

How To Recruit A Dream Team

Recruitment is something that a lot of business owners get very wrong. And more often than not they have no idea how much damage they're doing to themselves in the process.

Attracting and retaining great people is among the most important job you have as a business owner. Doing it well requires discipline, effort and clear strategy.



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Great Recruitment Philosophy

Research shows that the best companies spend a disproportionate amount of time and energy finding the best employees. Take the long-term view, never make *panic hires* and if you do make a mistake correct it quickly.

Make people your number 1 priority

- The landmark 2001 study by Jim Collins author of Good to Great identified having great people as the number 1 differentiator between mediocre and exceptional companies.
- One founder or CEO isn't capable of being the best at everything. Your goal is to build a team of self-motivated world class experts.
- Having great people on board (not just ordinary people) is the single biggest investment you can make to your company's long term success.

Hire slowly

- Never stop looking for great people. Create a future organization chart and use it as your recruitment plan for the next 3 years.
- If in doubt, don't settle. Keep on looking for the right person even if it takes time.
- Hiring mistakes happen when you recruit too late, have no time and end up making decisions in a panic.

Act fast if there's a problem

- If there's a problem with a team member act quickly. If you can't fix the problem letting them go early and doing it respectfully is better than dragging out the process.
- Before firing, consider moving under-performing team members to a different role which would suit their talents better.
- Ask yourself the question "If I were to interview them again, would I still hire them?"

The Recruitment Process

Follow recruitment best practices and systemise the process as much as possible. That way you get the best results without it becoming a burden and a resource drain.

Get the job spec and job advert right

- Your job specification needs to be as much about skills as it is about personal qualities.
- Clearly specify the experience and technical skills you require but also the personality type that would perform best in the role.
- Write the job advert in the same way you would write a sales letter. Write it with a very specific audience in mind and use all your best copywriting tricks to make the opportunity sound enticing.

Put up barriers

- Put up barriers so that time-wasters deselect themselves.
- Hide an instruction in your application form that says “in your email put an X at the top of your message”. Any application without the ‘X’ can be immediately dismissed because you know they didn’t even read the whole application form.
- Leave a phone number at the bottom of your form directing your applicants to leave a voicemail rather than just send a CV. 80% of weaker candidates won’t leave a message.

Test competencies yourself

- Give your applicants a task that tests the skills required for the role: give a 10 minute presentation, do a team working exercise, write a blog post, complete a technical quiz, role play a sales call, ... etc.
- Make allowances for interview nerves. Don’t just go for the person who’s most charming and likeable on the day. You’re not searching for someone who’s good at interviews – you’re searching for someone who will perform best in the role.

Choosing The Right People

Think long and hard about the people you choose to join your team. Only settle for those who will fit your culture and who are highly self-motivated.

Making the final decision

- Obtain *verbal* not just written references for your final candidates. Speak to their previous employer and ask specific questions about the skills and attitudes crucial to the role.
- Score and rank each candidate out of 10 against the key attributes you specified in the job specification.
- Always offer a probation period before awarding an employment contract.

Focus on cultural fit

- At Zappos, a company world famous for their amazing company culture, they conduct 2 sets of interviews. One testing experience and technical ability and another purely on cultural fit.
- Assume that you can't change peoples' core values and that your job is to find the people who already embody your ideal culture.
- Being strict about only hiring employees that align with your ideal company culture (even if that means letting otherwise talented people go) is a long term strategy that has huge payoffs.

Look for self-motivation

- Your one-to-one interviews should mainly focus on attitude and motivation. Why will this job be important and meaningful to them?
- When in doubt, choose attitude over aptitude – because someone with the right attitude will be able to learn the required skills. The opposite is rarely true.
- Highly favour self-motivation as a quality in candidates. Mediocre people forever require a manager to keep them motivated whereas great people motivate themselves.