

## Strategic Staffing Tips On Hiring And Retaining Quality Staff

In the following pages, Strategic Staffing will provide you with step-by-step information on how to obtain maximum productivity and efficiency in the areas of:

- **COST EFFECTIVE STAFFING ALTERNATIVES**
- **SELECTING QUALITY STAFF**
- **RETAINING QUALITY STAFF IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKET**

### **COST EFFECTIVE STAFFING ALTERNATIVES**

#### **Temporary Employees**

Special projects, peak periods, high turn-over, difficult-to-fill positions or uncertain growth trends are all excellent reasons to utilize temporary employees. Why? The flexibility of using a "temp" for a day or even several months will eliminate costly over staffing, payroll taxes, workers compensation, unemployment claims, benefits, COBRA\*, advertising, interviewing and screening cost.

#### **Employment Agencies (Cost Analysis can be faxed upon request)**

Utilizing an Employment Agency is not only cost effective, it makes good sense. Why? Quality employees are hard to locate and are usually employed. Professionally trained recruiters are continuously locating, interviewing and qualifying a high-caliber base of candidates who are seeking new career opportunities. When you compare locating, qualifying and hiring full-time staff to the cost of your investment with an Agency, you will find that the latter is often less expensive. In addition to the dollar savings, you have a guarantee from an Agency, which you do not get when you hire on your own.

#### **Temp to Full-time Programs**

Some companies are opting to hire all of their potential employees utilizing the Temp/Full-Time program. Why? Strict hiring and reference checking laws make it difficult to both hire and terminate an employee. With a staffing agency, your company gets to try before you hire, to ensure a correct fit has been made. This eliminates all the cost and time involved with hiring. Best of all, if the employee is not exactly what you want, you are under no obligation to keep him/her. One phone call to your Agency and a replacement will be located.

#### **Pro-Active Staffing (A Pro-Active Staffing Plan can be faxed per your request)**

Why pro-actively plan up-coming staffing needs? High unemployment does not ensure quality employees are available for hire. Planning is essential to financially profitable growth, yet it is seldom done. Why? Because it takes time to plan. Too often we are too busy with the day-to-day functions of our jobs to try to look ahead. Utilizing the **Pro-Active Staffing Plan** is easy, quick and produces significant results.

#### **Payrolling**

Payrolling can be utilized to retain the services of 1099 contractors, relatives, seasonal employees, college students and peak employees. Why? To keep cost down and limit employee liabilities. Employees supplied by your company and pay-rolled through Strategic Staffing are OUR responsibility. For a minimal investment per hour, you receive all of the advantages of utilizing a temporary employee. No payroll, taxes, workers comp, unemployment claims, COBRA, W-2s, paperwork, record keeping, wrongful termination suits or over-staffing.

## **SELECTING QUALITY STAFF**

### **Preparing for the hire (a Position Description can be faxed upon request)**

The first step is to determine exactly what type of employee needs to be hired. A position description needs to be written. Clearly define the responsibilities, job duties, skills required along with the function and objectives of the position. In addition, a clear line of authority to get the job done needs to accompany each area of responsibility. Strategic recommends obtaining input from an employee currently in a similar position as well as the supervisor requesting the employee.

### **The interview process**

A minimum of at least two hours of interviewing time should be spent with the prospective employee. Strategic recommends at least three people be involved in the interviewing and selection process. Co-workers are excellent to utilize in the interview process along with the Supervisors to whom the new hire will be reporting. We suggest having a minimum of two separate interviews on separate days (and even three, if time permits). In the actual interview your time spent speaking should take up only be 25 percent of the entire time. DO NOT start the interview off with what you're looking for. Instead, ask the applicant why he/she feels that he/she is qualified for the job. Take notes on the responses to questions and be sure to get names and numbers of past employers and co-workers. Thank the interviewee for his/her time and explain what the next step will be. Move quickly and express sincere interest to quality candidates or someone else might hire them first.

### **After the interview**

Review and evaluate what the prospective employee has said to you. Compare notes with the other individuals who interviewed the candidates. Look for consistency in what has been said. Review the position description and qualify if their skills meet the requirements of the job. Ask yourself what are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses? An in-depth reference check is a must. Speaking with both past supervisors and co-workers will assist in getting a complete and thorough understanding on the individual's abilities.

