National Restaurant Search LLC

National Restaurant Search has remained the food industry's most respected executive search firm for nearly three decades. We seek to be the best. Therefore we are committed to recruiting the best candidates for our clients needs. We strive for excellence in everything we do and our clients needs always come first. Over the years we have built relationships, credibility and reputation by establishing an exceptional level of trust with both our clients and candidates. With offices in Chicago, Atlanta, and Minneapolis, and opening in Dallas in 2011, we offer a full range of search and consulting services to national and international corporations, early stage entrepreneurial companies, private equity and venture capital firms.

Our profession is an art, not a science. The quality of creative thinking the recruiter brings to his art, the judgment he uses in assessing prospects against client requirements, and the skill to close in a manner beneficial to the client and candidate come only from experience. There is simply no substitute for experience. Our search consultants all have executive level management experience within the hospitality industry, which makes us uniquely positioned to bring our clients valuable organizational perspective, while helping them to capitalize on the brightest talent and best performing candidates in the marketplace.

National Restaurant Search continually monitors the hospitality industry and keeps abreast of economic trends that affect our clients. We are also acutely aware that the shortage of talent, already evident before the recession, is reasserting itself strongly. Companies have begun to think strategically again, and in looking for growth are seeking out those managers and executives who can offer both operational strength but also practical leadership in taking organizations and teams forward. We see this as a challenging but exciting time to be partnering with clients to help them build and strengthen their management teams as they seek new growth in a much changed world.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how National Restaurant Search can be of service to you and your organization.

Sincerely,

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Articles

1: Restaurant Finance Monitor Article on National Restaurant Search

2: *Pondering the Poach* by Deborah L. Cohen

How To Avoid The 6 Most Common Hiring Errors

From the *HBR Blog Network* by William C. Taylor

We would like to share with you some of the experiences, information and insights we have gleaned from helping our clients sidestep the six most common hiring errors.

1. Experience Doesn't Always Count

When it comes to hiring, often entirely too much emphasis is placed on the past. Experience is what commonly is sought in job candidates and experience is often viewed as the ultimate tie-breaker when making a final decision.

But the price tag for taking this road can be high. How often is twelve years of experience just one year of bad experience warmed over a dozen times? In the end, effective hiring has less to do with experience than with potential.

By way of quick example, one of our clients says he has hired experienced people "who have fallen flat on their faces," but on the other end of the spectrum, has seen successful executives from similar industries become highly successful. And with technological advances driving the restructuring and reshaping of markets and industries, as well as the nature of many jobs, it does not make sense to base staffing decisions solely— or even largely— on the myth of experience.

The restaurant industry suffers from a lack of leadership and overall business experience.

Sometimes, these qualities are more important than experience for a particular position or industry.

2. Placing Too Much Emphasis On The Interview

How often, after hiring someone who does not work out, have you thought to yourself, "But they looked so good in the interview."?

In such cases, "interview stars" as we call them, often prevail. They make a very favorable first impression, but their performance fizzles after the interview. We find many of these candidates are referrals from friends of people connected to the company.

While interviews can provide valuable input into the hiring process, when all is said and done, you can often be left with more questions than answers.

For an interview to be effective, you need a very clear sense of the key qualities and competencies you are seeking in the ideal candidate. Only then will you be ready to develop a list of probing questions that will help you determine the extent to which each applicant possesses these qualities.

For instance, If you are trying to determine if an individual is confident and assertive, ask them to tell you about someone who influences them. Ask them to tell you about a time when they had to go against the rules. Ask them about the best suggestion they ever made. If they make claims of improving sales and profits or reducing turnover, ask them how they did this. Then listen. As their stories unfold, you will learn much more about themrather than simply allowing their resume to serve as a roadmap for the interview, as so often happens.

Depending upon the particular position, you will want to ask similar questions to help assess a candidate's level of independence, initiative, empathy, persuasive ability, caution, energy, leadership, problem-solving skills, organizational ability, communication skills, capacity to follow directions, and service orientation.

These questions can be windows into someone's personality. Coupled with the findings from a valid personality assessment, they can provide you with an accurate read on whether the candidate's motivations are aligned with the needs of a specific job— before you bring them onboard.

