributes to your selection criterion.

▶ Think of your team's goals, challenges, and opportunities. What specific skills, behaviors, attributes are lacking in your existing team that are needed to achieve your team's goals, capitalize on important opportunities, or overcome challenges? Add these to your selection criterion.

> " Hire better than you. Hire better than you have.
>
> Beyond "culture fit" – go for "culture add!". "

Once the expanded selection criteria are agreed upon, the candidate review process must be executed in such a manner as to better understand how each candidate's degrees, experience, skills, knowledge, behaviors, attributes, and traits align with these defined needs of the job, team, and organization. Consider which tools and tactics will make up your organization's thorough and collaborative selection process that leads to a better chance of selecting the very best new employees.

Pre-Employment Screening

There are many standardized forms of pre-employment screening tools or tests that can be administered to assist as part of a comprehensive selection process.

Some tests may be specific to customer-service aptitude and others could be more diverse and/or job-specific. Some vendors that provide these tests may also provide customized behavior-based interview questions that correspond specifically to each candidate's test results. These tests cost money, so a best practice is to only administer this form of testing to those employees that are chosen to be interviewed (e.g., those that meet the qualifications in a pre-interview process).

Additionally, or alternatively, a best practice is to have each applicant write the answer to an essay question in the application process. This can garner information about an applicant's ability to express themselves in writing and provide insight into their position related to a relevant issue.

Reference Checking

Many organizations require reference checking as part of their applicant screening process. Some require it before an interview is conducted; others require it before a job offer is made. If reference checking is done prior to offering an interview, the information obtained may be of assistance in developing the interview questions or maybe cause you not to interview at all – saving time & money.

It is unfortunate that many organizations provide very little helpful information when you attempt to get information about a candidate during reference checking. And, of course, candidates are only going to list references that are likely to say positive things. A few ideas to consider:

▶ Be the change you wish to see in others. As an organization, create/adopt a policy (with the help of your legal advisors) for your organization to provide thorough/helpful information when you are asked for a reference check on current/former employees.

▶ When you request reference information on candidates, have a candidate sign a release form that allows you to also contact other individuals who are sourced during the reference inquiries. Therefore, one of the questions you would ask when conducting a reference check would be: "Who else could we contact that would be the most knowledgeable about (first/last name)'s work performance?"

▶ Information about candidates may also be available via social media. If you are going to garner candidate information from these methods, it is best to have a policy/procedure to guide this activity.

Behavioral Based Interviewing

How a person reacted to a situation in the past reflects how they likely will act in the future. Past behavior is a predictor of future behavior.

Therefore, behavioral-based interview questions get at the candidate's past behaviors and actions in similar situations versus how they feel about something or what they think they would do.

Preparation. Consider the expanded selection criteria and what was learned in the pre-interview process when developing the candidate- and job-specific questions for behavior-based interviews. With this approach to interviews, you will develop fewer – yet more intentional – questions designed to explore deeply into the candidate's responses to garner an understanding of their past behaviors and actions in actual situations.

Sample Behavior Interviewing Questions

▶ When working with patients or family members, tell us how you create an environment that helps them feel informed and cared for? Provide a specific example of when you have done this.

▶ Tell us about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) to get a point across that was important to you?

▶ Tell us about a specific situation when you did not have the knowledge or skill to complete a task or assignment. What did you do? What was the outcome?

▶ Describe a time when you exceeded a patient's expectations. What did you specifically do to achieve that outcome?

▶ Describe how you contributed to the success of a team of which you were a member.

▶ Describe a tough problem at work that involved conflict between individuals or departments. What was your role in the situation? What was the outcome?

" We too often hire for skill and then have to fire for behavior. "

Interviewing. Those who are conducting behavior-based interviews should be trained in asking these type of questions (and being able to re-word them or clarify them as needed), listening well (and allowing silence as the candidate thoughtfully prepares a response), and asking follow-up probing questions to assure that the candidate thoroughly explains or describes the following in response to each question:

Event – the event/situation that occurred
Action – what actions they took
Result – the results they got or the outcome of the situation

Suggested probing questions for behavior interviewing

EVENT When did the situation start? What happened next? Who else was involved?

REACTION What thoughts were going through your mind at the time? What did you do next? What were your reactions when that happened? Then what did you do? What did you say?

RESULT How did the situation turn out? What was the end result? What happened in the short term? What was the long-term impact?

Peer Interview Panels

Employees selecting their new teammate is an empowering tactic and inspires accountability and ownership. Employees who are trained to interview and select their co-workers are invested in them, model excellent behavior for them, train them, and most importantly - want them to be successful. When that new employee comes to work for the first time, they will be met by some familiar faces.

