

Setting the Stage for Successful Recruitment Interviews

It is often said that, we remember a third of what we hear, half of what we read, and 100% of what we feel. If you were to ask recent job applicants how they felt after having gone through the recruitment process at your organization, what would they say? Respected? Frustrated? Enlightened?

Ask job seekers today and many will tell you that they would prefer to work with a company that fits with their skills, knowledge, interests and personal goals. Armed with this knowledge and recognizing that actions speak louder than words; employers should pay close attention to how job candidates feel they are treated throughout the recruitment process in order to attract them.

Setting the stage for successful interviews will ensure that candidates feel valued, respected and appreciated; qualities that most job seekers are looking for in their future employers. Here are a few tips to help you conduct professional interviews that will leave job seekers feeling excited about the possibility of working with your company:

Schedule Interviews

Taking a few moments to speak with job applicants as they drop off resumes is a great way to establish rapport with the individual and conduct an initial screening of their qualifications. However, this should not be the primary or only interview. Scheduling a date/time for qualified candidates to return for a full interview will enable both you and the candidate to properly prepare for the meeting.

Prepare in Advance

Have you ever attended a meeting or job interview where the person you are meeting with rushes in at the last minute? Unfortunately, I have sat in on a more than a few. This behaviour often leaves job candidates feeling frustrated, disrespected and/or that their time doesn't matter. Not the messages that we want to send to potential employees. Prepare in advance by reviewing the resume, organizing relevant interview questions and be sure to arrive early.

Maximize Time & Minimize Distractions

Typically job interviews will range anywhere between 15-20 minutes to 1 hour in duration, depending on the position. Remember that time is not only valuable to the busy manager but also the job candidate. Let the job applicant know in advance how much time to plan for the interview and then honor that timeframe by starting and ending on time and minimizing distractions during the interview.

Let them know that they have your undivided attention, encourage/ask them to do the same. Ensure cell phones, PDA reminders, etc. are forwarded or turned off. If appropriate, advise colleagues that you are not to be disturbed and provide them with an alternate contact and avoid meeting in areas with loud background noises. Sounds simple, right? Maybe so, but for a busy small business entrepreneur this may take some planning as it can be challenging to step away from the operation for any length of time.

Anticipate Candidate Questions

As mentioned earlier in this article job seekers are incredibly savvy and looking for potential employers that are a fit for them. As a result, they will likely have done their homework to learn all they can about your company. During the interview be prepared as they may want to know more about what your company has to offer. This is your opportunity to sell the position and why they should consider working for your company.

Anticipate questions that job applicants might ask and be prepared with answers. Here are a few examples of some common questions to get you started:

- How much does the job pay?
- What kinds of hours would I be expected to work?
- What kind of training do you offer?
- Do you offer healthcare benefits? If so, what are they?
- Are there any other perks or benefits offered to employees? If so, what are they? (ie. Discounted meals, signing bonus, travel, product/service discounts, etc.)
- Is there a uniform? Is it provided?
- What is the dress code? Is there a laundry or dry cleaning allowance?

Follow up, Follow up, Follow up

While it is exciting to contact a well-qualified candidate and offer them the job, it is also important to follow up with the unsuccessful candidates. This is an opportunity to close the loop on the process and ensure that all of the job applicants feel respected and that their efforts were appreciated.

Leave applicants with a lasting, positive impression of your company and encourage them to consider reapplying for employment in the future. Who knows, they might be a better fit for a future position, refer a friend for employment or perhaps even become a future customer.

By taking the time to prepare and conduct well organized interviews you send a message to job applicants that says “we are professional and we appreciate your interest, time and efforts”. Now, who wouldn’t feel good about accepting a position with a company like that?