

HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TOP STAFF

Presentation to SIDE by Dr Steven A. Saunders

The two principal causes of job failure are:

1. poor recruiting processes
2. poor leadership.

In this paper we will focus on recruitment processes. A six part process will be presented and pointers will be provided as to what and what not to do when recruiting.

The pain and cost of poor recruiting is substantial. The cost of getting it right the first time is small in comparison.

As a starting point remember the Axiom “a good vacancy beats a bad hire”.

Here is where many employers go wrong:

- No formal application process
- Too much haste to fill the role
- Over reliance on “gut feel”
- Failure to carry out proper verbal reference checks
- Trusting/believing what the prospective employee tells you
- Failure to use psychometric testing.

Employment Lawyers, Advocates, Mediation Services and the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) are all extremely busy dealing with the fall out of poor recruiting.

There is a better way.

Notes:

Use a balanced scorecard approach



1. Interview

Preparation is required. Use a structured approach. Ask these questions:

- What is your greatest achievement? Their answer will give you clues as to their personality and their values.
- What is your greatest disappointment? If they have none, have they ever approached life with real passion?
- Why are you applying for this job? Do their eyes light up or is this job just any port in a storm?
- What do you know about this job? Have they done their homework? Candidates who haven't done their homework on the role are rarely serious.
- Who was your best boss and why? Is this person like me?
- Who was their worst boss? Beware of candidates who bag previous bosses. In time you will be next.
- Tell me your life story – in a nut shell? Can they tell a story (their story) coherently and simply?
- Have you ever lodged a personal grievance against a previous employee? If yes, beware.
- Note how your candidate manages these and other job specific questions.
- In short you want to establish whether a candidate has the SKILL and the WILL to do the job you are interviewing for.

In the final analysis we tend to hire on skill and fire on attitude (WILL).

The essential attitudes/values required on the farm are: work ethic, ability to work independently of constant supervision, common sense (farming style), adaptability, mechanical aptitude, animal “sense” and sense of humour.

2. Track record

The longer a person has been in the workforce, the more weight is put on track record. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour in a similar situation.

3. Education and qualifications (E & Q)

Nice to have BUT at the end of the day without the WILL, E & Q are relatively worthless on the farm.

4. Gut feel

Important for sure. Make sure you validate against other measures. Often women have a sixth sense which can add value to the situation.

5. Verbal reference checking

Talk with as many previous bosses as you can. At least three is recommended. Be suspicious if the most recent boss is not listed as a referee. At times, written references can be of questionable value. Always ask, “Would you re-employ this person if a relevant position was available?” Also always ask, “Was this person a well poisoner?” It is extraordinary how many employers who have ‘eased out’ their previous employee (freed up their future, so to speak) are not contacted by prospective employers. To me, this beggars belief.

6. Psychometric assessment

It is the writer’s view that psychometric assessments are an absolute must when recruiting for positions where the WILL is key. A proper assessment will give clues as to:

- Fit to job

Notes:

- Fit to workplace culture – including yourself or their boss
- Hot and Cold buttons for best management.

The cost of a FinxS personal profile is \$180 + GST.

Follow the rules and your hit rate will improve. For further advice, please contact us at:

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