

## **20 Common hiring mistakes and how to avoid them**

Hiring can be challenging. It's hard to find talent in many industries, but even harder to find the right person for the right role. Not only that, but it is also costly in terms of money and time, so you don't want to hang around. This is all without considering what damage the wrong person could do to your business if you don't hire well.

Sounds like a minefield! But we've got you covered with the 20 common mistakes and how to avoid them:

### **1. Being unprepared**

We're all familiar with the saying 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail' and with hiring it is no different. You don't want to appear unprepared and unprofessional in the interview. Not only is this likely to put off a candidate, but everyone involved in the hiring process needs to be on the same page, even the candidates. This will help things run smoothly and save you time in the long run.

### **2. Too many decision makers**

It is good practice to have more than one person or a board involved in the interview stage, as they may think differently and see something you might have missed. However, to avoid arguments and slowing the process, the final decision should come down to one person, whether that's the business owner or the hiring manager.

### **3. No clear idea of who you're looking for**

You wouldn't set off to the shops with no idea as to what you were looking for, would you? So, why would you try and hire someone without knowing who it is you want to find? Ensure you have a list of 'must have' and desirable traits, as well as 'deal breaking' traits. Having said that, keep an open mind or you will find it hard to find the perfect person.

### **4. Not defining the role properly before hiring**

A clear job description will help you to find the perfect candidate. It sounds obvious but having a detailed job description will mean the candidate will know what to expect and will minimise surprises later down the line when the job isn't what they

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thought it was. When we hire, we always revise each job description 3-4 times, which we have found to help us hire the perfect fit for the role in the past.

### **5. Being too slow**

We definitely don't mean to make a rushed decision, but when you have made your mind up on a candidate, don't be slow to react. Slow internal processes, like a delay in getting the contract following a job offer, could mean losing the perfect candidate and then you'll be back to square one.

### **6. Hiring too quickly**

Make sure you don't make the decision too quickly. A rushed decision is possibly worse than not making one at all. The key here is to not leave it until hiring is critical to the business coping. Leaving it too long to decide to hire will put unnecessary pressure on you and only make the process harder.

### **7. Not considering your current employees**

The first place you should look when it comes to hiring is internally. If you haven't, you've missed a trick. Moving your current employees up within the business is likely to motivate them, plus it should make it easier to fill the entry-level roles. Having a succession plan in place for all your business-critical employees can help you to identify the right employees within your business.

### **8. Hiring without truly understanding why the last person is leaving**

Before hiring someone new, you should truly understand why the previous person in the role is leaving. It might have nothing to do with your business, maternity leave or moving to a new area where they cannot commute. Equally, it could be an internal reason that you are unaware of that needs some attention before finding someone new, or you risk a repeat scenario.

### **9. Being reactive rather than proactive**

Don't wait until it is time to hire to try and attract new employees. Building your employer brand is something that you should do all year round, not just when hiring and you may find that candidates start approaching you, even when you don't have a role open.

## **10. Hiring for the short term**

Keep your long-term business goals in mind when you're hiring. Think about who your business will need for the future. One candidate may suit the role right now, but will they evolve with the business as you need them to? Mindset should be considered rather than skills that could be taught on the job. Mindset is much harder to influence if it isn't right in the first place.

## **11. Hiring just because you can**

Just because you have the budget to hire right now, doesn't mean it is the right time to hire. Assess the needs of the business and whether you actually need the extra headcount right now or whether it is worth planning to hire at a slightly less busy time, so you don't make a rushed decision. Although don't leave it until you're in dire need, as this will add unneeded pressure.

## **12. Hiring even when your gut says no**

Trust your gut instinct and if it is saying no, then there will be other candidates. Hiring the wrong person will ultimately cost more time and money in the long run than waiting to find the right one.

## **13. Not casting your net wide enough**

Keep your mind and options open when looking for candidates to fill a role. Don't put too much emphasis on your list of 'must-have' qualities, or you may write someone off before you find out more about them. The type of job ad you write can narrow your candidate pool, too, but by writing a more inclusive job ad, you could attract a wider pool of talent.

## **14. Hiring based purely on company culture fit**

So, you've worked hard on getting your company culture just right, and now you need to hire someone new. Well, first things first; the person needs to be able to do the job over anything else. Maybe they will need some more training, but they need to be capable of doing the job. Yes, everyone needs to get on too, and sometimes certain personalities do clash, but it is no good for your business if the new candidate becomes best of friends with existing employees if they can't actually do the job well.

### **15. Hiring the right person for the wrong role**

Finding someone you know during the hiring process will be perfect for the business, but not right for the current role can happen, but don't be tempted to hire them anyway. Find a role that they will fit into, if your budget allows, but if not, then let them go this time. Concentrate on the role you have open first.

### **16. Talking about money too soon**

Although money is important to the candidate, as there will be a level of money that they will need to sustain their life, talking about it too soon in the process could mean they want the job for the wrong reason. Alternatively, they could switch off if what you mention first of all isn't what they were expecting, before you've even had chance to negotiate.

### **17. Not utilising technology**

There is loads of technology out there now that can make the hiring process much easier, so not utilising it can put you behind the rest. An example could be using video calls in the interview process, which can help in scheduling interviews, saving both you and your potential candidate time.

### **18. Skipping the phone interview**

Telephone interviews are great for you to get a first impression of a candidate, so shouldn't be overlooked. Depending on the role you're hiring for, more often than not, your new hire will at some point speak to your clients or customers over the phone too, so this is a good way to find out how they will come across in that situation.

### **19. Talking rather than listening**

Remember, they are the one persuading you that they are right for your company, not the other way around. You don't need to persuade every candidate to come and work for you. It pays to stop and listen to what they have to say, as you can steer the interview in the way that you want to, to find out as much about the person as possible before you make your mind up.

## **20. Banish unconscious bias**

Unconscious bias can creep in when you least expect it, hence it being unconscious. It has been shown in studies that people tend to unconsciously favour people who are similar to themselves, so having a diverse range of people assist with the hiring process can help to eliminate this.

The main thing to remember when you are hiring is to take your time to consider your decision. The wrong choice could be worse than waiting to find the right person. Work on your employer branding before it comes time to hiring and it will make the whole process a lot easier. Keep an open mind and consider all options.