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GROUP PARTNERS

ASPIRE to HIRE

FIND THE BEST TALENT IN THE BEEHIVE STATE

6 Hiring Tips You Didn't Learn
During Leadership Training

INTRODUCTION

Your company is growing, the local economy has never been better. In fact, it's starting to get so good that commuter traffic used to be the biggest pain in the neck you faced. Oh, if only you could go back to traffic being the worst of your problems!

You were doing an okay job of hiring, the need certainly has never been greater and there are multiple openings in everyone's department, then it happened.

Your top performer told you she received an offer from a company that just built a state of the art campus, equipped with a cafeteria, on-site gym and state of the art game room (spoiler alert, these perks aren't nearly as important as you think).

You tried to counter her offer, and she cared enough about the relationship you built to listen, but in the end her new offer was just too good. Before you knew it, you were signing her farewell card.

Now, the goals you had in mind at the beginning of the year have gone from stretch to seemingly unattainable.

In this market, talent is incredibly hard to find and even harder to attract. No one is applying to your job posting, and your talent acquisition team (if you're lucky enough to have one) is buried. The positions that were open prior to your top performer leaving, have been open for going on six months now, and you have two more people on your team at risk of jumping ship.

Employee engagement and turnover aren't something that you've tracked, but the former seems at an all-time low and the latter seems at an all-time high, company-wide.

At this point, there is way too much on your plate to prioritize hiring. Let's face it, it's your least favorite part of being in leadership anyway.

So you've started to take those calls from recruiters that you used to screen. You've gone as far as signing agreements with terms that feel one-sided, in an effort to see additional candidates.

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After all, these guys charge top dollar for what they do, so they must have a pool of passive candidates ready to go.

But now, managing all the relationships with recruiters feels like another full-time job. They all

want to go to lunch to build a relationship and keep asking for exclusive deals. It'd be one thing if they were presenting qualified candidates — the job description is posted online for everyone to see — but the resumes they're providing are lackluster, to say the least.

Why are they sending people that are unqualified?

You've also asked your team who they know that would be a good fit, but they keep saying everyone is happy where they are currently. Even offering referral bonuses to employees doesn't seem to surface any potential leads.

As a result, half of your day is focused on keeping your business moving and getting as close to that goal as possible, while the other half is spent interviewing candidates who you couldn't have imagined considering just a few short months ago.

You know in the back of your mind that hiring needs to be your top priority, but it doesn't feel like you have the time to dedicate to the hiring process and you're not getting what you need from your internal team or these staffing firms.

You're trapped in a vicious cycle: You're not filling open positions and taking on more responsibilities. If you can't solve for this, you'll miss your goals by a mile.

You'll lose additional people, which is the last thing you need right now, and most importantly, you'll have to continue working 12-14 hour days and spend time away from your family. So, what's the solution? The answer may be simple though not easy. The following are six hiring tips that you may not have learned as part of your leadership training.

1. Identify the business need you're trying to solve with this open position
2. Build a profile of your ideal candidate
3. Position your current team and culture to attract the ideal candidate
4. Align internal stakeholders upfront
5. Create a sourcing, interview and onboarding strategy
6. Execute

Let's take a closer look at these steps one by one.

STEP 1

Identify the business need you're trying to solve with this open position

So, you lost your top performer. There are two ways to look at it.

1) You can feel sorry for yourself and try to replace her with a carbon copy. or 2) You can look at this as an opportunity to reset and re-evaluate your current team and the business objectives that will lead you to achieve your goals. And perhaps, even an opportunity to upgrade your talent.

You can't control what's happened to you up to this point, but you can control what you do from here.

Take a hard look at your team as a whole (if you lead a team of one, look at the business partners that this individual supports). What were some of the gaps that your top performer had? Where can the remaining members step up to fill those gaps?

You may realize that what you need in your next hire doesn't closely resemble what you had in the individual who left.

If your new position is a growth position, and not a backfill, it works the same way. What can the team use as a whole that will make it stronger and more synergistic. What is the true business need?

I can't stress this enough. Too often, we get focused on replacing

someone who left and end up with tunnel vision. We think that we need a certain skillset without taking a step or two back to look at the unique business problem holistically.

You may realize that what you need in your next hire doesn't closely resemble what you had in the individual who left.

This is the first and most critically neglected step in the entire hiring process. It's rare, but sometimes it even leads to the realization that you don't need to hire at all.

Most of the time, you will realize that you still need to hire someone, but this exercise will ensure that you hire right.

