



METHODS FOR MANAGEMENT

Some Advice on Hiring Employees

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Hiring Employees

Do I really have to wait for references to be checked?

We've all interviewed applicants who seemed perfect for our open position and we've been tempted to make a job offer immediately, foregoing the standard reference and/or background checks. It is easy to become impatient. Usually, you've waited weeks to hire someone, posting an ad, sorting through the replies, interviewing those that actually showed up for the appointment and all the while the work is backed up. The position must be filled now!

When you do finally interview a great candidate – why can't you hire the applicant immediately?

Limited Perspective

Before you make a job offer, remember that your perspective is limited – you've formed an opinion based only on a couple of short interactions. Why not take it one step further and gather additional feedback to get the whole picture? Have a policy to check references and background information of all potential hires. You might be quite surprised as to what you find. A quick Google search may give you a reason to abort the process quickly.

Reference and background checks complete your understanding of the applicant's qualifications. When buying a car, you do your research. You look into the car's history (e.g., its performance record, its safety record, cost of maintenance) before buying to ensure you are making a good purchase. Similarly, you need to research the background of your potential new employee. You're making a major investment in this individual and you'd like to improve your odds of success.

Understand Whom You Are Hiring

Reference and background checks allow you to verify information such as dates of employment, educational credentials, and job duties. They also allow you, with the proper authorization, to check into criminal, financial, and/or civil records. Further, because past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, feedback from previous managers or supervisors can be invaluable. They are often able to give you insight as to how the individual actually performed while on the job. Be sure to ask for references.



Tips for Pre-Hire Verifications

BE CONSISTENT. Just as in pre-employment testing, you must ask the same questions and verify the same information for every candidate for an open position.

BE SELECTIVE. Be selective on the background information you require from applicants. While you may want a credit report from applicants for a money-handling position, you probably will not need that information for a production position.

VERIFY REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES. If the position requires certain certifications, licenses, or degrees, make sure you confirm those credentials for each candidate. You don't want to be surprised by realizing that your new hire can't drive the company van.

VERIFY PRIOR EMPLOYMENT. Call the applicant's former employers and ask about the applicant's qualifications. While some companies may only verify dates of employment and job title, others may provide you with valuable information about the applicant's work habits. At the least, you verify the applicant's work history; at best, you find out that the applicant was a great employee.

CALL REFERENCES. While any reference provided by the applicant will most likely say only positive things, you may find out information that will help you determine if the applicant will "fit" the job and your company culture. For example, the reference may tell you that the person is methodical and likes systems. While this is not a negative reference, it is important to know - especially if you are looking for someone who is highly flexible and who responds well to change.

DOCUMENT ANSWERS. When checking references or talking to previous employers, write down the questions you ask and the answers you are given. If a previous employer only verifies title and dates of employment, note that the employer refused to give you additional information. This documents that you used your best efforts to gather information about the applicant and helps in issues of negligent hiring.



However thorough you choose to be, retrieving background and reference information can either back up the good feelings you already have about the candidate or provide critical information to help you avoid a bad hiring decision. Either way, with a little research, you complete the picture and make an informed hiring decision.

This article was written with assistance from PMSI.

If you'd like assistance with your specific needs, contact us and someone will be able to work with you.
Call Us at: **253-851-6327**

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