

Key Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Recruitment and retention are two human resources functions that require strategic thought and planning. Talent management--an area of human resources which includes recruitment and retention--is extremely important to your organization's growth. Your business' most valuable assets are the talent, expertise and resources of your work force. Recruiting and retaining the best talent can only improve the value of the your assets.

Recruiting Qualified Applicants

Employment specialists who devise creative ways to recruit the most qualified applicants increase their own visibility in professional associations, seminars and other activities that give the employment specialist and your company the greatest exposure. By demonstrating to the community that your organization is an employer of choice, the most qualified applicants will have conducted research on your company to ensure they are spending their time wisely in considering a job with your company. Other ways employment specialists recruit talented and qualified applicants is by organizing a job fair or participating in a job fair that is widely publicized as being a promising event for job seekers. Many job fairs these days attract hundreds of people who show initiative and motivation in their search for the right job. A qualified applicant has the technical skills necessary for a role with your company; however, some of the best applicants are those who craft a thorough and diligent job search. There are also ways to incentivize potential applicants. In times when there are shortages in the work force or in particular occupations, employers will offer sign-on bonuses. The typical sign-on bonus carries with it a commitment to stay with the company for a minimum amount of time--you don't want your investment in a new employee to go down the drain after only six months of employment. Think carefully about your recruitment strategy if you intend to pay premiums for applicants you think you can't do without.

Retaining Talented Employees

This is probably one of the trickiest endeavors upon which a small business can embark because of the type of strategy required in retaining employees who you believe add value to your organization. Developing a retention strategy requires special skills in determining which employees are likely to seek opportunities elsewhere and which of them are most valuable to your business. Retention incentives can range from bonuses to professional development. Succession planning can also play a role in your retention strategy. If your human resources department is constructing a succession plan, identify the most promising employees who show aptitude for climbing your organization's ladder. Salary increases are another retention strategy, although it's a difficult case to make when employee compensation is modified in ways that cannot be justified in case questions arise. Raising the salaries of employees you want to retain--simply because you want them to remain in your employ--can backfire and is not the ideal method of retention. Depending on the employees you intend to retain through salary increases, your business may be unfairly accused of discriminatory employment practices. Consult the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for information about the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. Weigh the costs of spending money to retain certain employees against the cost to hire. For employees whom you're unsure about retaining, it may be a better decision to recruit for a replacement and assume the cost to hire.

Tapping In-House Talent

Again, your work force, or human capital, is extremely valuable to you and as such, perhaps they can play a role in the recruitment and retention of qualified applicants and talented employees. Establishing an employee referral program is an ideal way of recruiting applicants. Individuals who share similar worth ethics, practices and employment records tend to associate with one another. Ask current employees for recommendations and create an employee referral program that rewards them should the referred applicant eventually become an employee. If you company utilizes a 360 degree performance appraisal system, look closely at feedback provided from peers of the employees you want most to retain. The insight you gain from their peers may be more helpful to you than appraisal information you receive from the employee's manager.