

Our Vision is "To teach, inspire, and assist people to experience enjoyment, fulfillment, and personal growth in their work while contributing to the success of themselves and their employers."

The Koval Eagle

Making People and Profits Soar!

Issue 2
November 2007



Welcome to the second issue of the Koval Associates Newsletter - now proudly bearing the name "The Koval Eagle." See our announcement about the winner of our newsletter naming contest - Ellen Silverman!

This quarterly newsletter intends to educate, inspire, amuse - and keep you informed about how Koval Associates can help you to cultivate a happy, motivated, high-performing workforce.

This issue's article helps you to avoid common hiring mistakes. (It also includes a photo of my first horse!)

Our "Ask Sue" feature debuts in this issue, and the question, about working with freelancers, comes from Darcie King. Feel free to email us with any people related questions you have about your business - and maybe your question will be included in our next issue!

Our humor this issue relates to job descriptions - a nice fit with our featured article.

Happy reading!

Sue Koval

In This Issue

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Newsletter Naming Contest Winner!



Winner Announced: Newsletter Naming Contest!

We're pleased to announce that the winner of our Newsletter Naming Contest is Ellen Silverman of ESAmarketing. Ellen is a certified Guerilla Marketing Coach, marketing consultant and speaker. She helps business owners to grow their companies by developing and implementing low-cost, high-impact marketing strategies.

As the winner of our contest, Ellen will receive a \$100 Visa gift card. Congratulations Ellen!

Special thanks go to all those who entered our contest. Your creativity and great ideas are appreciated!

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The Three Most Common Hiring Mistakes – Don't Let This Happen To You



Sue with her "new hire" – Checkers!

Have you ever hired someone who did not live up to your expectations?

Have you ever hired someone who greatly exceeded your expectations?

How different were your hiring processes in each case? If you're like most employers - the process used in each case was the same! (You just got lucky - or unlucky!)

What would it mean to your business (and your sanity!) if your company was chock full of great employees? Does this sound like an impossible dream? It's not! So how can we increase the odds of hiring great people - every time?

We can start by avoiding the three most common hiring mistakes:

Mistake #1: The company lacks a systematic, fundamentally sound approach to hiring that is used consistently. Through the years companies have upgraded and modernized many of their business processes - such as inventory management, project management, technical design - but their hiring processes have remained static - run an ad, do some (unstructured) interviews, hire. The odds of getting the right person this way are about 14% - you could flip a coin and get better results!

A system designed to recruit and select top people should start with performance profiles and compelling job descriptions, with sourcing methods, screening processes, interviewing processes, assessment processes, and closing processes designed to attract the very best. Not only does this system need to be well documented, but all those involved in the hiring process need to be trained in its use. And because it's a system, its consistent use will result in the hiring of great people time after time.

Mistake #2: Hiring based on emotion rather than objective criteria. Sometimes a hiring decision is based on the warm body approach - we need somebody right away - you breathe, you're hired! Hiring decisions are often based simply on whether or not the interviewer likes the person - I like you, you're hired! And sometimes the decision to hire is made because the candidate was outstanding in the interview - wow! - you're hired!

The problem with these emotional approaches is that the chances of hiring a great employee are very low. You may desperately need to fill a position right away in order to get the work done, but if you hire the wrong person, the time you saved in hiring that person immediately will end up costing you a lot more in time and money. Develop a process for hiring great employees and take the time to use it - it's worth it!

It's normal human nature to want to hire someone we like - even though the candidate may be far from the right person for the job - and that's why it's important to include objective criteria in your hiring process, such as structured interviews based on performance profiles and competency assessments.

And an outstanding interviewer is not necessarily an outstanding performer. The research shows that in general, the best candidates are not the best interviewers, and vice-versa, the best interviewers are not the best candidates! The interview is a critical part of the hiring process, so it is very important to use it to get the best information possible. Performance profiles and competency assessments enable you to do a structured, objective interview with your candidates, thereby improving the quality and impartiality of the information you gain. More and better information results in a more effective decision making.

#3: The position is not clearly defined and the job description is not compelling. In order to attract superior people, superior performance must first be defined and built into the job description. This is done through a performance profile, which emphasizes what a person must do to be *successful* in the job. This differs from the traditional job description which is based on experience, skills, and education. Average performers have the right skills and qualifications - superior performers can do the job at a superior level! Basing your job description on specific performance objectives improves the quality of the applicants for your position, and improves the objectivity of your screening and interviewing processes.

We have a variety of applicant tracking, assessment, and hiring tools to help you consistently hire great people - superheroes rather than wolves in sheep's clothing! Call for a complimentary consultation.

Ask Sue

This edition's question comes from Darcie King of E Video Productions - thanks Darcie!

We are currently trying to work with freelancers. Do you have advice on how to work with them and keep them motivated to stay with us?

