



Best Practice: Job Applicant Screening

Recruiting quality job applicants for your open positions is always challenging, but the employment process can become very frustrating when new hires do not seem to fit in and don't stay with the company very long. A white paper, *The Recruiting Survey: As Worker Loyalty Fades, Personality Fit Is Critical for Hiring and Retention*, summarizes the surprising findings of the survey sponsored by eBullpen, LLC.

Forty-six percent of new hires leave their jobs within the first year, and only 49% remain after two years. Other surprising responses cited in the white paper include findings that 75% of respondents named quality of hire and retention as the two most important HR metrics, and 59% of those surveyed believe that less than half of all candidates interviewed are qualified.

More than half of the respondents noted that the personality of candidates is important in the hiring process. **Assessing whether a job applicant will fit into your work culture and teams before you hire may make a difference in whether an employee will stay for only a year or two or become a long-term, dedicated addition to your workforce.**

eBullpen, LLC, says, "Conservative industry estimates put the cost of turnover at 1.5 times that of salary, with some companies reporting a six-fold expenditure above salary when hidden costs such as 'chain reaction' turnover and lost productivity are factored in."

To help you hire better the first time, another white paper by Susan Govea of eBullpen provides hiring tips:

- **Assess the vacancy.** Involve the hiring manager, superiors, and subordinates with whom a person will work. Brainstorm about increasing productivity, satisfaction, and success for the next person who works in the position, as well as the required skills, most critical personal traits, and strengths that are currently missing from your work team.
- **Translate the information** collected into the skills and personality attributes that will enable a person to be successful in the position.
- **Be realistic about the skills and attributes you seek.** Does the job description sound like an unattainable super candidate who has to be everything — a strong leader and team player or an accommodating analyst who quickly makes difficult decisions? Recognize when traits conflict and determine which traits are most important.
- **Avoid rigid competency-based disqualifiers.** Using them at the cost of personal style will render a candidate list unbalanced, and an entire group of people who might better fit the personal style sought will be overlooked.

- **Interview at least three times and include at least three people.** Studies show that long-term placement increases with two, and even more with three, interviews. Prepare for the interview by developing targeted questions designed specifically to discover if the person has the personal traits and skills identified in the vacancy assessment.
- **Focus on the future,** rather than the past, with candidates. What a person might have done is not as relevant as what they need to do. Ask specific situational questions that are relevant to the job and types of tasks that must be completed.
- **Implement a follow-up success measurement.** Determine what made some hires so successful and try to replicate that experience with hiring tactics.