If you're finding this difficult to do, then enlist the help of stakeholders around you. We'll talk more about this in step four, but **hiring should never be a unilateral decision.**

Even if it's effectively done by only one person, the next hire on your team will make an impact on a number of individuals, teams and processes in your organization. You've heard the cliché about the pebble being thrown in the middle of the ocean.

You'll want to do a quick interview of the most important stakeholders this position will work with, to see what they value in the next hire you make.

STEP 2

Build a profile of your ideal candidate

You have a job description, sure.

When is the last time you read it? Actually, read it — not just skimmed it.

If you're like most, when you go back to re-read your current job description you'll find one of two things: 1) A completely sterile document that doesn't differentiate the position or your company at all, or 2) perhaps it's simply a wish list.

We'll focus on the job description in step five, but the point is that this is all you have for candidates and recruiters (internal or external) to understand what you're looking for in the position.

It's not enough.

Frankly, there is work to be done here that many aren't willing to do, but you need to create more than that tired job description when you're hiring.

Think of the profile as everything that isn't in the job description. Everything that isn't the skillset you need in this position.

The profile should include the attributes and/or behaviors you need in this individual.

Are you part of a small company or start-up? You need someone who possesses an owner's mentality.

Are you part of a large corporation that has well established processes in place? You need someone who can collaborate and pay attention to detail.

You should be able to come up with the top five attributes someone must possess to be successful in this job.

At minimum, you should be able to come up with the top five attributes someone must possess to be successful in this job. And critically, these attributes must be prioritized — stack ranked from top to bottom

and then, like the skills section of your job description, understood what are the must-haves versus the nice-to-haves.

Again, be sure that you take a holistic approach by first looking at your current team/stakeholders to help you determine the attributes of your successful next hire.

On that note, have you talked to your current team yet?

STEP 3

Position your current team and culture to attract the ideal candidate

Culture is one of the business world's favorite buzzwords right now, but what no one talks about is how hard it is to change a culture. You can't just expect to implement a few processes, employ some best practices, and get a game room with unlimited free soda and expect a meaningful change.

Whether on purpose or not, every team and every company have a culture. Do you know what your team's culture is?

If you're an attentive leader (hint: if you're still reading this guide, you are) then you have a pretty good idea. If you haven't thought much about your current culture, it's important that you

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take the time to verbalize it right away.

Again, you can't just fix your culture overnight. That said, you can look to the future as a guide to help you hire for the

present. In other words, understand the culture of your team and your overall company today, as well as where you want to take it.

Ideally, you'll want to find someone who can contribute to both. But you don't know how long it's going to take to move the culture

where you think it should go, so you must hire someone who can contribute today.

Employee engagement is critical for retaining talent, and you'll never keep someone who doesn't contribute to your team and company's current culture.

For now, understand your current culture, and the attributes that make someone successful in it. With this information, you're almost ready to find that next great team member.

STEP 4

Align internal stakeholders upfront

Skip this step and you're setting yourself up for extreme frustration. Those of you who have been through it know what I mean.

Of course, I'm talking about getting ready to make an offer (or worse, having made an offer already) and finding out someone in your organization who matters isn't on board with your decision.

You lose face and the candidate has a bad experience even if you end up hiring them.

Here's the thing, it's not just about knowing who will need to weigh in on a prospective hire before the decision is made. You'll save yourself hours by simply defining the interview and decision-making-processes up-front, before you even start meeting candidates.

But even more importantly, you'll have an opportunity to get crucial feedback from stakeholders around the organization on what you could use in your next hire. This not only helps you hire right, it's a great opportunity to solicit important feedback on how you and your team are doing.

Remember earlier when I talked about the possibility that the next person on your team could end up being nothing like the person who just left? This is the best way to find out.

From a practical standpoint, you'll build credibility and critical buy-in from people who could end up squashing a hiring decision if not consulted up-front.

You can keep the process short and sweet by having multiple stakeholders meet with your candidate at the same time, even if they haven't been a part of the interview process in the past.

Identifying the decision-making process is as simple as thinking about anyone who could veto your decision up-front, and involving them along the way. Simply having been consulted first usually means they won't even care about meeting your candidates, they'll just be happy to have had a say.

Not to mention the fact that they'll appreciate your good judgement for having consulted with them on your next hiring decision.

Now that you've gained alignment from all stakeholders (including the ones who could throw a last-minute wrench in your decision) you're ready to hire.

