

Reimagining Your Hiring Practices: A Self-Assessment

Evaluate yourself with this hiring checklist.

By Magi Graziano

Many organizations are using outdated hiring techniques. Clinging to the ways of the past when constructing a workforce leads to high turnover, stagnant engagement from staff, and low productivity. Solving the hiring problems of the future requires a spirited, connected system that makes selecting the right candidates easy.

It requires a *conscious* hiring process.

Be Thoughtful about Your Methods

Conscious hiring is the linchpin to employee retention and an optimized workforce. In such a culture, the right people are focused on the right things. The right things might look like increased revenue, operational efficiency, innovation, customer experience, and sustainability, as these are the pillars of any long-term successful organization.

A conscious hiring mindset also leads to motivated, productive workers. Most people are like sponges, and those around them affect their work attitudes. Work production improves under the guidance of engaged, inspired, and competent people.

Know Who You Want

A conscious hiring program begins with the end in mind. Before you do any advertising for a position, you need to analyze the role for a solid understanding of how it relates to your overall organizational strategy. Often, too much time is spent with candidates who lack the fundamental traits to execute the role; in the end, neither the person nor the role deliver.

The customer experience improves when the person in the customer-facing role authentically cares about service delivery, is a proactive problem solver, and has a natural talent at follow up and detail orientation. Organizations that match their hiring brand with their customer brand attract people who deliver results for customers. When you match your organization's values to the values you look for in your employees, they naturally deliver in a way that honors those values and your message. In turn your service brand is strengthened.

“A conscious hiring program begins with the end in mind.”

Hire with Retention in Mind

Employee recruitment and retention programs are tied together. One can't succeed without the other. You must make sure that what you offered when you interviewed candidates is what you deliver when they're hired – and continue to deliver.

To retain loyal and excellent employees, you must be aware of what they want. When surveyed globally, employees consistently named the same elements that nurture their engagement. The most common are:

- **belief** in the organization's mission and vision
- **promising future** for one's self
- **work-life balance** supported by the organization
- **confidence** in the organization's leaders
- **good on-the-job** training, education, and development opportunities
- **being treated with respect and dignity** and being recognized for one's work.

Keeping employees happy will be much easier if you use the hiring process to find out what candidates want, what their values are, and how they see themselves fitting into your organization's vision. People who are aligned with the organization will make the best employees.

Integrate the New Hire into Your Organization and Culture

Choosing a candidate isn't the end of the hiring process. The first-day interaction with your new recruit is vital. There are eight elements that are important to new-hire integration:

- **Enlist a key member of management** to talk about the organization's mission, vision, and values to get the new employee excited about the organization and the big picture.
- **Remind new employees of the significance** of their contributions: why they matter, why their role matters, why they were chosen for the role.
- **Make time for a briefing** on employee benefits and organizational policies.
- **Introduce the new employee to key people** who will work with them and who they need to know.



- **Provide an office tour** and demonstrate how to navigate throughout the organization, how to find and operate office equipment, and so on.
- **Assign the new hire a buddy, sponsor, or mentor** different from the immediate boss.
- **Have the new employee's workspace ready** with business cards, phone, and computer.
- **Perform an orientation of the job** and its function, complete with a training plan, performance expectations, and a milestone timeline.

A new hire must feel important, invested, and eager to produce results. Invest in employee development tools and trainings, provide sincere greetings when new employees walk in the door, and follow through on your promises. You must create a vision of the future from day one and have structures in place to cause ongoing engagement.

Ask Yourself These Questions

Use the following assessment to evaluate your recruitment strategies.

- **Do you know what makes your best employees tick?**
Do you have a systematic way to recruit people with those same qualities?
- **Do you hire people into roles** with defined performance expectations?
- **Do you have a process in place to analyze why people stay** and why they leave?
- **Each time you hire someone, are you open to considering** all the many types of workers, including consultants, part-timers, and independent contractors? And, whichever type you choose, do you hold them to the same standards as you do your full-time workers?
- **Do you have a system to compare candidates** and objectively evaluate who is the best fit?
- **Do all interviewers use the same questions** for all candidates?
- **Before you begin hiring, do you have a clear idea** of who the right type of person for the role is?
- **Do you ask candidates what their ideal work opportunity looks like** and what they want for their overall career?
- **Instead of relying on resume content**, do you hire based on the candidate being able to achieve the core accountabilities of the position?
- **Do you have a career** and succession planning program?
- **Is your hiring strategy tied** to your organizational strategy?
- **Do you have a system to attract and develop people** to fill any upcoming gaps in your workforce?

