

Stopping the Revolving Door: How to Hire and Retain Top Talent !

By Paul Endress

Every year, valuable employees leave companies for reasons no one really understands—not even the departing employees. In fact, when asked why they quit, many employees simply state: "I didn't *like* the job." This leaves many business owners, managers, and HR professionals scratching their heads, as they believe it's impossible for anyone to pinpoint what constitutes "like." In reality, what makes people like their job is something you *can* control, although it's also something most companies don't focus on. Those who lead a company or department, or those who are responsible for hiring employees, tend to focus on the tangible aspects of employment, such as wages, benefits, job duties, etc. As such, when they bring new people into the organization, they do so on the premise that if Bob was successful selling widgets at ABC Company, then he'll be successful selling widgets here. But just because someone was successful in a past company doesn't mean he or she will be successful in your company. And just because someone has the technical skills to do the job you have available doesn't mean she'll like working at your company. That's why you need to go beyond skills and technical expertise if you want an organization filled with productive people who actually like their job and stay with you.

So if you sometimes feel that your company has a revolving door of talent, consider the following suggestions for hiring and retaining the staff you need.

- **Enhance your hiring process.**

Gone are the days when hiring an employee meant reading a few resumes, conducting a couple of interviews, and then hiring the person with the best professional and/or academic background. Today's companies and employees are more complex than ever. And since most interviewers and most managers don't have a background in psychology to really discover what's going on inside a job candidate's head, pre-hiring behavioral and/or personality assessments are vital to any hiring decision.

A simple assessment tool—many of which people can complete in less than 15 minutes—can reveal a wealth of information that can help you better determine the person's strengths, weaknesses, communication style, work style preferences, etc. While you can't use the assessment tool's results as your only hiring criterion, you can incorporate the results with your formal interview answers to get a clear understanding of the job candidate's preferences and tendencies.

- **Get a good fit.**

By now, most people have heard that you want employees who "fit" in your organization. But what exactly does a "good fit" mean? It means that the person will be able to work within your organizational culture, not that he or she is technically competent to do the job. For example, is this person someone who enjoys being around others, or does he prefer to work alone? Does this person like to do things "by the book," or does she thrive in a flexible work environment?

Knowing more than just someone's skill set is important, because chances are that someone who was successful in a structured environment will not be successful in a flexible environment. And while few employees will ever pinpoint the disconnect in work style preferences as the root of their job dissatisfaction, any employee in that situation will complain about "not liking the job," even though it's the same job they did elsewhere and excelled at. A good assessment tool will reveal much information about a person's potential fit within your company.