8 Hiring Mistakes to Avoid

Plus tips and tricks to help you hire only the best candidates

Introduction

Successfully adding a new member to your team can be one of the trickiest aspects of being a manager. A good hire can make your team more productive, easier to manage, and ultimately more successful.

On the other hand, a bad hiring decision can, according to the US Department of Labor, cost a company as much as 30% of the employee's annual salary.[1] For a position that pays $100K, that's $30K wasted.

Before you begin the hiring process, read this guide to make sure you don't make these common yet completely avoidable hiring mistakes.

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#1. Not sticking to a timeline

Whether you've created a new position or you're filling a vacancy, it's common to fill it right away or prolong the hiring process as long as possible. Don't procrastinate about making the decision and expect the perfect hire to just appear out of thin air. Make sure you interview enough people to feel confident that you're making the best decision.

TIP: Create a hiring strategy, complete with timelines for actionable tasks and larger milestones – and stick to it. Be proactive in your hiring process by anticipating roles you and your team will need filled, and set aside time each week to focus on hiring efforts.

#2. Not screening for cultural fit

While a resume can tell you a lot about a candidate's experience and skill set – it's not enough. In order for your new hire to be productive and satisfied, they need to be a good fit for your company's culture. In fact, cultural fit is one of the top three most useful topics for your candidates to hear about.

TIP: Have several members of your team talk to the candidate. If possible, even take the candidate to lunch to get to know them on a more personal level. If you need a shortcut to screening for culture, use our 30 Behavioral Interview Questions guide.

What candidates say was most useful to hear from interviewers[2]

70% Role responsibilities

42% Team culture

42% Company mission & vision

[2] Source: Inside the Mind of Today's Candidate: 13 insights that will make you a smarter recruiter

#3. Conducting too many or too few interviews

When it comes to the right amount of interviews, find a happy medium. Holding only one interview will amount to making a snap decision. However, if you haven't found the right candidate after six on-site interviews, you may need to revisit the job description or screening process.

TIP: Get to know candidates over a series of interviews. Start with the phone interview, then invite them on-site. Be sure the candidate talks to at least two people in your organization. If deciding between two candidates, hold a third and final interview.

#4. Ambiguous job descriptions

Nothing scares an interviewee away faster than ambiguity. Before you even reach out, make sure you have differentiated the job requirements from the nice-to-haves. This will help you craft job posts that attract the right candidates and will keep you more focused on key details of the job while interviewing.

TIP: Know what you want from your new hires and be able to articulate it concisely. For tips on how to write effective job posts and templates, read How to Craft Job Posts That Convert.

#5. Relying too much on the interview itself

No matter what profession you're hiring for, the job will likely require more than just the ability to interview well. That's why it's important to get to know more about candidates' core competencies through methods other than interviews.

TIP: After you've spoken to candidates over the phone, assign a short exercise as a preliminary test of their skills. In fact, 84% of hiring managers that have assigned a preliminary test found the exercise helpful, especially in determining a candidate's interest.[3]

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS:

WRITE A BLOG POST
Ask the candidate to write a blog post for a specific topic related to your business.

CRUNCH THE NUMBERS
Provide a quick coding or data analysis exercise for technical candidates to see if their skills are on par with members of your team.

CRAFT A SALES PITCH
Ask the candidate to create a sales pitch for an existing or hypothetical product relevant to your company.

#6. Not preparing the interview team

When bringing a candidate on-site, it's important for key members of your team to meet with them for additional perspective and to facilitate future working relationships. But make sure to divvy up questions among interviewers to prevent the candidate from having to answer the same question over and over.

TIP: Once you've identified the right mix of people for the candidate to talk with, inform the interview team of the candidate's background, strengths, weaknesses, and any uncertainties you may still have.

#7. Not properly organizing feedback

When evaluating candidates, it's important to give yourself and other interviewers a structured way to document feedback. Use a scorecard that outlines all the key criteria for the role and company culture, and rank the candidate on each factor. This gives you an easy way to compare candidates, especially if you're torn between two great options at the end of the interview process.

TIP: Use a Candidate Evaluation Scorecard like the one included at the end of this guide!

#8. Forgetting how technology can help

Good hiring managers know they can't waste time interviewing the wrong candidates. In this guide we've mentioned several tips to use when interviewing – but where can hiring managers go to *find* qualified candidates? You'll need to reach them before they even start their job search. Traditional places like classified ads and job boards just don't cut it anymore.

TIP: LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a full range of recruiting solutions to help organizations of all sizes find, attract, and engage the best talent.

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Learn more →

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Candidate Evaluation Scorecard

Date:

Interviewer(s):

Name of Applicant:

Position Interviewed for:

Recommendation:

H = Hire

HC = Hold for consideration

NH = Do not hire

BQ = Better qualified for another position

Applicant selection criteria matrix

5 – Excellent (significantly exceeds criteria)

4 – Above Average (exceeds criteria)

3 – Average (meets criteria)

2 – Below Average (generally does not meet criteria)

1 – Unacceptable (significantly below criteria)

	Score (1-5)	Notes/Comments
Decision-making/judgement:		
Functional and technical:		
Communication skills:		
Education:		
Cultural fit:		
Initiative:		
Problem-solving:		
Quality:		
Teamwork:		
Enthusiasm:		
Overall evaluation:		
Additional notes/comments:		