The peer panel, the hiring manager, and human resources work collaboratively toward the same purpose – to select the very best person for the job. Some useful practices are:

▶ Human resources and the hiring manager pre-screen applicants prior to the employee panel interview. Applicants that are well screened (which can include review of resume/application, pre-interviews, pre-screening questions/tests, references, etc.) and then deemed qualified by human resources and the hiring manager are the candidates that advance to this final selection step – the peer panel interview.

► Have applicants review and sign the organization's behavior standards before the interview - if they balk, do not interview them and/or probe into this in the interview.

► Select panel members that are high-performing employees. Departments that hire often may have a set panel; other departments may assemble an ad hoc panel. Train them in interview skills and the legalities of interviewing.

► An employee from the interview panel could also provide a department and/or organization tour to the candidate(s). This can be another way to learn more about the candidate. People tend to open up while they are walking! You can also assess how they greet people, if they are naturally curious, what observations they make or what questions they ask.

► Allow time for the candidate to also ask questions. They are also forming a decision as to whether they are a great fit for the job, team, and organization.

DECISION MAKING

Decision Making. When peer panel interviews are utilized, this panel is empowered to make the recommendation as to which candidate(s) will receive a job offer. The job offer may be contingent on the outcome of reference checking if this was not completed in the pre-interview process.

In the absence of a peer panel interview, the selection decision is made by the hiring manager (note, often the official job offer is communicated to the selected applicant by human resources even though the decision

A weight-based decision matrix can make the evaluation of candidates more objective and consistent.

As well, it helps to facilitate the decision-making process and discussions and minimizes emotional decisions. It is not meant to imply that "the highest score" is the one who is hired.

SAMPLE DECISION MATRIX

Weights are determined in advance of the interviews and must add up to 100%
Scoring is a 1-5 scale, 5 being the highest, most favorable response

Candidate: _____   Panel Member: _____

Position: _____   Date: _____

Education   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Experience   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Communication   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Perceived "Fit"   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Interview Questions:

Question #1   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Question #2   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Question #3   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Question #4   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

Question #5   _____Score x _____Weight = _____ Sub-Total

                                       TOTAL SCORE: _____

Recommend for Position: Yes   No

Comments:

on·board·ing

noun

1. the action or process of integrating a new employee into an organization or familiarizing a new customer or client with one's products or services.

2. to offer new hires relevant training and development opportunities

<u>Key objectives of effective new employee onboarding</u>

▶ Engaging the new employee in the vision and strategies of the organization

▶ Connecting to the culture of the organization

▶ Facilitating the establishment of interpersonal relationships and information networks

▶ Increasing clarity, competence, and confidence in role

▶ Teaching the necessary regulatory, legal, accreditation, and policy requirements

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER – "MAKE DAY 1 SPECIAL"

In this excerpt from the book *"The Employee Experience: A Capstone Guide to Peak Performance,"* co-author Sue Tetzlaff relays this true story that illustrates the importance of creating a welcoming "day 1" for each new employee.

"My cousin recently accomplished a lifelong dream. A mother of seven beautiful children, she has spent the last years being a dutiful and caring parent. After all this time, and wonderful experience, she decided it was time to pursue her dream career...nursing. She passed the boards with flying colors and eagerly made her first steps into the world of healthcare.

I had the opportunity to speak to her about her first day on the job and found myself a bit perplexed by the experience. She dove right into explaining how she had attempted IVs and found success after a few missed opportunities. She talked about the mysterious complexity of the electronic health record system. She also spoke about how the staff on this unit had no idea that she was coming. They had no idea!

This was a monumental day for my cousin. A day when she was able to fulfill a childhood dream, to become one of those she had thought heroes. Yet, here she was, meant to feel special, but left alone in the cold.

I've heard far too many stories of those reporting to work on day one, only to find nothing prepared at all. No desk, no chair, no badge of employment, no signifier at all that anyone was paying attention to their existence."

To "Make Day 1 Special" may include organization-wide activities (usually spearheaded by the Employee Experience Team) and/or those that are department-specific. Below are some organization-wide practices used by actual Employee Experience Teams:

▶ The members of the Employee Experience Team personally greet each new employee when they arrive for their first day. They present them with a welcome card, gift certificate for hospital-logo wear, and candy bar wrapped in customized paper that reads: "Serving size: One Happy Employee" and the ingredients are the organization's standards of behavior.

