

## “PROJECT A POSITIVE IMAGE WHEN RECRUITING”



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Job candidates are frequently told, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." The same holds true for companies when they are recruiting, although they frequently seem to forget this. Job seekers have long heeded the warning, "Watch how you are treated as a candidate - it is a preview of how you will be treated as an employee." What kind of a message is your business conveying?

There are several reasons why you should pay attention to your selection process and the message it is sending to people who might be interested in working for your company. First, if you want to attract top talent, these candidates will be discriminating about the companies that they will work for. They will start their evaluation of you as an employer from the very first contact.

Secondly, as the war for talent heats up over the next few years, companies who want to be competitive will hone their hiring and communications process so as to be most favorably considered by their strongest candidates.

Here are a few ways that you can start improving your internal systems so that candidates will be wanting to work for your company, rather than anyone else:

- Acknowledge the receipt of all resumes, whether unsolicited or in response to an advertised position. Since most organizations fail at this basic courtesy, you will stand out from the crowd from the onset.
- When you telephone screen candidates, be sure to ask if this is a good time for them to speak with you. If not, reschedule to a mutually convenient time. This shows respect for the candidate. Let each one know how your selection process will work, your timing and what the next steps will be.
- When you have selected the candidates that you will be inviting for personal interview, be prepared to step up the red carpet treatment.
- Each professional candidate should receive a meeting preparation letter and company information or a web address where they can find such. Out of town candidates should have their travel arrangements made for them, or clear instructions / guidelines to do it for themselves.
- Never keep a candidate waiting unnecessarily. Stop running around seeing if anyone is available to meet with this person. Show the proactive rather than the reactive side of your business.
- Be sure that your interviewers, particularly the managers, are thoroughly prepared to give a quality interview. If there will be team interviewing, be sure that they have planned in advance what discussion areas will be covered and by whom. At all costs, avoid putting the candidate through the wasteful experience of redundant, serial interviews.
- If there are changes or delays in your timeline, let the candidates who are under consideration know this. A simple email message will suffice.
- Once you have extended an offer and it has been accepted, thank the other candidates and let them know that your process has been concluded. Those who interviewed two or more times deserve a personal phone call. The others can be sent a letter. Never leave candidates lingering without closure.

Remember, everything you do in the employment selection process sends a message about your company, which will extend into the community at large. Handled well, even the candidates who were not selected should be able to speak favorably about your organization and how well they were treated. You can't buy that kind of positive public relations!