

# How to make better hiring decisions

By Mel Kleiman



The best applicant and the best employee are rarely one in the same, so I recommend following a “hire tough, manage easy” philosophy. Even if you occasionally miss the mark, you will still be hiring to a higher standard. The following “best practices” will help you build an excellent team:

1. There are two parts to every interview: gathering information and evaluating that information. To the best of your ability, keep them separate. Most interviewers have a tendency to let one good or bad answer skew their take on subsequent responses. Avoid having a single “perfect” response cause you to overlook faults or inconsistencies in later answers, or a single less-than-stellar response jade your perception of an otherwise outstanding candidate.

2. Rather than rely on your memory or notes, after each interview immediately fill out a standardized interview evaluation form. Such a document enables you to identify and score personality traits, as well as talents, skills and abilities that can lead to an employee’s success on the job.

3. If you are responsible for screening job applicants before referring them to others for interviews, keep your findings to yourself. Don’t influence their perception of a candidate; the fact that you passed a candidate on

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is your tacit stamp of approval. After all interviews and testing have been completed, then it’s time to compare notes and contribute to the hiring decision.

4. Always check references. According to The Society for Human Resource Management, 20-25 percent of all

resumes and applications contain at least one major discrepancy. If you don’t check references and it turns out an employee’s employment record has been falsified, you can be held accountable and at risk for a negligent hiring lawsuit.

5. If you make the final hire/don’t hire decision, consider the following suggested formula:

- 30 percent: Results of any pre-employment testing
- 30 percent: Interview performance
- 30 percent: Results of the reference check
- 10 percent: Your feelings, intuition and opinion should count for a small portion because, no matter how hard you may try to eliminate your biases, they still come into play

If the applicant scores poorly in any one of these areas, it should be a deal breaker. However, an exceptional rating in any one area shouldn’t, on its own, get someone hired. You want good ratings in all four areas before you make an offer of employment.