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The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
How to Interview, Hire and Fire



HOW TO INTERVIEW, HIRE AND FIRE

1

Summary

This article offers some timeless tips on finding, managing and firing employees. Hire the right employees and 80% of your job is done. Hire the wrong employees, and your problems are multiplied many fold. Letting people go is never easy, but in order for a company to excel it must have consistent performance standards that everyone adheres to; those that want to make their own rules may not have a place on your team.

Interviewing Ideas

- Successful interviewing should be designed to obtain certain answers that will either stimulate interest for further discussion or serve as a warning sign that this might not be the best person for the position. You should develop a list of standard questions that you consistently ask when interviewing. You will want to make sure that you ask every candidate the same essential questions.
- In an interview, you need to discover the candidate's ability to meet the parameters of the job, and his willingness to make the sacrifices it will take to do it right. Will the necessary commitment be there when you need it? The candidate's past performance with his prior employers is a good indicator.
- People often hire haphazardly, grabbing any candidate due of desperation, lack of time, or plain ignorance. Then they hope everything works out. This is a reckless and irresponsible way to hire. Instead, plan ahead. Think about a succession plan and look for exceptional talent.
- A person's ability to lead others can be foretold from how well he manages his own life.
- Look for people with a sincere attitude of wanting to help people. This caring approach comes from within and is not something you can teach through training programs. Look for people who put a smile in their voice. It is critical to the success of your company.
- **BEWARE:** Any person with character flaws hired will be the weak link in your team. The assessment of character in an interview can be difficult. Warning signs include:
 - their failure or unwillingness to take responsibility for past actions or circumstances
 - unfulfilled promises or obligations
 - lots of unexplained Job Hopping
 - how he talks about his prior employers, bosses, etc.
 - showing up late with all kinds of excuses
- Remember, no matter how great the player, if he can't play with the team, he won't help the company. The addition of a new team member always alters the chemistry of the team.
- When the interview is over, you should be comfortable with this person and confident that you can trust him with the responsibilities of the job. Be mindful that this person, along with everyone else you hire, will help determine whether you succeed, so you can't afford a mistake even with one new employee; this is particularly true when filling leadership positions.



HOW TO INTERVIEW, HIRE AND FIRE

2

Staffing

- Companies repeatedly make the mistake of rewarding overachievers with promotions to leadership positions even though they possess no leadership qualities. How does that make any sense at all? It hurts the employee and his staff as well as the overall performance of the company.
- Execute whatever financial steps you must to retain your key personnel, becoming proactive in this area instead of reacting when another company begins courting their services. And remember, you can't allow your organization to become so dependent on any one individual that his loss will hamstring your ability to be the best.
- Your strength and determination can only achieve so much. Therefore, your future success becomes directly linked to the leaders you hire to function under you. Finding and hiring top leaders is an incredibly important process that will give life to everything you want to accomplish. Look for people who have the ability to assume leadership responsibilities.
- In the end, you must come to terms with two key inevitabilities faced by most companies: you won't be able to afford everyone, and you won't be able to accommodate everyone's employment goals. Winners don't come cheap. If you can't hire winners, you have hire people who have strong character and winning instincts and then coach them to be champions.

Hiring The Right Kind of Players

- Hiring and retaining good people is one of the most important tasks of entrepreneurs. If you hire well, the benefits are multiplied and seem nearly endless. If you hire poorly, the problems are multiplied and seem endless.
- Having the right players determines 60 to 80 percent of the success of any organization. If you hire the right people, you won't have problems later. If you hire the wrong people, you're in trouble and all the revolutionary management techniques in the world may not bail you out.
- True Leaders are never threatened by hiring people with great potential. One "great" person will always out-produce and out-perform two mediocre people. If you can find an "impact player" you and the company will greatly benefit. An "impact player" is a superstar who can instantly change the whole complexion of the team. Incidentally, impact players usually possess not only technical ability, but also leadership skills.
- Hiring the right people is the most critical decision entrepreneurs face. Determine the criteria for the best employee and hire only people who fall into the top 5 percent of your criteria. Do not compromise. Spend the time necessary to make the right selection. The quality of your employees directly determines your ultimate level of success.
- The key to surrounding yourself with Leaders is to find the best people, then developing them into the best Leaders they can be. Great Leaders produce other great Leaders. Secure Leaders are able to surround themselves with people more qualified than themselves.
- When looking to hire the top "Stars", the best way to locate them is to ask other top superstars for their recommendations. Stars will always recommend other stars!



HOW TO INTERVIEW, HIRE AND FIRE

3

- The single most important contributor to productivity is employee quality. You must hire the very best people because no management system in the world can make up for having less than the best talent. Every new hire made should raise the mean level of performance of the team.
- You are only as good as the people that report to you. If you do not insist on hiring absolutely the best, then you are deciding that employees of average or worse quality are acceptable.

When It's Time To Let Someone Go

- When you finally have that tough conversation with a non-performer, it is rarely a surprise. Non-performers are coasting along hoping nobody will notice their poor attitude and lack of performance. They aren't surprised to be having an exit interview, and in fact, most will quietly wonder what took you so long to send them packing.
- If someone isn't capable of handling their responsibilities, then you are duty-bound to find someone else who can. Fairness is determined by the clarity in which you explain your performance standards and the consistency by which you enforce those standards.
- Sentimentality can't be allowed to cloud decision making when dealing with performance evaluations. Everyone should understand that no matter what his seniority or position, lack of performance will lead to dismissal. Firing someone is never pleasant, but if people believe they can coast without producing, the company won't function optimally.
- Let performance be your guide. You should have little tolerance for those who constantly have their hand out demanding additional increases and pay hikes. These people generate an unhealthy buzz within the company. It's best to use a direct, old-fashioned approach to deal with this problem; show them the door.
- Once an employee no longer performs up to expectations – even if he has been around for 20 years – you have to correct the situation. If you lose confidence in his ability, you simply must make a change.
- You can't move forward if employees are pulling you back. As a manager, it is imperative that you identify those who want to work with you and those who will always be unhappy. And you must unload anyone who would rather be negative than productive. You must rid yourself of these whiners, complainers and yappers who impede improvement through their negative talk and attitude. Those who receive a fair hearing on their complaints, yet still don't buy into the company policy need a hall pass to an exit interview