



*Guidelines
& Resources*

Recruitment of Staff



Table of Contents

Recruitment

| | |
|--|----|
| Recruitment Self-Assessment | 2 |
| Organization Overview | 4 |
| HR as an Organization Need..... | 4 |
| Job Descriptions..... | 5 |
| Workforce Development Committee | 6 |
| Keeping Track of Data..... | 6 |
| Incentives..... | 7 |
| Telling the Story — Selling the Organization | 8 |
| What is Your Mission?..... | 8 |
| What is the Organization's Culture and Benefits? | 8 |
| Profiler Stayers — Why Do They Stay?..... | 9 |
| Applicant Search | 10 |
| Writing the Job Ad..... | 10 |
| Finding Applicants - Where to Look..... | 11 |
| Internal Recruitment | 13 |
| Role of Current Employees in Recruitment. . . | 13 |
| Outside Sources | 14 |
| A Word about Job Fairs..... | 15 |
| Internships, Externships, and Volunteers..... | 16 |
| Selection & Hire | 18 |
| Selection Process..... | 18 |
| Hire Smart, Not Often | 18 |
| Interviews..... | 19 |
| Realistic Job Previews | 21 |
| Resources | 22 |
| Bibliography | 22 |
| Resources..... | 22 |
| Recruitment Specific Resources | 23 |
| Retention..... | 24 |



Recruitment

Recruitment Self-Assessment Tool

Have two or three members of your staff take this self-assessment and then compare and contrast the answers. Remember, this is a tool to help figure out what the strengths and weaknesses are in the agency. Once found, the team can build a plan, using the suggestions and tools listed in this manual. If you hear it once you will hear it a thousand times, only change one thing at a time; work together as a team to find the weakest area of your recruitment and selection plan; and concentrate on fixing that area first. Then use this self-assessment again in six months.

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Does the organization have a human resource professional? | Yes | No |
| Does the human resource person meet with management regularly? | Yes | No |
| Does the organization have a Workforce Team that includes a direct service provider, a frontline supervisor, and the human resource person? | Yes | No |
| Has a recruitment plan been developed using the expertise of the workforce development team, the HR professional, and management? | Yes | No |
| Are the Job Descriptions current and accurate? | Yes | No |
| Are incentives offered to employees that recruit new employees? | Yes | No |
| If yes, what is (are) the incentive(s)? | | |
| Is (are) the incentive(s) understood by the employees? | Yes | No |
| Is there follow through by Human Resources? | Yes | No |
| What percentage of employees use the incentive program? | | |
| Is that meeting your target (percentage)? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to the section **HR Need**.

Does the HR staff/Workforce Development Committee know:

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| The demographic working at the organization? | Yes | No |
| Who the organization serves (who are the customers)? | Yes | No |
| What its mission is? | Yes | No |
| What the organization's culture is? | Yes | No |
| What its benefits are? | Yes | No |
| How to write compelling job ads for different markets? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to the section **Telling Your Story – Selling Your Organization**



Recruitment

Does the organization:

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Get the quality of applicants it is seeking? | Yes | No |
| Get phone calls about how to apply? | Yes | No |
| Know the Knowledge Skills and Abilities needed for the job being posted? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to **Writing a Job Ad**

Does the organization:

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Understand the importance of staff diversity? | Yes | No |
| Know what sections of the labor market are available? | Yes | No |
| Know how to attract those various sections of the labor market? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to the section **Finding Applicants — Where to Look**

Does the organization:

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Encourage employees to apply for jobs within the organization? | Yes | No |
| Know how to use staff as a recruiting tool? | Yes | No |
| Feel comfortable with the success it's having attracting job seekers? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to the section **Internal Recruitment**

Does the organization:

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Post jobs internally first, when possible? | Yes | No |
| Have materials that all staff can use to recruit/market agency? | Yes | No |
| Have current job postings on its website? | Yes | No |
| Try to attract diverse groups of people? | Yes | No |
| Tailor job postings to help attract diverse groups of people? | Yes | No |
| Plan and participate in a number of job fairs each year? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly NO, go to the section **Outside Sources**

Does your organization:

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Hire constantly? | Yes | No |
| Work individually to hire new employees? | Yes | No |
| Feel the applicants lack knowledge of the job when hired? | Yes | No |

