

Screening for Fit

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One in three individuals hired leave their employer before completing one year of employment, either by choice or not. Hiring for a good fit within your company is essential to the success of the employer and the employee. There is no exact science for hiring for fit, but there are several components that an employer can deploy to mitigate the risk of a bad hire.

Know Your Culture (pre-interview)

The vision, mission, and values are foundational to an organization's culture. The culture is either strictly committed to them, or they are not. Consistent, successful hiring is much easier when an organization and its employees are strictly aligned with vision, mission, and values. Organizations not well aligned can still hire great (and lasting) talent, but they will do so with less certainty and consistency. Knowing and being committed to the organization's vision, mission, and values will ensure there is no miscommunication in the interview process and will create the foundation for accountability once the new hire joins the team.

Effective Job Descriptions (pre-interview)

While culture fit is important, equally important to effective hiring is knowing the key skills needed in order for someone to perform in their role. Job descriptions are helpful in the first layer of the screening process. The job description should provide a summary of the role and its purpose to the organization. To take job descriptions to another level you can even include a value proposition about why someone would want this position, or would want to work for your company (ie. what makes your company unique to other employers?). Also to be included in the job description is a detailed list of common tasks and skills that will be essential to performing at a high level. The final aspect of the job description should detail minimum requirements and preferences that list education, software, industry, amount of experience, and core competencies that are important to high performance.

Identifying Core Competencies (pre-interview)

Often forgotten are core competencies, which are the roadmap to ensuring culture fit. Core competencies help define intrinsic qualities hard to identify on a resume. Examples are, initiative, drive for results, communication, analytical, responsibility, political savvy, organizational savvy, listening, influencing, learning on the fly, dealing with ambiguity, etc.

Interviewing for Fit

Once you have a clear understanding of the company and/or department culture, specific job requirements, and the core competencies, then you need to make sure you can identify those in the interview. While it is cumbersome and time consuming, I would recommend a multi-stage interview comprised of the following:

- Deploy a behavioral interview model with questions formulated to identify core competencies.
- Engage multiple stakeholders who will interact with the person in this role. These stakeholders can be inter and intra-departmental. Involve those who are quality conscious and scrutinizing of talent. While it can be frustrating when your position goes unfilled for an extended period, the benefit of having top talent throughout the organization/department will more than make up for the temporary discomfort.

- Deploy technical screening tools or assignments. These can be simple and can be administered on or off-site and at different stages in the process, depending on preference. The results will help reveal the type of details you would need to be certain you are hiring for fit. Some examples are:
- If you are hiring for a financial analyst who needs advanced skills in excel, you may want to design a brief excel test that helps identify their proficiency with aspects of the software that will commonly be used.
- If you are hiring an auditor you may want to give them a scenario and ask them to write an audit report.
- If you are hiring a programmer, you may give them a simple instruction and ask them to write a program to achieve the instruction given.
- If you are hiring a recruiter you may want to ask them to sort through a stack of resumes and prioritize them and/or have them write a search string for mining resumes out of a resume database.

In closing, these tasks may seem time consuming, but if you take the time do this on the front end you will save time in the long run (for all parties). Ultimately, finding someone who is a good fit for the job will ensure employee retention, produce bountiful results, and raise the quality of performance in your department and across the organization (likely leading to your next promotion!).

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