

Examining practical HR issues business owners and managers encounter every day

This month's topic is "Fire Fast...Hire Slow" covering both sides of the employment process. These concepts seem to go against our instincts, but in the long run they will save you both time and aggravation.

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**Hiring Tips
From Arlene**

- Fantasize the perfect employee / candidate
- Script your interview
- Ask deep questions
- Don't "wing" unplanned questions
- Interview the candidate 2 or more times
- Get a second opinion of someone you trust before you hire
- Check professional references

Fire Fast...

What makes us think we're going to get sued if we choose to fire a poor performer? We need to feel confident and comfortable in our supervisory abilities to make good employment decisions that benefit the function, productivity and profitability of our organizations. And that means dismissing those individuals whose performance is contrary to these objectives.

If you just hired an employee, it's the manager's job to help that person succeed. But if you discover that the employee isn't working out, what do you do? I say, "Act

- references
- Ask references job-specific questions
 - No references? No job.

It's Time To Fire If...

- You've trained them well and they're still failing
- You've lost a customer because of them
- Their errors are rampant
- Other employees are complaining and morale is dropping
- They are repeatedly late or absent
- They have violated an important policy
- They just don't get it
- They're pitting employees against each other
- You're spending time trying to fix them
- You can't sleep at

Quick!"

Determine whether the employee's problems are something that training, coaching and time will resolve. If so, start a program that ensures the results you want.

But if the problem is a true absence of skills, interpersonal abilities, common sense, attitude, motivation, team work or other "unfixable" work deficiency, document the problem, and let the person go. The longer they stay, the harder it is to justify the termination and the greater your potential of paying unemployment benefits.

My guess is that no matter how quickly you let the person go, coworkers will still ask you (or themselves), "What took so long?" We underestimate the impact of a poor performer on employee morale. So, take charge and act swiftly. As long as you're not discriminating against a protected class of employee, a lawsuit is a low risk. Do what's right for your organization.

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Hire Slow...

Sometimes we feel so pressured to fill a job opening, that we rush into a quick decision - not necessarily a

night because of them

How Arlene Can Help

You don't have to do it alone. Arlene can help you win the hiring game by:

- Defining candidate criteria
- Writing and placing ads
- Screening resumes
- Selecting finalists
- Interviewing candidates
- Checking references
- Writing offer letters

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good decision. We've all had at least one experience where we thought we selected the right person, only to find out that their "evil twin" showed up for the job.

Consider these questions to improve your hiring process:

- How long do you spend interviewing a candidate? A quick 30 minutes or a calculated 60+ minutes?
- How many people interview the candidate to give you different insights?
- Do you interview once or do you conduct a second or third interview to evaluate consistency?
- Are your interview questions thought-provoking or are they routine, not showing how the candidate thinks?
- Did you test the candidate's ability to do the job or are you relying on their self-assured "yes" answer?

There are 100s of questions I can pose to help you redesign and strengthen your interview process. The key is to take the time to learn what the candidate really can do for you.

If you only make the few changes suggested above, you

will be hiring slower, taking more of your precious time. Remember, the value is in spending time today to save time in the long run. You will have much better odds of getting the right person the first time.

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About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with organizations so they can attract, manage and retain the right employees. She brings 25+ years of hands on HR experience as well as an MBA in organizational behavior and an MEd in Counseling to her clients.

If you have gaps in your HR operation, have an employee problem to solve, or want to enhance your managers' skills, call Arlene today. Learn how HRx can save you time and help you avoid costly HR mistakes. HRx, Inc., 574 Prairie Center Drive #135/285, Eden Prairie, MN 55344, 952-996-0975, www.HRxcellence.com.

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