### **The job offer**

You have made the decision on whom to hire, now what? Bring the candidate in once again and ask him/her to clarify his/her perception of the position in regards to responsibilities and the standards expected of him/her. Eliminate any misconceptions that may surface at this time and ask if he/she has any additional questions. Make sure he/she understands the conditions of employment in full. You can then proceed with the actual job offer. If the candidate has valid reasons for declining the position, move on to your next choice or revamp your offer to meet the expressed demands.

## **RETAINING QUALITY STAFF IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKET**

### **Effective communication formats**

Many companies boast that they have open door policies and yet disgruntled employees leave those very organizations. Open door policy means all employees have access to another level of management other than their own direct supervisor. Issues—whether negative or positive—can be discussed freely and openly without fear of retribution or reprisal. One policy to consider implementing—"It takes two people to hire, and two people to fire". Employees like to feel they are important and enjoy interacting with new levels of management, and the above policy will accomplish both. Strategic Staffing also recommends establishing quarterly reviews for your staff. The time spent reviewing valuable employees performance quarterly will save time filling vacant positions, because someone was not recognized properly, or a problem can be corrected before it gets out of control.

## **Review process**

There are two types of reviews. Progress reviews do not usually involve salary increases and should be done on quarterly basis. Annual reviews are usually the time salary increases are given. Progress reviews allow you to give feed-back to an employee on job performance and them an opportunity to give you feed-back. If there are any area's the employee needs to improve, it is important you have specifics regarding those area's not generalities. You might also want to develop a plan of action to correct their area of weakness. It is equally as important to acknowledge their accomplishments and verbalize the contribution they are making to the company. Set the time and date for their next progress review. Annual reviews should be short and to the point as to why or why not they are getting a salary increase. With either scenario it should not be a surprise to the employee as to why or why not their salary is being adjusted, due to your quarterly progress reviews held throughout the year.

## **Benefit packages**

Benefits are important to employees, but are seldom the reason good employees will stay with your organization. The most common benefits offered include medical dental insurance, paid holidays, paid vacation, paid sick leave, 401Ks and employee discounts. In recent years companies have also implemented child care reimbursement, in-house child care programs, flexible hours and car pooling bonuses.

## **Growth opportunities**

Lack of growth opportunities is one of the main reasons people leave organizations. Why? There are several factors contributing to this. An employee might not see or know of growth plans and does not see any opportunity for career growth. This in turn, would limit their opportunity to gain experience and knowledge in new area's, in addition to limiting their ability to increase their income. Impatience plays a significant role in a society geared to the now! In larger companies the lack of proper grooming procedures will also lead to turnover. It is important to have clearly defined structures for advancement. What does it take to become an Accounting Manager? What do I need to do to move into a sales position? Does the company provide training to employees? How will new positions be filled? Sometimes just exposing eager to learn, ambitious, aggressive employees to new experiences will satisfy their desires for growth. This in turn will assist with retaining your most valuable assets, your EMPLOYEES.

## **Flexibility**

With the ever increasing demands placed on people today, flexibility coupled with responsibility are keys to ensuring everyone's needs are being satisfied. Dedicated employees get the job done no matter how long it takes, produce results and take their jobs seriously. Lack of appreciation of their efforts is a common reason given for why these people leave companies. Why would any company not appreciate a valuable employee? Often management gets to caught up in meetings, reviews, hiring staff and planning. They forget to acknowledge their right arms contributions or take time out to listen to them. Good employees often feel guilty about taking time off or asking for special favors. Management should watch for burnout and offer time off with pay to the producers. Maybe a family member is visiting and a long weekend would be appreciated. Children mean a lot, and the first day of school, plays, field trip or recitals are often things missed by the working parent. Offering time off to attend their child's functions would be a great time off to attend their child's functions would be a great way to show your appreciation. Do not wait for them to ask, because they probably never will. Instead they will just leave due to burn-out. You will then be back to square one. How much will that cost you?

## **Recognition Programs**

Organizations of all sizes are recognizing the need to praise employees for a job well done. Several programs can be implemented that will help in identifying your top performers. Employee of the Month, Quarter or Year. Best attendance and punctuality, customer service and quality control awards, best ideas and highest productivity are just a few. Reward performance based on the company's needs and objectives.

**\*COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985) requires most employers with group health plans to offer employees the opportunity to continue temporarily their group health care coverage under their employer's plan if their coverage otherwise would cease due to termination, layoff, or other change in employment status (referred to as "qualifying events").**