

Member's Quarterly

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Perspective

Recruiting the Managers: Getting Hiring Managers to Participate

Keep the recruitment process on track



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One of the difficulties that HR managers and recruiters face on a regular basis is getting buy-in and cooperation from their own line managers. Even though they are working with them and for them, many of these hiring managers can't or won't make time to talk about the hiring process or help develop questions for the interviews. Sometimes it's difficult to get them to commit to show up for the interviews at all.

In a recent survey by a major talent recruitment company, HR staff reported that getting managers to make time for interviews and then getting them to make a decision on a staffing action was almost as difficult as finding the right candidate for the job. They also said that this is having a huge impact on their ability to bring the right talent into the organization, and many believe that is one of the reasons for high-staff departures during their first year of employment.

Time is at a Premium

Managers and supervisors are exceptionally busy. They may in fact be working at the busiest and most intense levels in history. Many work evenings and weekends just to keep up with the hundreds of emails and text messages received on a daily basis. So when they are asked to participate in a hiring process, their first reaction may justifiably be that they are too busy. The problem is that when they defer or delay the approval of interview questions or are not available for interviews, the process grinds to a halt. They end up with staff shortages that cost them even more time and money in the longer run.

How HR Can Help Managers

A recruiter can't make more time for the hiring manager. Perhaps time is not the only issue here. Some managers simply don't like the hiring process and particularly don't like doing interviews. That was another of the results of the survey noted above. Half of the HR people said that their managers were poor interviewers and in large organizations that number increased. That's not really surprising. Line managers have likely had little or no interview training and limited experience. No wonder they can't make time for something they don't like to do or they aren't very good at!

The good news is that there are some things that HR can do to help their line managers become more comfortable with, and hopefully make time for, the recruiting and interview process. Here are three of them.

Research

Do all of your homework before you approach the hiring manager to get their feedback. Create a form or questionnaire that you can provide to the line manager that maximizes the use of their time and yours. Get their feedback and general direction and only come back to them if you need additional information. They will be more comfortable if you give them a timeline and show where they fit in. It will also become apparent to them that they can speed up the process or at least keep it on track if they play their part in a timely fashion. Give them as much advance notice as possible as to when interviews might be held. They will be more cooperative and freer with their time if they can build the interviews into their already packed work schedule.

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Training

Some managers will want and need specific training in the interview process. This will not only help them feel more comfortable but will also contribute to better hiring. This training is readily available and affordable. The HR group can prepare some helpful notes to assist all line or hiring managers. Another thing that really helps is to have a standardized set of interview questions for the entire organization. This can be modified to suit any hiring process, but once again it creates a comfort and familiarity for everyone who may be involved in the recruitment process.

Support

The more support that HR can provide to their management team around hiring and interviews, the smoother and faster the process will be. In addition to formal training, there can be mock interviews carried out in-house in advance of the real thing. Interview scripts can be provided to managers well before the interview date so they can acquaint themselves with the questions and think about the answers they would like to hear. Helping them to practice active listening, where they listen, respond and then probe deeper will also make them feel more comfortable and qualified to carry out the interviews. They will then see the more positive results that good interviews can produce for the organization and their department or team.

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