▶ The Employee Experience Team sends a welcome package to the home of each new employee that is addressed to the entire family. This package invites them to be a part of the hospital family and lists the upcoming events and perks that are available to all family members (e.g., memberships to the company fitness center, wellness fairs, annual company picnic, etc.)

Socialization and relationship building. In the best workplaces, employers recognize that people want to forge quality relationships with their coworkers, and that company allegiance can be built from such relationships. Creating a sense of belonging and inclusiveness in your organization takes everyone.

New employees are likely feeling excited … and a bit uneasy. Consider how you can foster a sense of welcoming, support and belonging …. starting as early as a new employee's first day on the job …. even if you aren't officially in a role to orient, mentor, or supervise the new employee.

Actions that everyone can take:

▶ approach a new employee with a warm introduction and a sincere offer of your help with any questions that arise
▶ offer to join them on meal breaks or other breaks
▶ help them to find their way around
▶ if they are new to the community, ask if they need information or connections that would be helpful to them outside of work too

Gallup research has uncovered that "**Those who have a best friend at work** are seven times as likely to be engaged in their jobs, are better at engaging customers, produce higher quality work, have higher well-being, and are less likely to get injured on the job."

> *"Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are."*
>
> *- Brené Brown*

The efforts to create a sense of belonging, and to expand ways that employees can find a "best friend at work" will have the ripple effect across your organization to elevate both the patient and employee experience!

Some recommendations for socialization and relationship building:

▶ Who are your "party people" or "social butterflies"?" Who would enjoy, and could be entrusted, the responsibility of this aspect of onboarding? Wise leaders will recognize that there are certain employees that excel at relationships and putting themselves out there in social situations.

They organize potlucks, celebrate birthdays, invite everyone to a happy hour after work, or make sure a new grad who passed their boards gets celebrated their next day at work. Every department can benefit from empowering a "Chief Party Officer." Notice them and enlist their help.

▶ Employee and/or Family Events. Family social events are a great way for employees from other departments to get to know one another and for employees who may work together daily, but never really "see" each other as humans with family responsibilities. Everyone has a different concept of family. Make sure you acknowledge that furry family members (pets!) may need to be invited to the Summer Family event.

Family events are a great way for employees to see each other as spouses, parents, grandparents, etc. Social groups will naturally form, and your newest employees may find others with like interests.

▶ Community events are another way for a multitude of employees to see each other outside of their work environment. Volunteering is a great way to break down barriers and reduce stress.

Remember, people who play together stay together! Teams can grow stronger through the positive shared experience of creating a community event that has great purpose for their organization!

▶ Employee-driven teams is another way to build relationships! Cross functional or matrixed teams are the norm in an increasing number of organizations. Not only are you getting great work done to improve the organization, but you are also building relationships.

Orientation. This section is not intended to provide in-depth practices that support new employees in gaining competency, consistency, and confidence in the ways of their new organization and their specific job responsibilities.

However, there are some key aspects of this part of the orientation processes that often provide opportunities for improvement.

▶ Personalization of the job-specific orientation process and timeline. Some new employees are going to join the organization with years of experience and high levels of competencies in the role they've been hired for; others may join as a first-time employee and/or new graduate. Customizing or "right-sizing" the orientation plan will be more efficient and satisfying.

▶ Organization-wide orientation sessions are often "overwhelming" and highly focused on regulatory content. These sessions, preferably offered in-person or via live virtual gatherings, could serve as an important opportunity for engaging the new employee in the vision and strategies of the organization, connecting to the culture of the organization, facilitating the establishment of interpersonal relationships and information networks.

▶ When an organization has an organized transformation initiative involving employee-driven teams, the solutions being brought forward to employees by these teams (e.g., standards of behavior, positive communication standards, etc.) should have a place in the organization-wide orientation process. As well, as the employee-driven teams continue their work and introduce new solutions to all employees via trainings and other methods, these solutions should be considered for possible additions to the new hire orientation content. In essence, keeping new hire orientation as current as possible with the latest and greatest solutions.

▶ New leader onboarding is often found to be one of the largest opportunities for improvement of job-specific training.

▶ Some organizations "batch" the start dates of new employees until after they complete the organization's new hire orientation program; mainly due to the need to orient new employees to the regulatory requirements. This can delay the start of new employees, which can be dissatisfying to new employees as well as the departments that need these new employees. A "first days checklist" (see next page) could provide a process to expedite start dates of new employees while meeting the needs for regulatory information.

