



HR Solutions for Small Business, LLC

Stacey Etherson

The “HR-Lady” for Nonprofits & Small Businesses

“Hiring Doesn’t Have to be Rocky!” Plan

When you hire in a small business or nonprofit, whom do you hire? Friends? People in your network? Or, friends of the people who all ready work for you?

Do you find this approach results in qualified staff?

This next story is all too real in the small business environment.

When I shared with a friend that I was starting a human resources consulting practice, she shared the following story with her permission to use it to help others who hire staff. As we shall see, best intentions do not always end well.

A friend married later in life and settled down to raise her children. Sadly, she later found herself faced with a divorce. She was concerned about reentering the workforce and whether her skills had kept pace. Someone she knew at church was hiring a part-time office assistant to perform 3 job responsibilities: answer phones, set up appointments and bill clients using the computer. This friend said she was told, “Don’t worry. We will train you. It will be easy”.

For many possible reasons, this individual did not adapt so well to reentering the workforce. She said her skills had fallen behind. The new boss was not patient. The pace was faster than anticipated.

What could the hiring manager have done differently?

First, the hiring manager needed to take an hour to draft a job description. This would have helped the manager assess the job responsibilities of the office assistant and the qualifications for successful performance in that job and environment.

Qualifications for the office assistant are basic pc skills, the ability to use systems for setting up client appointments and billing clients. The business owner could have considered the amount of time she had available to train someone without experience and answer questions. Further, she needed to be aware that she lacked patience with people who do not learn quickly. This assessment

could have led her to including “a few years of prior experience with the pc and scheduling and/or billing systems”. Further, “telephone skills, customer service, and ability to learn quickly” are relevant. Working conditions of “sitting for long periods of time and working in a fast-paced environment” also make sense. If your particular job requires other physical abilities include them. Some jobs may require sitting, or lifting and/or moving heaving objects, or working in extreme weather conditions.

Once the hiring manager understands what is needed, the next step is to decide where the ideal candidate is likely to show up.

Asking friends and family to recommend someone is always a viable option. It should not be the only option. Decide where qualified candidates for your job are likely to look and advertise accordingly. Consider professional or networking organizations to get the word out. You may also consider social media or online job boards for your particular industry.

The last step in pre-planning the search for a new employee is to plan the actual interview process. Who will be involved in the interviews? Based on the job, how many interviews will you hold? Will you conduct an initial phone screen to weed out unqualified candidates? Which questions will you ask? How will you evaluate the candidates?

Watch for answers to these questions in my next blog.

Box 865

Monroeville, PA 15146

412-580-8249

stacey@HR4SmallBus.com

www.linkedin.com/in/staceyetherson

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