Results: If you answered mainly YES, go to the section **Selection**



Recruitment

Organization Overview

HR as an Organization Need:

Often times, in small organizations, human resource duties fall onto someone as an additional duty. All of those duties:

- hiring,
- orienting,
- training,
- retaining,
- and adhering to personnel requirements (laws, payroll, etc.)

belong to the human resource professional. Yet, without a human resource professional, these duties end up being extra work or additional duties. These important building blocks for an organization should not be left to the “extra duties as assigned” portion of someone’s desk. Estimates on the cost of turnover vary widely, even within this industry, but to replace one individual an organization must: advertise the position, pay overtime while the position is left unfilled, and take the time to hire the new employee (write ad, post, interview, select, background check, hire, and train). And those costs do not take into account the indirect costs that include the loss of productivity, loss of client revenue, reduced quality from increased workload hours, and loss of reputation (due to stressors listed above). It is important for management to take the functions of human resources seriously. Making sure the data sets highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and solutions to the business problems will make the human resource professional a valuable asset to the management team



Job Descriptions

Having solid job descriptions are part of the building blocks of the organization. Like having and adhering to the organization's mission statement, vision, and values, having strong job descriptions helps an organization.

- Define and communicate the job responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform said job, and how the position relates to the larger picture.
- Determine performance standards and performance of individual employees.
- Defend against lawsuits (by creating essential functions, bona fide occupational qualification, ensuring exempt/non-exempt status, etc.).
- Maintain consistency for each position between division, supervisors, and individual employees,
- Give guidelines for job ads.
- Help with selection and hiring.

To write a job description you must break down the duties of the position into the most basic components. To update or create job descriptions, consider using existing employee feedback. Ask several people working in the same position to write down what they do on a day-to-day basis. Use the write-ups to determine what the Essential Functions of the job and the Non-Essential Functions of the job are. In other words, what is done most often, what is done least often? Use those functions to figure out the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities needed to do that job. Are there educational requirements? Licensing requirements? Background check requirements? All of this information should be written down on the job description.

Have this reviewed by the employees doing the job. Do they feel it reflects the job accurately? This job description will be the basis of many hires!



Recruitment

Workforce Development Committee

How does an organization ensure it is hiring and retaining people who are appropriate for the positions and will stay on the job for longer than a year (i.e., stayers)? One strategy that is highly recommended across every industry is using a workforce development committee to help make human resource decisions (that are not covered by local, state, or federal laws). The Workforce Development Committee should have the power to help make decisions regarding how accurate job descriptions are, to be part of selection/hiring committees, determine incentives for encouraging employees to help recruit, determine how to help retain workers, etc. The Workforce Development Committee must have the ability to actually implement policy and procedures and meet regularly. There is real value in using the workforce as part of the decision making process on recruitment and retention issues, since it is that same staff most affected. It is important to give the paraprofessional as well as the professional level employee a voice on the committee and allow them the time to attend committee meetings. For more information on how to set up a Workforce Development Committee, go to Resources Section.

Keeping Track of Data

A key piece of data is knowing how many employees only stay for six months and then leave. If the employee leaves at 12 months, that is also a critical period. Another interesting group of information to collect is who is staying (i.e., stayers) and why they stay. There are many ways to keep track of this information. A simple spreadsheet documenting each employee's start and end date is a good beginning tool. More formalized data sets can help create more tailored programs to attract and retain good employees. Why would the organization want to keep track of this type of information? Usually, if an employee stays for 18 months in direct service work, there is a good chance the employee will stay longer (Larson, 2005). So, it is important to keep track of who stays and who goes and then use that information when looking for new employees. By keeping track of information, it will be easier to tell if the organization attracts a certain type of job seeker. While an organization wants to attract a diverse group of workers, it is also good to know who your base worker is and why that group is working there. Is it the flexibility of the hours? The location? The population you serve? The independence of the job? What is the attraction? Do all of those attracted to the organization stay 18 months or longer? If not, who does? Having this information will help you tailor your job announcements to the niche markets that work best for your organization.



