

Want Good Employees? Stop Hiring ‘Bodies’

Resist the urge to fill vacancies with the first applicant. Focus on finding the right fit for the company.

By Jim Peduto

The success of your cleaning business depends on the performance and achievement level of each employee. Put simply, you are as good as your worst employee.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency for managers to take a shortcut in the selection process and fill vacant positions with “bodies” as quickly as possible. As a result, businesses experience a high turnover and go through multiple bodies as they constantly work to fill staff openings. High turnover attacks service levels and your bottom line.

The best thing you can do for the company, your staff and customers is to be disciplined when hiring. Resist the urge to fill the position with the first applicant. Every hire is important, so the focus should be on finding the right fit for the job and for the company.

Finding the right employees can be as simple as 1, 2, 3. Consider the following steps as an easy way to weed out the wrong people and find the best candidates for the job.

Step 1: Screening interview. The screening interview is the first stage in the hiring process. This short conference, which can be conducted over the telephone or in person, only needs to take about five to 10 minutes. The purpose of the screening interview is to quickly assess the applicant’s qualifications for the position. Questions should focus on skills and knowledge associated with job responsibilities.

You should also paint an accurate picture of the job duties in order to avoid unrealistic job expectations that cause disenchantment, dissatisfaction and turnover of new employees. If the hiring process includes a background check or drug test, this is an ideal time to ask, “Are either of these an issue for you?”

Step 2: Second interview. Applicants that score relatively well during the screening interview should be given a second interview, usually conducted in person and ideally at the job site during operating hours. If possible, the second interview also should include a tour of area to be cleaned. Recruiters also should explain the scope of the work and encourage the applicant to ask questions. The site manager and team leader to whom the applicant will report to should conduct the interview.

Step 3: Orientation. First impressions are everything. Since the outcome of your new hire’s first day on the job sets the tone for the employment relationship, you have to engage the employee from the moment that they arrive on the job site. It is quite common for new employees to walk off the job on their first or second day. This is not an employee issue; it is a management issue. It is the manager’s responsibility to welcome, effectively orientate and train new employees. Most people are at their best on their first day — are you? Managers need to quickly set clear expectations and bond with new hires.

The key to breaking the cycle of bad hires is focusing on getting the best fit by implementing a rigorous hiring process. Spending the time hiring often is the key to your success. 



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