Sample First Days Checklist

Employee Name: _____ Dept: _____

The First Days Checklist	Date Completed	Employee's Initials	Trainer's Initials
DAY 1			
Infectious Disease and Exposure Control Module/Test			
Hazardous Materials Awareness Module/Test & Access to MSDS.			
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Module/Test			
Emergency Management Program Module/Test			
Abuse and Neglect Module/Test			
Fire and Safety Training Module/Test			
Review HR Module/Test: zero tolerance of alcohol & drugs, zero tolerance for harassment, employee's responsibility to maintain licensure/certificate, employee occurrence reporting, Patient & Residents Rights			
Review Work Rules & Regulations, Behavior Standards, Code of Ethics, Values			
Review of Infection Control Policies			
Review HIPAA Policy			
Proper Lifting Techniques and Transfers, other departmental safety requirements			
DAYS 2-5			
Review of Department Specific Policy / Procedure Manual Process for scheduling time off work, calling in sick, scheduled breaks			
Review of Communication Standards/Plan – Module/Test			
Review of Administrative Policy / Procedure Manual			
Review Occupational Health Policies - Employee responsibility to complete OHS paperwork and medical testing, if not completed at the time of hire and annual TB testing, reporting of injuries, etc.			
Review Chain of Command and Communication Policy			
Review of Payroll Policy – Train on the time clocks. Work Schedules /Shift Rotation/ Shift Differentials/Overtime Policy			
Review job status / Explain FTE status			
Orientation Period "At-Will" first 90 days. 30-Day & 90-Day Check-Ins & 90-day evaluation, mid-year conversations, anniversary annual evaluation process			
Basic Rules: Dress Code, Smoke-Free Campus, Parking			

Date of 1st Day of Work: _____ Submitted to Human Resources: _____

New Employee Rounding. For managers, it is recommended that they jump start a positive working relationship through the practice of New Employee Rounding, which is purposeful 1:1 time scheduled at multiple points during the first months of employment.

These relationship-building rounding sessions are in addition to any other meetings that leaders may have with new employees to "check in" to see how they are doing specifically related to their job orientation competencies.

At 30 and 60 Days, ask:

▶ How do we compare with what we said?
▶ What is going well? Who has been helpful in the orientation period?
▶ Is there anything your previous employer did that worked really well we could adopt?
▶ Is there anything here that would make you leave us?
▶ As your supervisor, how can I help you?

At 90 Days, ask:

▶ How do we compare with what we said?
▶ What is working well? Have there been any individuals who have been helpful to you?
▶ Based on your prior work, what ideas for improvement do you have?
▶ Is there any reason you feel this is not the right place for you?
▶ Do you know of anyone who would be a good fit for our organization?
▶ As your supervisor, how can I help you?

Research published in 2014 showed that 24% of employees leave within the first year. Additional research shows that half of all hourly workers will leave a new job in the first four months. Keeping track of certain statistics is helpful to gauge the results of your efforts toward high quality hiring and onboarding processes.

Given the expense of the hiring process, the cost of a bad hire, and the expense and disruption of turnover, hiring right and onboarding successfully are a must. The aim is that if you "hire tough" you can "manage easy."

Take the time to assess your current hiring and onboarding practices. See if there are opportunities to take these processes to greater levels and produce better results for your organization.

NEW EMPLOYEE ROUNDING

▶ Round with your newest employees. Ask them about their application, interviewing, and onboarding experience.

▶ Evaluate trends in recent years related to employee satisfaction or engagement data and comments for employees in their first year(s) of employment.

▶ Collect baseline data, monitor changes over time, and compared to any goals or targets. Comparing and benchmarking your results against other organizations or national norms can prove helpful too.

- Number of new employees who leave within the first 90 days
- Reasons for new employees who leave within the first 90 days
- Number of new employees who have extended probationary periods
- Employee satisfaction/engagement by years of service
- Employee satisfaction/engagement with the onboarding process
- Time/days taken to fill open positions ("time/days-to-fill")
- Vacancy rate

▶ Seek understanding of the current hiring processes (e.g., pre-employment testing, reference checking, hiring criteria and job qualifications, interview process and questions, background checks, etc.) and at various intervals, research current practices that are getting great results in other organizations/industries.

▶ Seek understanding of current onboarding processes (e.g., department-specific orientation, organization-wide orientation, day one, preceptor training and assignment, welcoming activities, probationary period, new employee evaluation process, etc.) and at various intervals, research current practices that are getting great results in other organizations/industries.

Additional Resources:

▶ CapstoneEDU (eLearning Course) - Effective Hiring and Onboarding

▶ Book - *The Employee Experience: A Capstone Guide to Peak Performance (McLeod, Tetzlaff)*