Recruitment

Incentives

Offering incentives to existing employees to help recruit highly qualified applicants is a great recruitment tool. There are many ways it can be used; but usually it is based on the successful retention of the referred applicant. So, if the existing employee refers an applicant who becomes an employee who stays (three months, six months, 12 months, or some combination), then the existing (or original) employee receives a bonus. The additional benefit is the new employee knows someone already in the organization, and that person has a vested interest in him/her staying on and being happy on the job, so there is a form of mentoring going on. The important part of the program is the follow-through by Human Resources! The bonus must be given to the existing employee if the applicant stays on the job. Another opportunity to use existing staff (and give them incentives) is to have them work Job Fairs with Human Resource staff. While it is a hardship to lose that body on the “floor,” it helps give the applicant a face behind the job description. Give everyone in the organization business cards (organizational cards with address, website, phone number, etc.) so employees can give out cards to people asking questions about what they do. Working the Job Fair or giving out “cards” can also be incentivized. The Workforce Development Committee can be creative devising incentives and the human resource professional must be ardent in keeping track of the data to ensure employees receive those incentives. If those two parts do not happen, the employees will not be motivated to help encourage people to work at the organization.

Although this section is specifically talking about using incentives as a recruiting tool, incentives can be used as a retention tool too. Incentives can be given for longevity (two year, five year, 10 year employee recognition that work as goals to work towards — more vacation days accrued, plaque, and recognition, etc.). If overuse of sick leave is a problem, good attendance rewards can be given. If getting staff to turn in case notes on time is the goal, then recognize the team/individual best case note completion rate. Another one that can be incentivized is the individual or team with members successfully completing the most competencies or training. All of these issues can be incentivized, but take it slow, use incentives in one or two areas that need some improvement.

Another word on incentives is that they do not have to be monetary; many things besides money motivate people, so incentives can come in a variety of forms. For example, gift certificates, time off, tickets to events, art, and other items can be used to as incentives. It just depends on the individual, but for sure, money is a universal attraction for a recruitment bonus.



Recruitment

Telling the Story — Selling the Organization

In the recent Alaska Direct Service Providers Wages and Benefits Survey (Ward, 2009), the No. 1 reason for people to stay at an agency was not money. Additionally, many of our workers were part-time workers. It is often said, people do not work in this industry for the money, yet many organizations try to put the money as the foremost benefit the organization offers. Each organization is different and has a different culture, vision, mission, and values, yet forgets to use those items to “sell” the organization to applicants. Mission, vision, values, and organizational culture can be what sells an individual on the organization. It is important to review WHO your organization is and WHAT your organization does as you put out job ads and start the selection process.

What is Your Mission?

Much like knowing who stays at the organization; knowing the mission and the culture of the organization is important as well. What is the mission of the organization? The values? The vision? Are these driving forces of the organization? Are the values of the organization applied equally to the consumers and to the employees (e.g., respect, celebration, etc.)? This is part of the recruitment process: highlight the mission, ensure employees know the mission, and highlight it while recruiting for new employees.

What are the Organization’s Culture and Benefits?

Benefits and culture may sound like two separate things, but the two can intermix when talking about attracting new employees. Does the organization have the usual benefits to offer, such as retirement accounts, health insurance, holiday pay, leave, etc? If not, what about the culture offers benefits? Such as, allowing an employee to take an extended vacation, use flexible scheduling, or that it is a “family friendly” organization. What are the advancement opportunities for new employees? According to our new wages and benefits survey (Ward, 2009) advancement opportunities matter greatly to younger people, but not as much to older people (over 35). How does the organization value education and training? Even if the organization does not have the funds for an educational program, are educational pursuits supported in other ways? These are benefits that can help attract employees as much or more than the offered wage.



Recruitment

While trying to attract employees, or trying to fill specific positions, highlight these unique attributes of the organization. The ability to be flexible in schedules can be a large selling point to many potential candidates, both paraprofessionals and professionals. If an organization is willing to be flexible in schedules (e.g., four 10-hour shifts, part-time work, etc.), then the organization might consider allowing for a job sharing. Job shares occur when two people share one job. It works well for many organizations and many people. It opens up the labor pool and allows people who aren't willing to take on a full-time job to consider sharing a job with someone else.

Finally, the consumers served are usually part of the organization's culture. Highlight the strength and relationship between the individuals served and the employees who work at the organization as it stands.

Profiler Stayers — Why Do They Stay?

