



# HR Solutions for Small Business, LLC

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## “Hiring Doesn’t Have to be Rocky!” Pre-Screen

Once you have advertised your job opening, all you have to do is sit back and wait for the resumes to come in, right? Well, not exactly.

Be proactive and begin to think about the must haves. What prior experiences and skills are essential in an applicant that would cause you to want to talk with that person?

In the previous blog in this series, an office assistant needed to have pc skills including experience greeting patients, setting up appointments and using patient billing software. If I were screening resumes for this job, I would have a list of at least these three experiences. If an applicant’s resume omitted these, I would move that resume quickly to the ‘do not call’ pile.

When a resume includes my must haves, I spend a little more time reviewing the resume. I look for how many jobs the person has had. Are the jobs in the same general field or has the person moved from one type of job or field to the next? I also realize many skills are easily transferrable from one industry to another. How long has the individual worked in each of those jobs? Depending on your needs, job hopping may or may not be important. I was recently reviewing a finance resume and when I noticed the applicant changed jobs every 1-2 years – I passed.

Gaps in work history are another area to watch for. While I want to understand why there were gaps in work history, be careful how you phrase these questions. Ask the applicant to tell you about themselves and prior experiences.

Small business owners sometimes overlook the working conditions. A roofer I talked with shared that he hires friends of the guys who work for him. Then he volunteered, some of the guys cannot carry the shingles up the ladder to the roof. I learned this during the time I was in the market for a new roof and quickly crossed his company off my list of possible contractors.

I wonder if the owner realized what his approach was costing him. Yes, he had a big heart. However, he was paying twice for someone to carry shingles up a ladder to the roof. This arrangement may cause delays in finishing the job. As a customer, I may not be pleased with this. The owner would need to spend more time on dealing with unhappy customers instead of getting new customers. Reviews may be less than stellar.

I share this example to outline the ripple affect on your business of hiring the wrong person when you do not plan ahead.

Once you advertise the job opening, which responsibilities, qualifications and physical abilities are must haves? What initial questions will you ask an applicant during a phone screen before you spend more time meeting with them in person or skype? Record your notes so it's easier to compare the applicants' responses. Finally, do you know which questions not to ask an applicant?

As we have seen, a little time up front will save you time and money and help to prevent unhappy customers in the long run. What thoughts or questions do you have? Feel free to reach out and share.

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