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| Recruiting and Retaining Quality EmployeesHow to Attract and Keep Talented Staff |

#### Overview

Our industry is facing a workforce crisis. While there's increasing demand for talented people in all phases of our industry, there's decreasing supply. High tech businesses in the computer sector are siphoning off the brightest and the best and are offering compensation packages that can't be refused. How are we, in the systems contracting industry to compete for this shrinking talent pool?

**Introduction**

Your staff is the lifeblood of your company, and finding talented employees is a challenge in this highly competitive labor market. Recruiting and retention are intimately linked. Retention actually begins right away in the recruiting process. What attracts viable candidates to your company is also what will keep them there as productive, loyal employees. Furthermore, recruiting is a never-ending effort similar to prospecting for sales. Recruiting and retaining employees are ongoing processes that are essential keys to the success of any systems contracting company.

**Three Key Questions:**

* How do we recruit to fill open positions?
* How do we retain employees for the long term?
* Why will give us a competitive edge as an employer?

**Section 1 –Recruiting**

Identify Your Staffing Needs

Finding the perfect employees starts with knowing exactly what your staffing needs are. As companies grow, existing staff resources become stretched to the max. At this point you know you need additional staff, but who? where? With careful planning, you’ll be able to define what you need that’s exactly right for your organization.

### Your organization—picture it

Draw an **organizational chart** of your existing company.

**Why?**

• For you:

It helps you see the big picture of your company and its growth, and it’s a tool to help you become more objective about the positions in your company. It’s not enough to have the “right people”; to grow your company needs the “right people” in the “right positions.”

• For your employees:

It’s a key to showing them that they have a career path.

**How?**

 Start with the owner at the top

 List the departments next

Write in the Positions and Names in each department and their full-time equivalency (i.e. a half-time person is “.5).

*Exercise: Sketch out your current organization.*

 *Now add boxes for positions that need to be filled.*

# Organizational Chart

Company Name:

 Owner

Departments:

Total FTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Total full time equivalency of all staff).

**The Unique Ability Organization - An Ideal to Shoot For**

What is it? It begins with being conscious of what each person’s unique ability is and then structuring the organization so that each person is spending the highest possible percent of his time doing those unique ability activities.

**What are Unique Abilities?**

We all do many tasks in our work. The goal is to have the greatest percent of our time spent in areas that are our unique ability. For managers, this means delegating everything else as much as possible.

Here’s a description of 4 levels of abilities:

**Level #1:** **Incompetence**

Feelings on the job:

**Frustration**--nothing seems to work

**Stress**--fatigue easily

**Conflict**--communication breakdowns occur

**Confusion**--easily lose perspective

**Level #2:** **Competence**

Feelings on the job:

**Competition**--many have equal ability

**Anxiety**--worried constantly about falling behind

**Repetition**--work is monotonous

**Boredom**--difficult to be enthusiastic

**Level # 3:** **Excellence**

Feelings on the job:

**Excitement**--activity is stimulating because you know you have superior skills

**Teamwork--**discover others with excellent abilities to work with

**Reputation**--abilities bring you praise

**Opportunity**--many people want you to work with them

**Level #4:** **Unique Ability activities**

Feelings on the job:

**Joy**--activity is endlessly stimulating and satisfying

**Serenity**--no competition

**Breakthrough**--constantly creating innovations of value

**Transformation**--your work transforms the abilities of others in a positive way.

(Note: Please see worksheets on Unique Ability you can use in the Appendix.)

#### Fill the gaps- What do you really need?

Determine if you simply have a position to add, OR is this a good time to re-think your whole organization?

* Describe the duties for the position(s) you need
* Describe the characteristics of the person(s) you need.

Exercise: Go to the org chart you’ve created. Find the box for the open position. List the characteristics of the person you need in that position.

The Job Description

###### **Why have Job Descriptions?**

* Clarifies the position in the organization.
* Communication tool for staff (takes the mystery out of “who’s going to be hired”).
* Recruiting tool (part of recruiting “kit”). Sets your company apart from the competition.
* Foundation for employee evaluations.

