HR SUPPORT CENTER

HR ON-DEMAND

BCM PAYROLL SERVICES

The Hiring Guide: Best practices for hiring, onboarding, and retention

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Introduction

Did you know up to 20% of employee turnover happens in the first 45 days?[1] And the cost of replacing those employees can result in a huge burden on the organization: up to 300% of the replaced employee's salary![2] Simply put, it's becoming increasingly important to make sure you're attracting and hiring the right employees – and that you have a robust onboarding experience that makes them want to stay. It all starts with getting the right candidates to apply.

Hiring

THE BEST RECRUITING STARTS EARLY — WITH PRE-RECRUITING. HERE ARE 5 WAYS TO UP YOUR GAME.

1

Recruit from within by developing an internal pipeline. This can help shorten your hiring and onboarding timelines with candidates who you already know are good fits for your organization and who believe in your company culture. So, when new positions open, make sure your current employees know how to apply.

2

Establish an external talent pipeline. You can do this easily with a website feature that allows prospects to sign up for email blasts when new positions are available. You can also post open positions on your company LinkedIn page.

3

Network. Talking to others in your industry can land you referrals when you need them. They also provide you with a referral source so you get more feedback about a candidate than you may otherwise be able to gather from a resume and interview.

4

Consider an employee referral program. Your employees can be your best recruitment tool because they can speak from experience about what it's like to work for your company and give the candidate a sneak peek into your company culture and values.

5

Be consistent. Making exemptions to your policies and practices can open you up to discrimination claims.

SAVE TIME WITH A DESIGNATED RECRUITING ROLE

A recruitment point person helps keep the process from getting disorganized. This person may be in charge of managing your job postings, pre-screening resumes, and acting as your liaison with candidates. A lot of time in the hiring process is spent reviewing cover letters and resumes from unqualified applicants; streamlining this task can significantly speed up your hiring.

BE SMART ABOUT JOB POSTINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Compelling job descriptions and postings are critical to attracting the right talent. Beyond a list of essential duties and requirements, the **posting** should include background on your company and values, and build excitement for the role. Remember to tout perks about the position. For example, does it include flexible schedules, does your organization encourage great work-life balance, do you provide free food on-site, do you offer unlimited PTO? If so, talk about it! Your job posting should show applicants the kind of culture you have, and it should motivate the kinds of applicants you want to hire.

When it comes to listing the requirements in your **job description**, think about them in terms of your ideal candidate – including education, experience, and temperament – and the essential functions of the job. This list of essentials should be around 10 items. Too many, and they may not all be "essential." Too few and we're relying a bit too heavily on the "other duties as assigned" catch-all. Being detailed is important, but you'll also want to keep minutia off of the essential functions list. Think about what this employee's standard work day will look like when listing the essential job functions.

The flip side of building excitement among good candidates is discouraging the unqualified ones from cluttering up your applicant pool. Being clear about the qualifications and expectations saves time for both you and the applicants. Candidates are less likely to apply for jobs they're clearly unqualified for, and you'll spend less time going through their applications.

However, make sure that the listed qualifications are actually necessary for the job. Unnecessary qualifications, such as those used simply to deter candidates from applying, could discourage a great candidate. They could also have discriminatory effects.

It's important to keep in mind that most positions evolve. It's therefore a good idea to review and adjust job descriptions whenever a position is open and as part of the annual performance evaluation process.

PREPARE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AHEAD OF TIME

Preparing interview questions in advance will help you feel more prepared for the interview itself and give each candidate your full attention. It will also ensure that you cover everything you want to discuss and maintain a consistent approach with all the candidates. After all, you'll need to compare apples to apples, so the interview questions should be the same.

