



people management

Seven Deadly Sins of Hiring

By Ron Evans

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"Recruiting the right talent is always a bargain" says Ron Evans, Managing Director of ESearch Group, "compared with the cost of hiring the wrong talent." With leading consultants putting the cost of hiring the wrong person at two or three times compensation, every organization should seek ways to minimize this unfortunate event. Heeding the seven practical steps outlined below can greatly increase the hiring success rate of any organization.

1. **Thou shalt not begin recruiting until the job is clearly defined.** Hammer out a lengthy, clear-cut recruiting profile, which by definition eliminates 95% of the marketplace. Identify and articulate your organization's critical success factors, such as core values, management and communication styles, and determine how to screen for them. You must know why this position is open, and what this opening says about the executive who is being sought. Be mindful of the old adage "If you don't know what you're looking for, it's hard to tell when you've found it."
2. **Thou shalt not under hire.** Your organization is going somewhere; will your new executive be able to get you there? Focus on a candidate's adequacy for the job two or three years down the road. Even if it takes more than the budgeted compensation range to attract the right person, do it. Hiring for the future is easier and less costly than hiring repeatedly for the same position.
3. **Thou shalt not limit your choices to the familiar.** In the interest of saving time and money, don't limit your search to in-house candidates, or those local and familiar to the organization. The "Peter Principle" (promoting until an executive reaches their level of incompetence) often results from hiring and promoting those familiar to us. Also, avoid the urge to add the search responsibility on top of another executive's already full plate; this may not give the quality of results desired.
4. **Thou shalt not fail to court the candidate.** Recruiting star players is a process, not an event. No courtship may mean no marriage! The "getting to know you" process should not be just a one-sided two-hour interview. Realize you are marketing yourself and your organization to them just as much as they should be to you. Clear your calendar so you can focus on them. Don't give the impression that they are an interruption in your busy day.
5. **Thou shalt take no shortcuts.** Scour the country for the best, and be sure that whoever is conducting the search has the time and budget to do it well. Allow time for top candidates to have second and third interviews. These often are more revealing of a candidate's personality and style than the first formal interview. Use proper due diligence to thoroughly check references (superiors, peers, subordinates) with standard questions asked of each reference.
6. **Thou shalt not hire from weakness.** The candidate is good compared to whom? Ideally there should be 3-4 candidates who have the right experience, education, compensation needs, and management style. Out of the group, hopefully two will find the position exciting and attractive, and will be regarded as highly desirable by your organization. Then select the best one...that's hiring from a position of strength.

7. **Thou shalt make no hiring decision in a vacuum.** This actually touches upon the critical issue of hiring process. Have several senior managers and/or board members interview each finalist, but make sure that each person is assigned a specific role in the evaluation process. We suggest you involve superiors, peers and sometimes, even subordinates. These people, if properly prepared and equipped, can raise some red flags before it's a done deal. Also, this creates "buy-in" from the organization, which in turn increases the candidate's chances of successful integration into the organization.