- **Do you use assessment tools** to make sure people have the personality traits, values, and skills you need?
- **Do you hire people not only for what they can do** but for who they are on the inside and for the values that motivate them?
- **Do you ask behavioral interview questions** that dig into the core abilities needed for the job?

Take Human Resources from Good to Great

Do you find yourself spending more time cleaning up employee problems than contributing to strategic initiatives? Follow these steps to take your human resources from tactical and good to strategic and great.

Start with alignment. What is the overarching purpose of your human-resource strategy?

Create a matrix of how time is spent in what aspects of human resource management. What percentage of the month, week, or day is spent in crisis mode, what percentage in “administrivia land,” and how much in the following crucial areas?

- talent management
- recruitment and hiring
- succession planning
- proactively teaching and coaching people

Weigh the cost of outsourcing versus handling non-strategic functions. Really look at the opportunity cost of holding on to those functions that don’t make or break the organization. Is the right solution to hire a junior or administrative level person to take care of those administrative processes or is it to outsource anything that can be outsourced – payroll, benefits, compensation, and the like? Delegate those tasks that detract from focus on building the organization with the best people and creating a winning employment brand and culture.

Self-evaluate your human-resource leadership ability. What strengths do you possess that empower you? What gaps are present in your mindset, attitudes, beliefs, and competencies that are likely to become barriers to your strategic success? Tell the truth to yourself about what personal and professional development you need and then dig further and ask yourself if you’re willing to do the work to excel in the people category.

Build a game plan. Create a five-year vision for how human resources will elevate and accelerate the organization in achieving its goals. Identify the top organizational goals and determine what is needed from HR to bring those to fruition. Get buy-in early about your vision and the big work that needs to be done to get you there. Once you clarify you’re on the right track, address the gaps needing to be filled. Then build your one, two, and three year plans.

To transform your human resources, you need the courage to evaluate what’s working and what isn’t. Then, once you’ve identified the weaknesses and removed the constraints, it’s up to you to stay the course and make it happen!

- **Do you hold regular accountability discussions** with employees?
- **Do you have a talent attraction strategy** to deal with the impending talent shortage?
- **Have you melded** your recruitment, retention, and new-employee-orientation tactics into one fluid, integrated process?
- **Is your marketing brand married** to your employment brand? Do you have a compelling employment brand that shows up on your employment web page, on your internal and external organizational web page, and in your recruitment advertising? Do you communicate the benefit of being a candidate, participating in your employee selection process, and being matched to the right job for the right reasons?
- **Do you know what the return** on your hiring investment is?

Ideally, you’ll be able to answer “Yes” to all the above questions. If you can’t, it’s time to look closely at the gaps in your hiring practices and begin making changes, today. The life of your organization depends on it. 

Magi Graziano, as seen on NBC, is the CEO of Conscious Hiring® and Development, a speaker, employee recruitment and engagement expert, and author of The Wealth of Talent. Magi provides her customers with actionable, practical ideas to maximize their effectiveness and ability to create high-performing teams. With more than 20 years’ experience as a top producer in the recruitment industry, she helps leaders bring transformational thinking to the day-to-day operation. For more information on Magi, visit KeenAlignment.com.

Be Mindful about Recruitment

For more ideas to transform your hiring, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Take the Gamble Out of Hiring with Assessments
(Vol. 25, No. 4)

The High Cost of Employee Turnover – and How to Avoid It (Vol. 31, No. 3)

Seven Steps to Hiring & Keeping the Right Person
(Vol. 32, No. 4)

Creating a Values-Based Road Map (Vol. 23, No. 2)

The Organizational Personality and Employee Performance (Vol. 21, No. 1)

Hiring a Concern? Learn What Talent Magnets Do
(Vol. 24, No. 5)