

Hiring and Retaining Good People

Source: The Essential Drucker, by Peter F. Drucker

No one is more respected for his work in developing and defining the discipline of management than Peter Drucker. He spent a lifetime studying the greatest managers on the planet, and wrote about it. Here's what he says about picking good people:

Managers should take great care in selecting people. No other decision is so long-lasting in its consequences and so difficult to undo.

Good people make a business "go." Good people determine your business' performance. Choose wisely.

If you put someone in a position and he or she fails, it is your fault, not theirs.

Don't give important assignments to the untested. Start the untested with small projects and slowly determine their ability to perform.

Here are some suggestions that will help you make good staffing decisions:

Step 1: Think through the assignment. Document job requirements in detail. Give these to all candidates and make sure they fully understand what is needed.

Step 2: Look at a number of potentially qualified people. Formal qualifications should be a minimum for consideration. Include only those candidates who fit the assignment.

Step 3: Think hard about how to look at the candidates. The central question is not: What can this or that candidate do or not do? Rather, it is: What are the strengths each possesses and are these the right strengths for this assignment?

Step 4: Discuss all of the candidates with several other people who have worked with them. One person's judgment is worthless. Look for patterns.

Step 5: Make sure the appointee understands the job. After he or she has been on the job a few months, ask what they need to succeed. Let them think about it a few days before answering. Then give them what they need. If you don't do this, and they fail, then the failure is your fault. The single largest reason for unsuccessful promotions and new-hires is the manager's failure to think through, and help the employee think through, what a new job requires.