

# **STEP JOURNAL**

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## **The recruitment journey**

Greg Horton discusses important factors that should be considered after hiring

When people talk of recruitment they frequently refer to the processes and procedures involved in attracting and recruiting new members of staff. These include the need to have a properly documented job specification, the need to ensure that the technical skills and personal attributes are properly aligned with those of the successful applicant, etc. All too often, however, insufficient attention is given to the period immediately following the hiring.

Such oversight can prove costly, as the hiring should be considered as the start of the recruitment journey, not as an end in itself. All the energy, effort and money spent on ensuring the right individual is hired can quickly be lost if the individual's expectations are not fulfilled.

What, therefore, are the important factors to consider in the recruitment journey, post-hiring?

## **Record promises**

First, make sure to record any promises made that have not been documented as contractual conditions. For example, statements made at interview about how you will support the new hire's desire to achieve professional qualifications, or assurances that they will be allowed to take time off in school holidays with their children, will be expected to be honoured. Verbal assurances that are subsequently forgotten will cause disharmony.

## **Consider their first few days**

Next are the all-important first few days: consider the welcome the new hire receives. The quickest way to make someone feel insignificant is for them to turn up at reception and be greeted with cluelessness about who they are and why they are there. The professionalism of your company is demonstrated in the first few hours after their arrival. Never lose sight of the fact that this is an important moment for an individual. Joining a new firm can be daunting, unfamiliar and even lonely at times. While for your firm the individual may be one of 50, 100 or even 1,000 new recruits each year, to the person joining it is likely to be the most important and isolated event they will experience for some time. Emotions and sensitivities are heightened; getting off on the wrong foot is easy to do and extremely difficult to rectify.

Have a proper integration programme, perhaps including a tour of the premises or time spent in other departments to provide an overview and some feeling of scale, before delivering them to their place of work. The appointment of a buddy or mentor to give them a point of contact in those early, uncertain weeks is also a wise investment.

## **Induction**

During their probation or settling-in, is there a formal induction course with other new staff? Beginning with a brief interaction between the new recruits about their experiences can be as informative for

your company as it is for them. Use feedback to continually improve your recruitment processes. Try to ensure the induction training promotes the real difference each new joiner can make to your business. Taking time to explain not only how they fit in, but how they can add value, provides much-needed direction and a real sense of purpose and belonging within the organisation.

A crucial ingredient in any induction training is explaining the organisation's vision and culture. This will provide an insight into the organisation. After all, if new staff don't fully understand and buy into your organisation's values, how can they live them? And if they fail to live them, you have not added to your team but simply created an opportunity to confuse or frustrate it.

Also, don't be afraid to labour what makes your business successful and the type of behaviour new hires will need to demonstrate for them to be successful within it. With a greater understanding of the organisation's culture, they will have a greater appreciation of how their role and behaviour will affect others. This will translate into improved employee engagement. Engagement in harmony with others is the quickest way to improve performance across or within teams.

## **Check for clarity**

If you have come this far together, your new employee should now be nearing the end of their probation or settling-in period. They should know how they fit in, what is expected of them, how they should behave and interact, and how their role contributes to what the organisation is trying to achieve. But before completely letting go, have a final one-to-one, or group joiners' sign-off. Test understanding and check that they do have clarity. Ensure that their line managers have spent time documenting clear objectives on which they will be measured and, most importantly, how they will be recognised, trained and rewarded. People need to be given the opportunity to develop and feel recognised for their work, both verbally and financially, as their skills and contribution to the value of the organisation increase. In short, ensure that the organisation has succeeded in engaging and inspiring its new recruit.

Finally, once the new hire is properly empowered, keep an eye on their development through an appraisal process; let them know your door is always open, then set them free.

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