

AdvanceMe's Small Business Tip: August 12, 2008

Hiring the Right One

Here's the scenario: you have a desk piled with resumes, you have been interviewing all week, and you are trying to evaluate how each potential candidate might be able to answer your needs. So how do you gain confidence that you will hire the right person?



Shannon Cobourn, Manager for Atlanta-based recruiters **Talent Zoo**, suggests that the following simple steps will help you to find and hire the right candidate.

- **Have a Crystal Clear Idea of Who You Need.** "This extends beyond a particular skill set to the personality and the transferable skills," states Cobourn. "How will you know if you've found the right candidate if you don't know very specifically who you need?" Cobourn suggests creating a "wish list" of all the attributes you'd like (or need) in a new employee. She suggests prioritizing this wish list, identifying skills or personality traits that are non-negotiable. Using this list as another tool to see how each candidate measures-up will help you find confidence in your decision.
- **Experience vs. Personality.** Cobourn states that attitude may be just as important as experience in many situations. "Certain skills can be taught but changing someone's personality is unlikely," she notes. "An enthusiastic, eager, and curious candidate with less relevant experience is often worth more than a seasoned pro with a chip on his or her shoulder."
- **When in doubt, have the conversation.** You might have a candidate that looks or feels strong, but there are some key details missing from the resume. In this situation, Cobourn suggests that you may be rewarded by making a call to dig a little deeper. She states, "You could spend an extra thirty minutes scouring the resume for specific keywords which may or may not appear. Or, you could just pick up the phone and ask the questions directly." In doing so, Cobourn states you'll get much more than just the answers to your questions. "You'll be able to hear how this candidate communicates, how she presents herself, and how she thinks on her feet. In a conversation, you will get a glimpse into her real personality...and none of that appears on her resume."

Bringing the right person into your business is rarely an easy or effortless decision to make. However, by following Cobourn's simple advice you can certainly gain confidence that any decision made will be in the best interest of your business.