###### **What’s in a Good Job Description?**

1. Title of the Position

2. Scope of Responsibilities

3. Specific Responsibilities (can include hours and pay range)

4. Reporting Structure

5. General Requirements

###### **Tips for Writing Good Job Descriptions**

* Write for the POSITION and not for the PERSON
* Get input from people in your organization—tasks that need to be done
* Decide which tasks are relevant to the position you’re creating, & incorporate them
* *Caution!* “Too many hats” won’t attract good people

(Note: Please see Sample Job Descriptions in Appendix).

Start Hunting - Approaches to Recruiting

While it’s true that good people are getting harder to find, it’s also true that there are lots of losers out there answering ads and applying for work. The techniques presented here will help you find and attract the winners and avoid wasting your time with the losers.

As you can see, the recruiting process ties closely with your company’s overall marketing program.

###### **Referrals**

###### Networking is the best approach. (More on how to work with referrals below).

###### **Advertising**

* Think of using marketing techniques as you place the ad so you get referral sources as well as candidates
* Where to advertise
* Target your candidates—Where are they looking?
* Allow lead time
* What’s the best form of advertising?

###### **Outside Services and How They Work**

Type 1: Temporary Help Services—for skilled or semi-skilled help

Type 2: Recruiters or “Head Hunters”

* Use them for higher positions only (i.e. middle managers on up)

How they’re paid:

* Headhunters charge retainer and contingency fees. A typical fee is 30% of the first year’s total compensation package, usually paid out in 3 installments. Example: A Sales Manager Salary is $50,000 per year plus a possible $10,000 in potential bonuses. The headhunter fee for this position would be $18,000.

The Recruiting Package

 —for Candidates *and* Referral Sources

 **• Cover Letter**

 **• Job Description**

**The message**:

\* The Company’s Growing

\* The Industry’s Exciting

\* This is the Place to Be

 **• Company Fact Sheet**

 - Brief Company History

 - What the company does

 - Its Market Segments

 - How many employees

 - Brief company philosophies/approach

 - A glimpse of the future

 **• Sample Sales Literature**

Exercise: What’s Great About Your Company? Why is it “The Place to Be?”

 1.

 2.

 3.

###### **Tapping Your Referral Sources—The Steps**

1. Identify them from your contacts database

2. Call them; tell them about the open position; ask for their help

3. Send the packet.

#### Fielding the inquiries

* Do as much pre-screening as possible. Interview only the “cream of the crop”
* Have a plan for fielding the calls/faxes/e-mail
* Delegate keeping the project organized

Interviewing

###### **Who Interviews?**

Candidates should be have multiple interviews, not just with the direct supervisor.

**Rule of thumb:** The higher the position,, the more people involved in the interview

Example: a Field Installer position will meet with 3 people

* The Direct Supervisor
* A coworker doing a similar job
* The Financial / Human Resources / Operations Person

Example: A Sales Manager position would interview with

* The Owner
* The Direct Supervisor (if different)
* The Installation Manager
* Existing Sales Staff
* The Financial / Human Resources / Operations Person

###### **Apply A Value Rating Tool**

Too often when we’re interviewing job candidates, impressions that seem perfectly clear at the time, get blurred together after several interviews in a row. Here’s a tool to help you sort out your evaluations of each candidate you interview.

Immediately following the interview, all people who interviewed the candidate complete the rating tool. This provides a tool for discussing the candidate and quantifying the results of the interview. Note: The Rating Tool should be completed BEFORE discussing how the interview went. (See Rating form in Appendix)

 **Values to Rate** (on a scale of 0—5, with 5 being best possible)

 Unique Skills Fit Our Needs

 Growth potential (aptitude for increasing skills) fits our needs

 Scheduling Fit

 Presentability: Interface with Customers

 Personality fits our company culture

 Total Score:

 Notes:

(Please note: Reproducible Value Rating Tool form in Appendix).

###### **Tips On Controlling the Interview**

**First Impressions Count**

You’re seeing the candidates at their worst and at his best at the same time. Presentatbility is about as good as it gets. You’re also seeing the candidates under stress—how do they handle it?

