

## Five Signs Your Hiring Process Needs Help

By Adam Robinson

It's a widely accepted maxim of the business world: Great companies begin with great people. When you have the benefit of top-shelf talent at all levels of your organization, the possibilities are limitless. There's just one small hitch - great people don't just show up in your lobby, ready to get the job done. You have to *find* them.

Great people, then, begin with a great hiring process. The symptoms of a weak hiring process show up throughout your company, and it's important that you know what to look for.

**1. You're not making the numbers.** I've worked with hundreds of clients over the years, and I have never - and I mean *never* - heard one of them tell me that the reason for their company's under-performance is sub-par talent. Not once. Bad marketing collateral? Yep. Bad economy? That's the current favorite. New competitor? Heard that one plenty. "Adam, I just don't do a good job selecting the right person for the job?" Not once.

If there's an aspect to your business that isn't moving in the direction you want it to move, the very first thing you need to determine is whether or not you've put the right people in charge of the result. Great employees find ways to make numbers. Mediocre employees find ways to make excuses. It all leads back to your hiring process.

**2. You keep losing candidates to other offers.** It's the most frustrating feeling in the world - you've found the perfect candidate, and you've made a job offer. Unfortunately, your competitor made a better one, and now they're selling against you. You end up selecting your 2nd choice, who was measurably weaker than your top candidate.

A strong hiring process can prevent last-minute candidate catastrophes. A weak hiring process prevents jobs from getting filled with great talent. Believe it or not, you don't have to be the top-paying outfit in town in order to pursue the best talent in your industry. Great people want to work for well-run companies. A loose process signals a lack of management capability.

**3. You have high turnover.** It doesn't matter if you're in a high-turnover industry or not - people who do well at their jobs have higher retention rates. Why? Because they're *happy*. And happy people stay in jobs.

If you're hiring people who aren't quite "great" at the job for which you've hired them, at some point they're going to quit and take a job that they feel will make them "happier." How about hiring people who are good at the job

you've hired them to do? A great hiring process ensures that you've measured their ability to do exactly that.

**4. Your employees don't know whether or not they're meeting goals.**

That's often because they haven't been given specific, measurable goals to meet. Does your company's Marketing Director have a specific number of qualified leads that must be delivered each month in order for them to be considered successful? Can your Accounts Receivable manager describe their collection targets?

Can every employee in your company go home every day without wondering if they've met expectations? If the answer is no, then take a look at your hiring process. If you're screening candidates for prior evidence of accomplishing certain specific, metrics-driven goals, then you'll be forced to define the goals for which you're screening. You'll know that you're in good shape when you can tell a candidate, "One of the things that you'll need to accomplish in the first 180 days here is to get our A/R to an average of 50 days aging or better. Tell me about the collections metrics at your current employer." When you have a strong hiring process, this problem solves itself.

**5. You spend a large part of your day solving problems for your staff.** Great employees don't need your help on everything. As a matter of fact, great employees prefer *not* to have you poking around all the time.

If you took two weeks off, would your business fall apart? If the answer is yes, then it's probably because you're not delegating properly. Now, think about the reasons why you're not delegating. If it's because you don't trust your staff with the tasks that need to be delegated - that you're better off "just doing it yourself" - then you have the wrong people on your team.

Keep your eyes peeled for these five symptoms - if you recognize any of these issues in your company, it's time to work on your hiring process. Few efforts will yield more profitable results!

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