3. Hiring In Your Own Image

It is only natural to want to work with people you like. Human nature being what it is, everyone tends to like people who are most like themselves. This sets up a reflex action to hire people who remind us of ourselves, or, at least, with whom we have much in common. After all, who wants to surround themselves with people who get on their nerves?

But if you hire an entire staff of people just like yourself, you are bound to create an imbalanced organization. A staff with a preponderance of your strengths and virtues will also share your limitations. It would be like a football team made up of eleven quarterbacks with nobody to block or catch a pass.

To avoid hiring in your own image it is best to first outline very clearly the tasks you need the individual to accomplish, as well as the competencies and personality qualities that would enable an ideal candidate to get the job done. You will then be in a position to assess your most promising candidates against this ideal profile. This is the surest way to avoid hiring someone because you like them, then wondering a few months later why they didn't work out.

4. Being Overly Impressed By Formal Education

While education is clearly important and worth pursuing, having a diploma does not necessarily tell you whether an applicant is bright, empathic and flexible enough to learn and grow with your company.

The ability to learn and grow requires considerably more than a keen intellect. We have assessed many people with well above average intelligence who lacked the capacity to grow because they used their intelligence to rigidly defend their preconceived notions, rather than to genuinely seek new solutions or approaches.

On the other hand, many individuals with only average intelligence have the potential for growth because their openness, flexibility and empathy permit them to make full use of their capabilities. We also found common sense and the ability to operate in the real world instead of a theoretical one is extremely important.

The bottom line is not necessarily how someone does in a classroom. It has more to do with whether an individual is open and flexible, has common sense, can shift gears under differing conditions and demands, can read between the lines and adjust accordingly, and is motivated to learn and grow.

5. Depending Upon Training To Fill In The Missing Pieces

One of the major problems with training (as most trainers will readily agree) is that it is generally assumed that everyone possesses the potential and talent to take advantage of what is being offered. Appropriate training can certainly increase the productivity of someone who has inherent potential; however, an individual entirely devoid of potential for a particular position rarely improves with training, no matter how thorough it is. For training to be profitable, individuals first need to be selected according to their innate potential and abilities.

This takes an understanding and appreciation of what can be taught and what has to be brought. For instance, listening skills can be improved, but you cannot help someone to enjoy the persuasive process. Likewise, you can show someone how to manage their time more efficiently, but you cannot teach them to enjoy pleasing others. Certain skills can be taught, but you cannot give someone motivation or potential.

We have found that the only way an individual will take full advantage of a training opportunity is if it appeals to an inner ability. Effective training begins with a thorough understanding of each individual's strengths, limitations and potential.

6. Pirating From Your Competitors

The notion persists in many industries that pirating an employee from a competitor provides and enormous head start. The reasoning is that a pirated individual will be able to hit the ground running, because training can be skipped. An added benefit may even be that other employees will come along with this pirated individual.

This is only true if you select the right individual and he has the right attitude. Ask yourself, why would a successful person be willing to give up seniority and other benefits to come to you? Is you opportunity really that much better than your competitor's? If the answer is not a ringing, "yes," then seriously question the wisdom of "operation pirating."

If you are not willing to pay these individuals well and give them an opportunity to grow and "share the wealth", this may not be the answer to your problems. You also must be certain these individuals fit your company's culture and chemistry. If you are not really careful in these areas, the result will be a recirculation of mediocre talent or the hiring of people who are not team players.

Where Do I Find These Quality Candidates That Will Take My Company To The Next Level?

Hire a professional search firm who has years of experience in the restaurant industry. If you choose the right firm, you will start with a limited number of quality candidates who are prescreened, reference checked, and fit your company's culture. Using suggestions 1-6 will assist you in selecting the candidate that will not only meet your requirements, but will also match your company's chemistry and culture which is just as important. This may sound like too much work, but the result, a great hire, will be well worth it!

If you would like to discuss "The 6 Most Common Hiring Errors" or any other concerns you might have about hiring executives, improving the productivity of individuals already on board, or developing a more effective team, please give us a call.

We are here to help take your organization to a higher level of performance!

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