Data collection is key to finding out who stays long-term and who does not (see Keeping Track of Data). This information is important, since it can help develop your workforce. Although diversity is important, it is also important to know who stays and why. That way you can work on developing those attributes to attract other groups of people to your organization. To find out who stays and why, organizations can use a survey, information gathering, and/or the Workforce Development Committee. The survey may be the most reliable source of information — since it is anonymous — but it also can be expensive and cause concern with the employees if not done correctly. Informal information gathering, asking a group of long-term employees to tell why they have stayed, may not give a true impression of why they stay, but is inexpensive and offers employees the chance to really give an opinion. The Workforce Development Committee can help develop the tools and ensure the employees that something productive will be done with the information. Defining who stays helps define what type of person likes to work at the organization, that information will help you determine what to write in your job ad (see Job Ads).



Recruitment

Applicant Search

Writing the Job Ad

When writing the job ad, make sure to outline the job, the organization, and the requirements of the job. On top of those requirements, try to “sell” the organization based on what was discussed earlier in Telling Your Story. Highlight what is enticing about the organization, the specific job, the benefits, and the environment (even if posting in Alaska, people like to move from Interior to Southeast and vice versa). Including the salary has pros and cons: there is transparency in posting it, yet it might automatically disqualify otherwise interested people simply because s/he believes the amount of education and experience is worth more monetarily than being offered. This stops the conversations of intrinsic benefits in its tracks, yet some applicants won’t apply without a dollar figure available. The compromise is to give a pay range, depending on education and experience, with the number being decided after the interview. The other things to post are the requirements: the education, licensing, background checks, experience levels, and any other requirements required for the job. Having a generic job ad for the positions with the highest turnovers is a good idea. Have these job ads go through the Workforce Development Committee for a “sound check” based on the information gathered about the organization.



Recruitment

Finding Applicants — Where to Look

While knowing who stays the longest at the organization and targeting that group is always good, diversity in the organization should also be encouraged. Finding people who are not normally attracted to these types of jobs is the key. It is important to reach out to find new employees; there are civic organizations, faith-based organizations, veteran organizations, and others that are trying to help people find work. Reaching out to these organizations could be an untapped resource for the organization to find part-time or full-time employees. The key is developing messages that resonate with each individual group and then finding that group.

- **Young Adults** — before moving on from this section think about the age group. Young adults include anyone 16–24 years of age. Organizations can work with the high schools — students getting ready to graduate are looking for job and career advice — by simply offering to attend a career day at the local high school and discussing the opportunities within the organization (paraprofessional, administrative, and professional level). Even if the organization can't hire someone until the age of 21, it is important to remind the high school students of the importance of keeping a clean record.
 - Look for young adults in colleges, connect with the on-campus organizations that are connected to the human services, social work, psychology, and other programs and see if you can work directly with the students, by having the students work on a project for the organization (off-site or on-site).
 - If the town does not have a college campus, then work with AmeriCorps, faith-based organizations, workforce development organizations associated with the Alaska Job Center Network, or the Alaska Job Corps, which have students in health care, behavioral health, and administrative studies and always love to hear from employers about the industry.
 - In Alaska, the young adults were interested in opportunities in advancement as well as working part-time jobs (Ward, 2009).
- **Veterans** — There is not a central location for recruiting veterans. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has run campaigns to encourage veterans into the industry. The Alaska Department of Labor has a Veterans Outreach service available too. Going to the military bases, if possible, would also be encouraged. If physically unable to go to the military bases, then call each of the Transition Assistance Programs to see how to post jobs openings for veterans and their spouses.
 - Veterans often have an image of being strong, resourceful, timely, and respectful.
 - There is also a belief that after serving in the recent conflicts, many of the current veterans will have disabilities and will like to “give back” to the communities.



