
Using Current Employees as a Powerful Recruiting Tool: The TEAM Approach

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Need to turbo charge your recruiting strategy? Try a TEAM approach by including your current employees. This strategy can help you increase your pool of candidates, improve your interview process, increase employee loyalty, build peer relationships and improve retention rates. There are four steps to the TEAM approach:

- T Tackle manpower needs,
- E Entice quality candidates to respond to those needs,
- A Aim to use employees to interview and select the best applicants,
- M Mentor newly selected employees into the process.

Teaming with current employees in the process will help you at all stages.

Tackle Manpower Needs and Entice Quality Candidates by Using Employees as Recruiters

How can employees fire up the recruiting process? Several ways:

- Employees have an understanding of the operations, roles and responsibilities of the business. Sometimes, in fact, they know more about what they do every day than most managers! They may be more likely to recommend candidates who match your needs as well as to assist you in identifying manpower needs.
- Increasing the candidate pool could reduce reliance on external agency services, saving time and money.

- When you consider the candidates they recommend employees feel valued as team members
- When employees know that they can benefit from attracting others to the business, your internal PR will improve.
- Participation in recruiting fosters a team spirit of contribution to the big picture.

Establish modest recruitment incentive programs to encourage positive public relations and improve employees' perceptions of their relationship with the company. Most organizations offer current employees a modest monetary incentive. Half of the amount is paid after the employee is hired, and the balance is provided upon successful completion of a probationary period. Using a probationary period also encourages peer support even after the initial offer is made.

If you have employees at the professional or managerial level, it's also a good idea to let them know that you are always on the look out for good employees.

Encourage them to participate in trade and professional organizations. Such groups not only help them improve their skills but also allow them to serve as "scouts" for bringing potential new employees into the fold.

Aim to Interview and Select the Best Applicants by Using Employees as Peer Interviewers

When you invite employees to participate in the interview process they feel valued and can offer front line insights about candidate suitability and fit within an existing team structure. Including employees can:

- Give a voice to the team members who will work with the new employee
- Increase employees' perception of their own value to the organization through inclusion

- Foster a positive working relationships between managers and reporting staff
- Serve as a practical training exercise for interviewing skills.
- Support a spirit of cooperation across organizational levels.
- Provide key, front-line operational insights about a candidates' ability to respond to position requirements
- Support ownership and empowerment of departmental activity.

Be sure, however, that you do some basic training about the law and your policies so that peer interviewers do not ask inappropriate questions.

Mentor New Employees by Using Current Employees as Peer Mentors

The third role for an employee in recruitment is with some kind of an employee sponsorship, mentoring or “buddy” system. Since most new employees feel stressed and unsure when starting a new job, a peer mentor can help new employees gain knowledge about what they’re supposed to do, how they will fit in and the key people on their team.

Many large organizations, such as the U.S. Air Force, use this approach but the same method can be used by smaller organizations. Benefits include:

- New employees feel included and nurtured prior to day one.
- The mentoring employee feels valued as a contributing member of the team.
- The mentor is reminded of company polices goals, mission and vision.
- Peer relationships are improved.
- Employee communication skills may improve.
- You can nurture a sense of community.
- You help a new employee understand the big picture and how they fit in prior to their first day.

Steps in an Employee Mentoring Process.

To start a basic mentoring program, send a letter and information packet from the mentor to the new employee's home address before the first work day. The package might include a wide range of information from the history of the company to welcome letters from relevant managers including the president and even area information such as maps, internet sites, restaurants, clubs attractions, if the employee is from another location.

The mentor can then personalize the package with a cover letter providing contact information, key dates and times for personnel processing and induction, and general comments.

How to Select a Mentor for the New Employee

Select mentors from the new employee's peer group. Ideally, find a different mentor for each new recruit, until everyone in the department has had a chance to mentor. This should be done at several level of the organization. The introduction of the "buddy" will help the new employee feel welcome.

Bottom Line Results from using Employees in the Recruiting Process

According to a study by Watson Wyatt of 147 large North American companies, employee referrals are an efficient way to find new workers. Companies that hire more than 1/3 of new employees through employee referrals generated more than twice the total return to shareholders (48%) of employers that hired less than 10 percent of employees through referrals (23%).

Summary

Using a team approach to recruiting offers many benefits. Consider adding this powerful recruiting tool to your arsenal.