

# 5 Tips for Hiring Great Employees

*By Terri Robinson*

This time last year employers had to be very creative to find great employees. This year the number of job seekers out there has more than doubled (according to the number of resumes posted on Monster.com anyway). Instead of having to search high and low to find a few great people, employers are bombarded with hundreds - or even thousands - of resumes. So how are you going to find the truly great employee?

Recruiting for an employee to fill your position can be a frustrating and time consuming process. From writing the ad, which has to be exciting and challenging to attract great people, to the actual interviews with likely candidates, your time is guaranteed to be stretched to the maximum for a period of time.

Here are 5 tips to help you hire a great employee:

1. When you review a resume, look for length of time on the job: a candidate with several short-term employers (less than a year) could mean a lack of commitment on their part. Of course, with all the recent lay-offs, it could just mean they got caught in the fallout.

It isn't necessarily a given that they were laid off because the company was cutting back. Star performers are not laid off if the company can avoid it. Be sure to check those references carefully, especially if the company is still in business. You don't want someone else's "deadwood".

2. Look for gaps in employment and ask for an explanation. Long periods out of work could signal a time out to update their education - or it may indicate some criminal background.

3. Watch the employment dates for "overlaps". This could be a simple error, but also might indicate that the candidate is not being truthful about previous employers. Ask the person to explain it, and be sure to call those employers and verify dates of employment with them.

4. Have a copy of the job description at hand when you review the resumes. The more skills that match your job description, the more likely you will be to have a great match. Focus on what they have done in the past that matches what you want them to do. If you need cold calls to develop new business, watch for that on their resume. Write a list of things you want them to do and then ask questions that will get those answers (or the lack thereof).

5. Sort your likely resumes into two "stacks" - one for those that look perfect to you, the other for those that look good. Call the perfect ones on the phone and ask them why they want to work for your company. Pay attention to your instincts - if you need a Receptionist, it is important that the person has a pleasant phone voice, that they are enthusiastic and articulate. If they don't make you feel good when you're speaking to them on the phone, they won't make a very good first impression on the customers who call your company.

While these tips aren't the whole picture in hiring a great employee, using them increases your chances that you will hire the perfect match for your company.

With the present restrictions on information that a previous employer is allowed to give you, it is

important to pay attention to all the details you get from the candidate. It will make the difference between having a GREAT employee working for you, or just having a GOOD one.

\*\*\*\*\*

Terri Robinson, President - Robinson & Associates, a recruiting company that specializes in sales and marketing professionals. Terri has been published in Arizona Women's News, Arizona Reporter Online News; interviewed by Recruiting Trends' Newsletter for their Extreme Recruiting column, by Smart Money Magazine, and by Sales and Marketing Management Magazine. Surf to <http://www.recruit2hire.com>, call 602-233-8410, or E-mail Terri