Recruitment

- Faith-based Communities — Many faith-based communities work with a variety of individuals (not just their community members). Many of these communities have an employment component to the work they do. Sending advertisements to faith-based employment offices will bring in a new group of individuals.
 - The employment offices try to help the job seekers find a right match and also try to help the employer if there are troubles on the job (much like a job coach).
 - Highlight mission, values, vision, and the correlation to faith.
- People with disabilities — Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a great resource for people with disabilities. Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR), which works with Alaska Natives and American Indians with disabilities is also available in Alaska. These two agencies, DVR and TVR, come with a cadre of support for the employer who hires the individual with a disability. Other resources for information include the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Independent Living Centers (e.g., Access Alaska, Kenai Peninsula Independent Living Center, Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL), and Arctic Access) as well as Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation Center (Anchorage and Fairbanks).
 - People with disabilities have a variety of abilities, yet are usually shut out of jobs in this industry. This is despite the fact many people with disabilities go to college for human services and are interested in helping others become self-sufficient.
- Displaced Workers/Empty Nesters — Older workers may have already had other careers and now be ready for a change of pace. These individuals may come to the field with a variety of degrees and/or experience, but may not used to working with the organization’s population(s).
 - The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has created an outreach message to empty nesters/displaced workers and encouraged them to go to www.aadsc.org.
 - The Alaska Job Center Network works directly with each large business that goes out of business to help move those employees to new opportunities.
 - These individuals are not looking for advancement, but they are looking for full and part-time employment. They are of the baby boomer and Generation X age groups.
- Minority Groups/English as a Second Language — Alaska has a large and diverse work force. Oftentimes, it is thought that the diversity is limited to Anchorage, but it is not. Barrow, Juneau, Kenai, Kodiak, and other locations have large contingents of populations that speak English as a second language.
 - Civic groups, cultural groups, and advocacy groups are all available to help. Each of these groups can help by either helping tailor the message or helping find job seekers interested in the job and, at times, helping with the language barriers.



Recruitment

Internal Recruitment

Internal recruitment is extremely important for gaining the right employee for the job and for maintaining morale. Promoting internal staff has intrinsic rewards; it shows employees the possibility for advancement does exist; it reinforces the idea that communication does flow within the organization; and it allows for new people to move into existing roles, adding new perspective to static roles. Post jobs everywhere where there are employees; do not make employees come to human resources to find out about new opportunities. Newsletters, bulletin boards, and emails are the traditional routes to take for letting employees know about the open positions, but another avenue is reminding supervisors about the openings, posting the jobs on an Intranet, and starting a word-of-mouth campaign (incentives included) to make sure employees know about the opportunity.

It may seem counterintuitive for supervisors to recommend their best workers for promotions; on the surface it seems only like the supervisors loses a productive worker and needs to train a new hire. Benefits to this system include the built-in overlap between the time the existing employee moves into the new role and a new employee is hired, as well as having an opportunity to show staff how supportive both the organization and the supervisor are of promoting from within the organization.

Role of Current Employees in Recruitment

Current employees should know the mission, vision, and values of the organization well enough to be able to tell others not only what his/her specific job is, but what the overall mission of the organization is. If employees feel good about the organization, then it is more likely the employees will speak positively to others about the work done. This is highly important since word of mouth is one of the best marketing tools available to all organizations for all purposes. Having employees refer job seekers is also highly encouraged, since the employees know the positions and the culture of the organization. The possibility of current employees being able to successfully recruit others is higher if they are given the tools to do it. Mission, vision, and values should be highlighted often, communication should flow between all levels, and employees should have cards describing the organization to hand out. Employees should know about ALL available openings — lateral, promotions, and self-requested demotions so they can speak knowledgeably about the jobs available.



Recruitment

Outside Sources

Many organizations use outside sources, such as newspapers, to get the word out about open positions. These sources vary greatly in cost and return on investment.

- Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers has a website where individuals interested in the industry know they can review industry information. Working with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the University of Alaska, AADSC is working to ensure that job seekers know as much about our industry as possible. Commercials are provided by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services; the University of Alaska is helping by providing education and training opportunities; and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is helping by providing a dynamic job bank for job seekers to find jobs in our industry.
- Newspaper readership is changing. As it changes, so does the way that newspapers offer classified advertisements. Some are offering a combination service (e.g., print, online, and job bank) for classified ads. When advertising in the newspapers, word count is important, as is the consideration of readership. Some examples, but certainly not the only examples, are a classified advertisement run on Sunday may be read by people already employed (but interested in the checking out the competition), online ads may be read by people comfortable with technology, and banner ads may get clicked by someone who is interested in starting a new career. In rural areas, the newspaper is an option with appeal, since it is one of the limited ways to get local news. This is not niche marketing, but mass marketing to everyone in the local area.
- Craigslist and Alaskalist are free listing sites on the Web. Craigslist is often used in Anchorage for job postings, while Alaskalist would be a better place for all of Alaska, including rural organizations to use. Craigslist list has more recognition, so gets more traffic, but since both are free, it is an option to post jobs to these sites. Since the posting is free, make sure to include information about the job, requirements, and information about the organization. Have fun with the ads; post more than one ad and use identifiers to see which ads work best. This is not niche marketing, but mass marketing to everyone in the local area.
- The Alaska Job Center Network, also known as Alexsys, has free job postings. The Job Centers also will allow the organization to hold “day fairs” at Job Centers, advertising it within the Job Center network. The Job Centers work with job seekers every day and recognize individuals who are qualified for paraprofessional and professional level work. The Job Centers also help individuals get training for careers with potential that are or interest to that individual. The Alaska Job Center Network, which includes the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, the Alaska Employment Securities Division, and its partner agencies, is a place to go for recruiting opportunities. Even if you

