

WANT TO HIRE THE BEST EMPLOYEES? SOME PRACTICAL TIPS:

When it comes to your business it is not just the top management that can make or break your success. Unpleasant or dissatisfied employees, poorly trained workers, rapid turnover, or a toxic work environment can all predestine your organization to failure.

At Cameron Cole we work with some of the largest organisations around the world to assist their positive staff retention processes. Below we provide 5 key lessons we have learned over the years which have benefited many of our clients in training their key people management teams:

Tip 1. Don't just take a professional reference, get at least 1 personal one. Checking previous employers tells you if the person is honest (or at least has never been caught cheating/stealing), and a bit about their work style, attendance, attitude, and skills. However, talking to someone on a personal level about the potential hire can reveal a whole lot more. Though not a professional reference, this can help you avoid some very tricky issues later on. Alcoholism, personal temper issues, theft. All these issues have been filtered through using this very useful tool – it allows you to ask different questions. Some suggestions on the questions to ask:

- a. **How long have you known the person?** This answer can tell you about a candidate's long-term friendships.
- b. **Are they reliable people?** Friends and family members who do not think so will often share details that will surprise you (e.g., "Well, I would never leave my cat with her because of the time she burned so and so's house down, but I think she has really grown since then...")
- c. **Why do you think he/she is interested in this job?** This can reveal a context that can bolster your interest in the candidate (e.g., "She has always been passionate about marketing – in fact, when we were kids, she ran the best lemonade stand on the block) or could put you off (e.g., "Well I think he really wants to go into bar tending, and this job seems perfect for a short-term gig.")
- d. **Is there anything else I should know?** This one is ESSENTIAL. I can tell you from personal experience that I have gotten more information from this question than anything you could dig up on [Facebook!](#)

Tip 2. Trust your instincts.

When you instinctively like someone, there's almost always a good reason. This is Have you ever admired someone's smile, and wondered why you liked them immediately? A smile can tell you how confident, stable and friendly a person is, naturally. While you need to allow for "interview jitters" to some extent, if the potential hire does not make eye contact, gives you a limp handshake, or otherwise gives you the creeps, probe some more. Perhaps the candidate is withholding important details about their previous work experience or has failed to mention a blow up with a previous employer. If you still feel uncomfortable, they are probably not right for your team, even if their resume is the best of the lot.

Tip 3. Be clear about the job description.

While many companies use standard job definitions, a smart business owner will customize their job descriptions to fit their organization. Articulate the skills that are important to you. Sometimes splitting a set of tasks into two part-time positions will make much more sense, especially if the skills involved are highly specific and/or opposites. The worst hire is someone who is great at one aspect of the job you need done, and awful at others. If you need a well-rounded hire, be sure that he or she has successful experience in each aspect of the job. It's very helpful to rank your requirements in the order of importance to you.

Tip 4. Introduce a new hire formally and informally.

Set the tone of your office atmosphere by making the introduction of a new person feel important. Make this action a way for you to show respect for them, and for your existing staff. All change can cause insecurities and discomfort, people can't help but assess a newcomer against their own skills and experience. It is therefore, important to explain the new hire's role in your company.

Start with the formal person-to-person introduction. This sets the right tone. After formal introductions, make sure that an informal event includes all new hires within a few weeks. For example, you could set aside a late Friday afternoon hang out time. This small investment of time and energy can be the best way to integrate and welcome new hires, and allow all of your staff to celebrate the end of the workweek together.

Tip 5. Be scrupulous about reviews and feedback.

The first 6 months after a new hire joins is the "trial period." This policy is actually reassuring to most new hires. It allows you and your new employee to see if there's a good fit, and to make sure that they are comfortable and productive. Ensure you schedule regular reviews – each week / month. Deal with any outstanding issues appropriately and don't forget to compliment. It is unbelievable how many negative initial starts can turn into the most rewarding careers with the right beginnings.

It is imperative to build trust and honesty into these sessions if you are going to encourage and mold a new employee into a model employee.