STEP 5

Create a sourcing, interview and onboarding strategy

Full disclosure, this part is hard and the market is a factor that is outside of your control. But if you get it right, you'll hire less often because you'll have engaged employees that are part of a highly productive team and are much less likely to leave.

So, it's well worth the effort.

For most hiring managers, this part of the process is where they focus all their effort, which is a critical mistake.

The only way to create an effective sourcing strategy, interview process, and employee on-boarding program that leads to a world class candidate experience, is if you have completed steps one through four up to this point.

Once you have done that, focus on re-writing your job description (unless you are one of the rare ones who already has it perfect). This is your opportunity to sell. Think about how you would talk to a candidate you are really excited about, and write the description with them in mind.

If you're not on LinkedIn yet, build a profile immediately. There is no better place to access passive candidates than on LinkedIn.

The days of post and pray are long gone!

You know the business need, have identified attributes/ behaviors, understand your culture, and gotten feedback from stakeholders, so you have the information you need to create effective interview questions.

Don't overthink it. You're never going to get the right information if you ask a candidate to sell you a pen, or how they would teach someone to tie their shoes. Are you trying to play "gotcha," or are you trying to identify the person can effectively do the job you need them to do?

Be sure that you or your corporate recruiting team are communicative and don't leave candidates hanging, especially once they've interviewed. If they're not a fit, let them know right away, preferably with some actionable feedback they can use. If you add value for them, they won't forget it.

The interview process is free marketing, even for those you don't hire.

No one who has a good experience goes on Glassdoor.com to trash your company. Who knows, maybe they'll actually go give you a positive review despite not getting the job.

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For the one you do hire, the interview experience informs their opinion about your leadership style and team culture. First impressions, right?

Aside from communication throughout the interview, you can do simple and inexpensive things like find out their favorite movie, beverage or book and have a small package for them on their first day.

Want to really go above and beyond? Send their spouse and family a thank you card for all of the time they're about to spend

with you.

As their leader, you are a big part of their first 90 days of development (which, again, starts before their first day), but you can't control everything, so control what you can and stay close to them once the offer is extended.

Remember: You don't want to go through this process again, so keep the one you hire happy and you won't have to.

STEP 6

Execute

You've just received the game plan, now go out and execute. It may take a little practice, but action is always better than spending your time thinking about or trying to perfect the plan.

If the above action plan is one that you're comfortable attempting and feel confident you can execute, go do it. I can assure you that if you execute on the above plan, you will have much greater hiring success immediately.

If you can effectively execute on the plan above, you'll fill positions quicker, attract the best talent for your unique business challenges, and retain that talent, so you are hiring more for growth and less for back-fills. But if you believe there is value in outsourcing all or part of the above process, then we can help.

SEARCH Group Partners has a combined 60+ years of experience recruiting in Executive, IT, Healthcare, Accounting/Finance, Office/Administrative and Marketing/Creative positions.

You've just received the game plan, now go out and execute.

Founded and led by CEO Ema Ostarcevic, we leverage our proprietary process and extensive network (especially along the Wasatch Front) to find you the best talent for your unique business needs.

What we've learned is that placing top talent isn't just about finding great people proactively (that's certainly part of it), it's

about identifying what you and your team need first and truly consulting with you on how to attract and retain top talent.

You can take the tips I've outlined above, implement them, and I'm certain you'll have success. But if you feel like it's a little outside your lane and you see the value in hiring right, then let us take this off your already full plate.

Using our proprietary process, we'll help you find your next top performer.

I don't want you to think it won't take work on your end, of course it will. But you'll have a partner to help you through the toughest parts and ultimately do the heavy lifting for you.

After working with us, you'll walk away with an improved hiring process, but most importantly, with the best talent for your hiring need. And you won't pay anything until we make good on that promise.

If you are ready to partner with a different kind of recruiting firm and fill your positions with the best talent, then I invite you to schedule a call to learn more today.



BY SCOTTY JOHN

Scotty is an experienced staffing professional, having spent eight years placing professionals in the IT and Healthcare industries. As Client Relations Director at SEARCH Group Partners, Scotty's responsibility is making sure our clients get the top talent they need in order to accomplish their goals.

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We are passionate about helping you find the right talent and resources to achieve your goals

- Our staff has 60-plus years of recruiting experience combined
- We've won Inavero's Best of Staffing Client Award 2014–2018
- We help you find the right talent for Executives, IT, Healthcare, Accounting/Finance, Office/Administrative and Marketing/Creative
- We connect you with our extensive network that stretches the Wasatch Front and beyond
- We love what we do

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