Retention

are not interested in hiring now, it is a good idea to go and get to know your Job Center staff. They help job seekers get training and education, find jobs, and help organizations find the right match (including, at times, providing incentives to hiring individuals). The Job Centers are a great resource. This is mass marketing and tailored marketing, depending on how you use the job center resources.

- Job postings can be placed in newsletters, on websites, and bulletin boards used by different sections of the community. For instance, the deaf community on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus has an active website; they might be willing to post the organization's job, if approached. Senior centers, independent living centers, and community centers, in addition to most civic, faith-based, and cultural-based groups may be willing to highlight job opportunities to their members. Many invite guest speakers to speak at monthly luncheons; it is just a matter of asking and being respectful.

A Word About Job Fairs

Depending on the economy, there can be several job/career fairs held in the community each year. Some are targeted (youth, military, industry specific, etc.) giving a smaller yet more concise jobseeker profile. The others are general in nature and draw in more job seekers, yet many of those job seekers have no desire to work in this industry and/or no concept of what your organization does.

- It is important to make a plan on how many job fairs the organization plans to attend at the beginning of the year, and stick to it.
 - If the organization is looking for hard-to-find professional staff, consider buying a booth at one of the professional conferences held out of state.
 - Rural and remote Alaska organizations may need to travel to an urban center to attend a job fair or two.
 - Even if in the same city, a representative must make sure there are enough flyers, brochures, and promotional items to give away.
- It is important to recognize the different types of job fairs and plan accordingly.
 - There is the Annual Healthcare and Human Services Career Fair, which is targeted towards people who want/have these types of jobs already.
 - There are Veterans job fairs, both on and off military bases. These are geared towards military members (active duty, guard, and reserves), veterans, and family members.
 - General job fairs attract everyone looking for a job in every industry to them. That might bring new talent to the door, or it may just bring good public awareness about the organization to more people.



Recruitment

- Bring an engaging employee who does the job (or a closely related position) and who is enthusiastic about the organization to the job fair to help sell it to job seekers.
- To find job fairs that may have potential contact:
 - Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers www.aadsc.org
 - Alaska Job Center Network (AlexSys) <http://www.jobs.state.ak.us/offices/index.html>
 - University of Alaska (all three campuses)
 - The Anchorage Daily News www.adn.com

Internships, Externships, and Volunteers

A powerful way to gain experience and exposure to an organization is by spending time there. By offering people internships, externships, and limited volunteer opportunities, organizations create goodwill ambassadors that exist independent from the organization's employees. This also allows human resource professionals an opportunity to gain insight into the individuals who may be good employees. Partnerships are endless when it comes to finding internships, externships, and volunteers; it is a matter of being open to the experience. Usually there is some paperwork required, background checks are often required, and supervision is required, but the return on investment can be vast. It is amazing how often organizations turn down these opportunities.

- Internships are pretty standard and usually used to help a college student complete the work-study portion of the program. The internship is not held to a strict time limit and varies from person to person. Interns can be paid and unpaid, from the area or from out of town. The importance is the intern is trying to gain on-the-job knowledge before launching into his/her career.
 - An innovative program in Minnesota offered paid internships to high school students (juniors and seniors). The students worked throughout the school year and were supervised by direct service providers at all times. The students learned more about the industry, which they took back to their school, teachers, and classmates. The organization, direct service providers, and consumers received an additional person to help out at the residence and during community outings (Larson, 2005).
 - The Alaska Job Corps, although they don't call them interns, is always looking for work-based learning sites for their CNA students and their Behavioral Health Aide students. The Alaska Job Corps is located in Palmer, but can travel to Anchorage and Wasilla for work-based learning. Alaska Job Corps is constantly looking for new opportunities.



