

# Seven Steps to Hiring & Keeping The Right Person

By Beverly Flaxington

Here are foolproof ways to hire the best people — and hang on to them.

**T**here are a lot of unsatisfied people in the workplace. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that about 50% of employees leave their job within the first six months of being hired. And, according to a survey by Right Management, a whopping 86% say they plan to actively look for a new position this year.

“The most basic reason for worker discontent is a job mismatch.”

The most basic reason for worker discontent is a mismatch between what they want out of their job and what the position offers. Whose fault is that? The organization that hired them.

When hiring, most organizational leaders don't look for a behavioral match or cultural fit. The good news is that it's not difficult to fix the problem: There are some simple steps to find out what job seekers want and how to keep them happy.

Here's a seven-step approach to hiring the best people every time. It's a model that has a real-world track record of success.

## Step 1: Be clear about success for this role.

Let prospects know what success will look like. Make the job description as detailed as possible. Include details such as:

- **the role's major areas** of accountability
- **actions and behaviors** that are critical for success
- **working conditions** and other requirements unique to this position
- **the way you'll measure** performance

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- **skills and knowledge** necessary for the job
- **a list of people** with whom the employee will be involved.

## Step 2: Match “carrots” to your objectives.

A common mistake is to come up with a salary and benefits package that's based on what the candidate needs or expects. Instead, consider what your organization needs to accomplish. Then design compensation to specifically address your organization's objectives.

## Step 3: Develop an interviewing strategy.

It's important to have a clear plan in mind before you start holding interviews. Here are some keys to successful interviewing:

- **Know in advance who will be involved in the interviewing process and how much weight each person will have** in the final decision.
- **Develop a procedure for comparing notes after the first round.** Interviewers should have a pre-set time to meet, share their impressions, and explain why they recommend for or against hiring.
- **Create guidelines for collecting feedback** so the post-interview meeting doesn't devolve into decisions based merely on “like” or “dislike.”

## Step 4: Know what behaviors will succeed in the role.

Take time to identify the behavioral style the job requires. Assess candidates to see how they'll do the following:

- **Manage problems** and challenges.
- **Interact** with people.
- **Handle the work pace** and environment.
- **Deal with rules and procedures** set by others. (For a way to assure that an employee's willingness to submit to rules fits your organizational culture, see the first article in "Know Your Workers" on the right.)

Every person has behavioral preferences, and every role has behavioral requirements. Match them as closely as possible.

## Step 5: Fit candidate motivators to organizational motivators.

Consider the workplace culture. Ask yourself:

- **Is the atmosphere relaxed, social, and highly collaborative? Or do people work independently**, driven by fast turnaround and a rapid pace?
- **How do client and customer relations** shape the culture?
- **What are the spoken and unspoken values** that define the organization?

Once you're clear about the values that shape your culture, communicate those beliefs to job candidates. Be sure their values align with yours.

## Step 6: Ask questions that provoke revealing answers.

Analyze the job. Critically evaluate the major areas of accountability. Ask yourself: What factors are essential for success in this position?

Based on this job analysis, the behavior style identified in step 4, and the cultural values from step 5, write a detailed set of interview questions that are specific to this job. Make sure you ask the same or similar questions of every candidate so you have a good way to compare them.


Ask questions that will give you important information. For example:

- **What factors** helped and hindered you in past jobs?
- **Who's the best boss** you've ever had? Why?
- **What challenges** have you overcome? How, specifically, did you do so?

Probe to get a window about how people performed so you can "see" them in action.

## Step 7: Establish ongoing feedback & communication checkpoints.

Hiring the right people is the first part. Keeping them happy and on track is the next part.

- **Establish regular milestones** and feedback check-in points.
- **At regular intervals – monthly, quarterly, or yearly – have reviews in which you discuss specifics of people's jobs.** What are they doing well? What do they need to correct?
- **Be as clear as possible about what you observe and what you need people to do differently.** Don't wait for an end-of-year discussion. Keep the dialogue open and ongoing. 

## Know Your Workers

Use these articles at [www.NonprofitWorld.org/](http://www.NonprofitWorld.org/) members to gain insight into your employees, what they want, and how you can keep them positive and productive:

**The Key to a Productive Workforce** (Vol. 32, No. 2)

**Three Top Tips to Attract, Energize, and Retain Winning Employees** (Vol. 31, No. 1)

**Earn People's Loyalty: Here's How** (Vol. 17, No. 5)

**Zen and the Art of Team Building** (Vol. 20, No. 1)

**Keeping Your Best and Brightest Workers** (Vol. 28, No. 6)

**Avoid Headaches: Engage Your Employees** (Vol. 27, No. 2)

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

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