To work most effectively with and to increase retention of freelancers, your relationship with them should be very similar to your relationship with your permanent employees. Here are some key points:

- Communication is vital. You must be very clear in specifying the duties and responsibilities of the position, and the expected results, in writing. This will prevent misunderstandings and make performance-related discussions easier. To maintain your relationship with your freelancers, communicate with them on a regular basis, even if they are not currently doing a job for you. Keep them in the loop so they feel like part of the team.
- Leadership - it all starts here. Freelancers need to be motivated just like employees do, and research shows that compensation is just part what motivates people. Do a short induction when a freelancer accepts a position with your company, and share the following with him or her: your company's goals; what is E Video Productions all about (your vision and mission); what makes E Video Productions different or special (so that freelancers would rather work for you than someone else?)
 - For ideas, you can even survey people who've worked for you and ask them what they like about working for you. Also, what would they like to see different?
- Team Building - you must make freelancers feel like part of the team. Team meetings should include the freelancers as well as the employees. Ask them for their ideas and for ways they can contribute to the success of E Video Productions (which could result in rewards for them). Make it clear that any person doing the work is part of the company and not a "temp." Holding an activity such as a company picnic, bowling, etc. and including the freelancers is a great way to build your relationship with them.

Keeping your freelancers informed, engaged, and feeling a part of the team will go a long way in keeping them productive and keeping them for the long haul. Good luck Darcie, and feel free to contact me with any more questions!

Please submit your people-related questions to me at sue@kovalassociates.com. Your question may be featured in our next newsletter!

Humor ... at Work

Let's hope these aren't your company's definitions!

Key to Job Description Terms

ENTRY-LEVEL POSITION

You'll be making under minimum wage an hour.

ENTRY-LEVEL POSITION IN AN UP-AND-COMING COMPANY

You'll be making under minimum wage an hour; we'll be bankrupt in a year.

AN UP-AND COMING SOFTWARE COMPANY

We want you to get your hopes up, but there's no way in hell we'll be the next Microsoft.

PROFIT-SHARING PLAN

Once it's shared between the higher-ups, there won't be a profit.

COMPETITIVE SALARY

We remain competitive by paying slightly less than our competitors.

JOIN OUR FAST-PACED COMPANY

We have no time to train you; you'll have to introduce yourself to your co-workers.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LEADER

Inc. Magazine wrote us up a few years ago, but we haven't done anything innovative since.

IMMEDIATE OPENING

The person who used to have this job gave notice a month ago. We're just now running the ad.

SALES POSITION REQUIRING MOTIVATED SELF-STARTER

We're not going to supply you with leads; there's no base salary; you'll wait 30 days for your first commission check.

SELF-MOTIVATED

Management won't answer questions.

WE OFFER GREAT BENEFITS

After 90 days, you can join our HMO, which has a deductible and a co-pay.

PENSION/RETIREMENT BENEFITS

After three years, we'll allow you to fund your own 401(k) and, if you behave, we'll give you a 5 percent matching contribution.

SEEKING ENTHUSIASTIC, FUN, HARD WORKING PEOPLE

. . . who still live with their parents and won't mind our internship-level salaries.

CASUAL WORK ATMOSPHERE

We don't pay enough to expect that you'll dress well; a couple of the real daring guys wear earrings.

COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

We have a lot of turnover.

EXCITING AND PROFESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Guys in gray suits will bore you with tales of squash and their weekends on yachts.

JOIN OUR DYNAMIC TEAM

We all listen to nutty motivational tapes.

FUN WORK ENVIRONMENT

Your co-workers will be insulted if you don't drink with them.

A DRUG-FREE WORK ENVIRONMENT

We booze it up at company parties.

MUST BE DEADLINE ORIENTED

You'll be six months behind schedule on your first day.

SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS REQUIRED

If we're in trouble, you'll go on TV and get us out of it.

SOME OVERTIME REQUIRED

Some time each night and some time each weekend.

A HIGHLY VISIBLE POSITION

You'll give boring speeches on your own time.

FLEXIBLE HOURS

Work 40 hours; get paid for 25.

DUTIES WILL VARY

Anyone in the office can boss you around.

WHERE EMPLOYEES FEEL VALUED

Those who missed the last round of lay-offs, that is.

MUST HAVE AN EYE FOR DETAIL

We have no quality control.

NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE

We've filled the job; our call for resumes is just a legal formality.

SEEKING CANDIDATES WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE

You'll need it to replace three people who just left.

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS A MUST

You're walking into a company in perpetual chaos.

REQUIRES TEAM LEADERSHIP SKILLS

You'll have the responsibilities of a manager, without the pay or respect.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Management communicates, you listen, figure out what they want and do it.

ABILITY TO HANDLE A HEAVY WORKLOAD

You whine, you're fired.

ASPIRATIONS FOR GROWTH WITHIN OUR COMPANY

We loooooove brown nosers.

Thanks to Tracy Laswell Williams for the humor.

Koval Associates offers a wide range of programs and services - including internet-based assessment tools, management development training, team training workshops and keynote speeches - to help you develop superior people and increased profits.

**Susan Koval
Koval Associates LLC**

Helping You Attract, Train and Retain Top Performers!

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