Retention

- Associate Degree students may be interested in having an internship program offered.
- If the intern is a good match, be sure to inquire about the individual's wants and needs before offering a job. Make sure the organization is a good match (advancement possibilities, benefits, etc.)
- Externships are used to help cross-train professionals from one field into another to help broaden understanding (e.g., to bridge a communications gap). Externs use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to help the organization complete a project. Externships are not as unlimited in their scope as internships and are usually used by state work force development programs to broaden, or by big business during complex multilevel projects. In Alaska, the Teacher Industry Externship program takes teachers and school counselors and puts them into organizations to complete a project in a two-week period in the hope that the teachers will then go back to the schools and use what they learned in the classroom. However, some of the teachers and counselors are getting ready to retire and are looking for a new career themselves and have expressed a desire to find a job within this industry.
- Volunteers at nonprofit organizations fill an important role, and sometimes organizations do not want to lose that individual as a volunteer to make them paid staff. Unfortunately, if the individual is looking for work, and is using volunteerism as a way to gain experience or contacts, then that will happen anyway. If a volunteer would make an excellent employee in a position that is needed, that is a good thing. The volunteer has a track record that can be reviewed and knows something about the organization already. It is about using the assets available correctly. It is very tempting to leave a good volunteer in that position, but will the volunteer stay? Will you be able to find any employee as good as the one you have right there in the volunteer? Like the old saying goes, it is better to have a bird in the hand, than two birds in the bush.



Recruitment

Selection & Hire

Selection Process

The deadline is closed for the job applications and there are applications to review. Now what? Depending on how the ad was written and placed, there may be several applicants! Of course, the applicants must meet minimum qualifications (see Job Descriptions), so that might weed out some of the applicants. Instead of trying to make this a process of weeding out the applicants, perhaps, it would be better to make this a selection process. There is a belief in human resources that if the selection process is done correctly, an organization can hire less often because the correct match is made the first time, and that leads to less turnover.

Hire Smart, Not Often

Review the job description while reviewing applications. Laying the groundwork by using existing employees to recruit people, doing targeted marketing, and working to increase the organization's outreach will increase the labor pool. It will also increase the diversity of the pool. Some interesting ways to increase your diversity and perhaps increase longevity include the following when reviewing applications.

- People who come from diverse backgrounds may not use the same words or catch phrases used in the industry, but still the applicants may have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the position. Does the position require cultural sensitivity? Perhaps the veteran does not put it that way, but does mention s/he was part of a bi-national workforce working to improve relations between the two countries. Does the position require timeliness? Perhaps the young adult states s/he opened the retail store and was often employee of the month, which would be hard to get if s/he wasn't on time to open the store. Though the words differ, the knowledge, skills, and abilities are the same.
- Note special skills that may be useful on the job.



Recruitment

Interviews

Interviews are another place in which organizations often take shortcuts in an attempt to save time. In the long run, though, it costs time because taking short cuts in the interview process can lead to a wrong hire. As many as four out of five interviews are decided within the first 10 minutes of the interview and based on as little as what the person is wearing or the handshake (Otting, 2009). Since this industry is built on working with a variety of consumers, it is important to not let personal biases cloud judgment while interviewing candidates for positions. It is also a reason to use a team approach to the interview, use a standard list of questions and rating scale, and create a warm, inviting environment.

Team interviewing is another wonderful way to discourage bias and encourage the right match. The team approach should consist of a potential co-worker, a supervisor, and a human resource person. This blend offers different perspectives, gives the co-workers buy-in about the new employee, allows the supervisor to have input into the selection, and gives the team the guidance of the human resource professional. The team should be given directions about how to conduct an interview, ask the interview questions listed, take notes, follow the rating scale, and be careful to rate the applicants fairly.

Use a structured interviewed approach. Develop a list of questions and stick to them as the team interviews each person. There are several types of structured interview questions. Two that work well in this industry are behavioral and situational interview questions (Larson, 2005). Behavioral-based questions ask the candidate to identify competencies that would be useful on the job. The questions are usually phrased:

- If someone told you that you had made an error, describe how you would react and what you would say in your defense.
- What strengths did you rely on in your last position to make you successful in your work?
- What was the best/worst time on your last job?
- Can you give me an example of how you overcame a personal obstacle, what was it and what did you do to overcome it?