It's also important to compile the right kinds of questions and remember to keep them job-focused. It's easy to stray into troublesome waters, even when you think you're basing questions on legitimate job factors. For example, you might want to ask about scheduling availability, but to do this, you wouldn't want to ask about available childcare. In this case, you'd define and emphasize what you need in terms of scheduling and ask if the candidate would be able to meet those requirements. Asking about someone's childcare could easily be perceived as discriminatory, even if that's not your intent.

USE THE INTERVIEW FORMAT THAT MAKES THE MOST SENSE

There are different approaches to the interview itself. There are standard interviews, behavioral and situational interviews, even presentation and panel interviews.

Behavioral interviews can be used to give you a sense of how the candidate may act in certain job-related situations. For example, you might ask the candidate about a time they had to help an upset client with a difficult situation. As an interviewer, you'd want to hear how the candidate worked with the client and walked them through the difficult situation, what their thought process was like, and how they achieved a solution.

Situational or stress-based interviews are often required of firefighters, police, or emergency personnel. In this case, the interview is actually intended to cause the candidate stress. This interview format is not as commonly used outside of those types of positions, but there may be aspects of it that would be useful for hiring in your industry.

Another method of interviewing that's quite popular is panel interviewing, where more than one interviewer is present at a time. This format can serve two purposes.

First, if your organization is small, it may be possible to get everyone who will work with this person in a room at once. This has some obvious advantages, such as ensuring that everyone likes the candidate and eliminating the need for a second interview for the applicant to meet others on the team. It can also serve as a form of situation or stress-based interview. For example, let's say that you're hiring for a public relations professional. This person must work with a wide variety of professionals and the public, day in and day out, and likely under quite a bit of pressure. Having this candidate meet with a large group of people makes sense, as it resembles what they'll do every day.

As you select an interview type that works for you, ask yourself the following: Who needs to be involved in the interview? Who makes the hiring decision? Will you have single or multiple interviews? When will you conduct the interviews? And how soon does a decision need to be made?

LET THE APPLICANTS TALK

Ask your questions, but then stop talking. And don't lead the candidate with the questions. Your great questions won't get great answers if the candidate can do little more than say "yes" or "no." Stick to open-ended questions, and then give the candidate time to reply. You'll learn more about them that way.

Onboarding

MAKE SURE YOUR ONBOARDING PROGRAM IS MORE THAN AN ORIENTATION

A lot of people use the words “onboarding” and “orientation” interchangeably, but these are two very different things. Orientation is usually a session that the employee attends on their first day in a new role. Sometimes it might last a few days. Onboarding, on the other hand, is the way new hires get adjusted to the social and performance aspects of their jobs while also learning the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to be successful in your company.

With the right onboarding program, you can ensure that your new employee gets off to the best possible start. Research shows that each year, nearly 25% of the nation’s workforce undergoes some type of career transition. As we mentioned earlier, turnover is expensive. But having a great onboarding experience can really pay off. In fact, nearly 70% of employees are more likely to stay with a company for at least three years if they experience great onboarding.[1]

“A lot of people use the words “onboarding” and “orientation” interchangeably, but these are two very different things.”

25%

Each year of the nation’s workforce undergoes some type of career transition.

70%

of employees are more likely to stay with a company for at least three years if they experience great onboarding.

The sooner an employee feels confident in their job and place in the corporate culture, the sooner they will be contributing to your bottom line, and the more likely they will stay. An effective onboarding process builds on the excitement and energy new employees feel at the start of their new jobs and sets the foundation for an employee’s long term success.

START THE ONBOARDING PROCESS BEFORE THE EMPLOYEE BEGINS WORK

It's important to go over the details of the employee's first day before they even get there. What time should they arrive? Where do they park? How do they dress? What do they need to bring? Whom should they ask for upon arrival? What breaks will they have? How do they clock in? What is their orientation schedule?

Tell new employees what the office is like and what to expect on their first day. Maybe mention the general working hours of people in the office. Whatever you say, get them excited for their first day at work!