**Beware! Entrepreneurs Tend to “Sell”**

When the owner interviews, be on the alert, because, even though you are somewhat in “selling mode” and want the position to attract talented candidates, you are mainly in “buying mode”. Owners tend to be better in “selling mode”.

**Prepare your Questions in Advance**

**Establish rapport. Initiate small talk before you lead into introductory questions.**

**Begin with general, introductory questions, and follow up with specific questions.**

**Give them the ball and let them run with it. Provide lots of room to show you who they are**

***Sample Interview Questions***

* What did you do in your previous job(s)?
* Why did you leave?
* Describe your ideal job.
* What are your long-term career goals?
* What is your greatest strength?
* What is your greatest weakness?
* What skills and interests do you have which could benefit this company?
* More ?’s

**References**

* Get references of people who know the candidate’s work.
* Check references in reverse order.

**Section 2 – Retaining Top Talent**

Why should they stay? With so many companies competing for the shrinking talent pool, what factors give your company the edge in keeping excellent employees? Beyond salary and benefits, there are intangibles that add quality to the workplace and will make your employees value their job at your company.

The Five Value Creators

All five Value Creators lead to the highest levels of CLARITY and CONFIDENCE among the staff.

 **1. Positive Work Environment**

* Physical (lighting, space, HVAC, décor)
* Professional (All the tools)
* Social
* Everyone’s moving toward the same goals.
* There’s an atmosphere of excitement about the work.
* Everyone rallies during crunch time.
* There’s a lot to celebrate.

**2. Career Path—Is It Important? YES**

* Show them where the company is headed and how that spells opportunity

**3. Flexibility—A Little Goes a Long Way**

* Workday hours.
* Holidays, vacations, personal days, sick days.
* Match the schedule to the job and the person to the job, not the schedule to the person.

**4. Open Communications**

* Everyone has access to the vision – There’s clarity about Why the company is doing what it does.
* Job responsibilities and expectations are clear.
* There’s a grievance procedure.
* “Don’t Assume!”

**5. Training and Mentoring**

* Take time for orientation
* Mentoring—make sure everyone has a mentor
* Evaluation
* Skill enhancement opportunities
* Send to outside seminars, workshops
* Support their own learning initiatives.

## Exercise: Raise Your Company’s Value in the Job Market

For each of the five Value Creators, list at least one example of what your company is already doing. Next write initiatives that will increase your value in each of the areas.

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|  | **Now** | **Future** |
|  | Already In Place--Examples | New Initiatives--Action Items |
| **Positive Work Environment** |  |  |
| **Career Path** |  |  |
| **Flexibility** |  |  |
| **Open Communications** |  |  |
| **Training and Mentoring** |  |  |

**Section 3 –Retaining Success Tips**

#### Leadership Policy

* Praise Publicly; correct privately.
* Praise freely—most effective ratio is 90% praise : 10% correction.
* Use “error trapping” techniques when making corrections (focus on the item, not on the person).
* Show respect for ALL your stakeholders (vendors, customers, other trades; other employees). Your employees are watching you.
* Approach obstacles as problems to be solved, encourage open expression of obstacles.
* Allow for mistakes—model mistake admission and correction.

## Share the Wealth

* Compensation incentives for all positions.
* Choose what to incentivize.

## Company Handbook

* Why it’s important.
* What it should contain.
* How to use it.

(Please note: See Outline for Company Handbook in Appendix).

## Comprehensive Benefits Program

* Know your competition—not just other contracting firms, but other industries competing for the same talent.
* Match the competition wherever possible.

## Keep A Candidates Database Ongoing

* You’ll be adding staff as you grow
* The prime candidates may not be available when you are ready, but they could be sources of valuable referral
* Be a referral source to your industry colleagues.

**Key Points**

* Recruiting is linked to marketing.
* Retention involves more than compensation and benefits.
* We need to recruit constantly to retain good people as well as attract the next employee

###### **Resources**

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*Principle-Centered Leadership*, Covey, Stephen R., , Fireside, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY,1990.

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