Recruitment

Situational interview is where the applicant is given artificial situations and asked questions about what s/he would do in that situation. The purpose is to see how the candidate would respond to situations that occur on the job. The questions are usually phrased:

- A co-worker tells you in confidence that she plans to call in sick while actually taking a week's vacation. What would you do and why?
- What would you do if the priorities on a project you were working on changed suddenly?
- You are asked to start working on a new goal with a consumer. What are your first steps?

It is important that the questions be used consistently with each applicant and that the rating scale is consistent. For the rating scale to work, each of the team members must agree on the meaning what a score of "1" means and what a score of "10" means on a scale from 1-10. The team can write down descriptors for what all of the numbers mean or just some of the numbers. One basic rule that must be followed for all three of these interview types is that a scoring mechanism must be made and each candidate must scored according to that scoring devise. Rate the individuals based on the questions answered and attributes. Be careful not to be swayed by the:

- Halo Error (strong first impression);
- Similar to Me Bias (e.g., having same likes and demographic characteristics makes it easier to identify with a person); or
- Nice Guy Effect (enthusiastic, pleasant, yet not as qualified or most qualified person); since these items are not what will get the job done once the person is hired (Olson, 2006).

After the interviews, decide the top candidate, second choice, and third choice. Then make the reference checks. Reference checks should be done by someone who was not involved in the hiring process and the questions that references are asked should be standardized and written down.



Retention

Realistic Job Previews

Many steps have been taken to make sure the right person is going to be offered the job. The Realistic Job Preview is not taken by all organizations, but has been proven to make a statistical difference in retention rates by the ones who do use it (Larson, 2005). The Realistic Job Preview (RJP) offers the candidate a chance to have an in-depth look at the job s/he is being offered. It is offered at this juncture, instead of earlier in the hiring process, because this is when candidates are most likely to listen closer to what is being said about the particulars of the job.

To create a RJP ask the Workforce Development Committee to find out from employees working in that position:

- What they like about the organization and that job
- What they don't like about the organization and that job
- The hardest part of the job and the easiest part of the job
- Why they stay and what makes them sometimes want to quit (give examples)
- What would they want a new employee to know

Use that information to help create a realistic preview of the job. The purpose of this is to give candidates a good idea of some of the great, good, and difficult things about the job. Combine that information with the basic organizational information:

- Mission, vision, values
- Overview of staffing and human resource issues
- Job description
- Generalized information about people the organization works with
- Then use the information gathered (see above) to describe the good parts of the job
- The difficult parts of the job

The RJP can be formatted in a variety of ways. It can be a short movie, a scrapbook, a Web page, or even a structured tour. After showing the candidate the RJP, it is then time to ask questions. Examples of questions to ask include what do you think will be a challenge about the job? What do you think will be fun? Would you like to work for our organization? Based on the answers, the new employee will be able to be tracked, and, if possible, be given a mentor to help with the areas that might pose challenges. This will increase chances of success on the job.

At this point, if the offer is accepted, the reference checks (if not previously done) can be done and the other paperwork as required should be done. The person has selected the organization as much as the organization has selected him/her.



Recruitment

Resources

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Recruitment

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Addressing paraprofessional issues including training, retention, and quality standards.

Website: The Annapolis Coalition <http://www.annapoliscoalition.org/pages/>

Action Plan on Behavioral Health Workforce Development http://208.106.217.45/pages/default2.asp?active_page_id=61

Working to improve the recruitment, retention, training, and performance of the prevention and treatment workforce in the mental health and addictions sectors of the behavioral health field

Website: Better Jobs Better Care <http://www.bjbc.org/resources.asp>

Working to make changes in long-term care policy and practice that help to reduce high vacancy and turnover rates among direct care staff across the spectrum of long-term care settings and contribute to improved workforce quality

Website: Family Caregiver Alliance http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=368

Website: National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals <http://www.nadsp.org/main/index.asp>

Promoting the development of a highly competent human services workforce which supports individuals in achieving their life goals

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Who Are Direct Care Workers (website and/or PDF available: <http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/download/ncdcw%20Fact%20Sheet-1.pdf>)

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Recruitment

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