Another important task is setting up the new employee's workspace. Determine what equipment and supplies they'll need, and pre-order them if necessary. Consider setting up their computer and having their login credentials ready to go. You'll prevent wasted time, and the new employee will be able to focus their energy on diving into their new role.

EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS AND POLICIES

Most employers simply tell employees they offer benefit X, Y, and Z without explaining what each benefit means. Consequently, many employees have no idea what their benefits are or how to use them. If employees don't understand the perks they get, then the perks don't build excitement or inspire loyalty. If employers don't take the time to explain benefits to new employees, then they may feel their employer doesn't have their best interests at heart.

Whether you offer many rich benefits or just a few, set aside time to make sure every employee knows what benefits they get, the ways to use them, and how to enroll. Knowing that a benefit is readily accessible will make it feel more valuable.

Give employees time to read the company handbook, and let them know whom they should go to with any questions.

INTRODUCE NEW EMPLOYEES TO YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

Part of introducing your new employee to the rest of the team involves familiarizing them with the culture, mission, vision, and values of your company. Where has it been and where is it going? If you have a mission statement, manifesto, or culture guide, make sure employees are made familiar with it from day one.

Be up front and concrete about what your company values are, how your company follows them, and how you expect every employee to exemplify those values. Ask new employees how they see themselves contributing to your mission and vision, and create goals together that fit with your company culture.

ASSIGN NEW EMPLOYEES A MENTOR

An assigned mentor can make the new employee feel welcome, answer their questions, and help them navigate through the organization's culture. Employees will feel comfortable sooner and will more quickly achieve a sense of acceptance and belonging. New hires may be hesitant to ask questions for fear of appearing unskilled. Peers can fill in the gap by making themselves available for questions that new hires might not want to discuss with their boss. Mentors also can show the new employees around, introduce them to others, go to lunch with them the first few days, and keep lines of communication open while respecting confidentiality and offering encouragement.

A successful peer or mentor candidate should be a seasoned employee who understands organizational practices, culture, processes, and systems. They should be a friendly volunteer with high personal performance standards, a positive attitude, and good communication skills. The peer's role is not to be the new employee's supervisor. Training and communicating performance standards and evaluations builds a foundation for the supervisor to guide the employee in the future and should not be delegated to the mentor.

Retention

ENGAGE EMPLOYEES BY HELPING THEM IMAGINE THEIR FUTURE

Research shows that nearly 1 in 4 new hires turn over before their first anniversary.[2] Many employees leave because they don't feel engaged with the organization's mission or their co-workers.

This is often a symptom of seeing no future for themselves at the company, either because they don't feel like a part of the team or because it seems there is no opportunity for career advancement within the organization.

So how do you do engage and retain your best employees? Here are 4 ways to encourage employee retention:

1

Encourage them to share their ideas. Ask them to share their thoughts on how to improve the organization, and speak their mind. Communicate with transparency and help employees understand the vision and direction of the company, as well as how they can do their part to contribute to the company's larger goals.

2

Involve them in key company initiatives. Employees who feel connected to the organization are more likely to share their ideas and be invested in the long-term success of the company. If they have a sense of ownership and involvement at the outset, they'll be more likely to want to see those initiatives to completion.

3

Recognize them. Employee recognition is a great way to show your team members that you value their work. It's also a good opportunity to reiterate how their work was meaningful by directly tying it to the success of the organization.

4

Invest in training opportunities. Contrary to common fears, training employees doesn't usher them out the door. Yes, training may prepare employees for employment outside your company, but it also prepares them for a better future working for you. Training also shows you trust your employees and that you're committed to their career growth.

Conclusion

There's no guarantee that every hire will be the right fit and stay with your company as long as you'd like, but you can help cut down on bad hires—and the costs of bad hires—by following the best practices outlined in this document. Develop and implement a recruiting strategy, be smart about your hiring procedures, don't skimp on the onboarding, and involve and invest in your employees. They'll be happy to stay, and you'll be glad to have them.

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