

# Top 3 Hiring Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

**SPECIAL REPORT**



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## Top 3 Hiring Mistakes and How to Avoid Them



Hiring the right person for the job is a major challenge, whether you are looking to fill a new role or to replace a departing employee. While you struggle to find the right candidate with the qualifications to do the job, you're also looking for someone who is a good match for the company and its culture.

Just as candidates use new and creative methods to secure work, employers need to be pro-active when it comes to finding the people they need. This includes being aware of common pitfalls recruiting managers make and how to avoid them in your next recruitment and selection project.

From our experience in people management and business coaching, we've collected the three most common traps we see. One thing is certain, if you fall into any of these, you will spend a lot more time, effort and money trying to climb out again, further down the track!

### **Mistake 1: Panic Hiring**

Have you ever had a key employee leave and no-one available to do their work? Or perhaps business has grown quickly beyond the capacity of your current staff? This is when most people start to think about hiring. Big mistake! Desperation to fill a role often leads to a hasty decision and the wrong person in the job.

#### **Solution: Plan!**

In the current skills shortage, you can't afford to be complacent about being able to attract good staff. (Incidentally, even as unemployment rises, experience shows that there will still be a global shortage of qualified and experienced employees who are in high demand.)

1. Never assume your current employees are going to stay. Always be on the look out for good staff around your industry and your networks.
2. Have a documented recruitment plan ready to put into place immediately. Know your process: Where have you sourced good employees in the past? What has/hasn't worked for you?



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3. Have a detailed and up to date job description for every role in your organisation. Make sure you include full details of the skills, qualifications and experience necessary to do the job well.
4. Communicate your recruitment process and expectations to candidates and keep them informed. Don't risk losing a good candidate to a more pro-active competitor.
5. Be prepared to suffer some short term pain for long term gain. The person you seek is (probably) out there somewhere. Don't be tempted to hire on the basis of 'they'll do'.

Near enough is not good enough when it comes to your business success. If necessary, hire a temp or have other staff cover the work until you are certain you have found the right candidate. As Jim Collins says in *Good to Great* (2001), "When in doubt, don't hire—keep looking."

### **Mistake 2: Looking for a Clone**

Do you have a star employee you'd just love to duplicate? Or would you like another copy of yourself to do all those things you just don't get to? As far as we know, human cloning is not yet available and perhaps it's just as well.

Recruiting on the basis of closest match to an existing or past staff member means you can miss out on the variety of experiences and insights that diversity brings. In addition, you are recruiting for a reason—do you want that need to recruit to be repeated in the future because you've hired on this basis?

### **Solution: Find the Best Fit**

Because you know the 'clone' just doesn't exist, use recruitment as an opportunity to refresh your business. Make sure you:

1. Focus on your current and future needs, not on past glories.
2. Consider new and creative ways of finding candidates.
3. Understand what characteristics make someone successful in your organisation and in the role you are trying to fill. Find ways to measure what you seek.



### **Mistake 3: Falling 'in love' with a Candidate**

We are all at the mercy of a charming candidate who has done a good job of selling themselves to us. Combined with an urgent need to fill a role, this has the potential for heartache as the true abilities (or lack of) of the new employee are gradually revealed. Often, the resultant negative impact on your credibility and the productivity of your staff can be greater than if you had left the vacancy unfilled.

#### **Solution: Be Objective**

As we are most vulnerable to this mistake during the interview process, there are a number of steps you should take, especially if you know you have fallen into this trap before.

1. Always have planned interview questions, which are asked consistently to each candidate. Of course, you can stray from the list to clarify issues with candidates. Just remember that small talk is for small decisions and hiring is a big decision.
2. Get help. There will be another staff member or business associate with recruitment experience who is willing to sit in on interviews and give you their opinion.
3. Use a talent assessment tool that examines both work preferences and behaviour to give you an objective measure of how well the candidate would do in the role and in your organisation.
4. Always, always, always check references and qualifications—no exceptions. A high proportion of candidates admit to lying on their resumes. Don't be the one caught out not checking.
5. Your task is to sell your organisation and the role to the candidate. It is the candidate's task is to sell themselves.

**For practical advice on recruitment, call us at Balance at Work on +612 9233 2293 or 1800 785 150, email [advice@balanceatwork.com.au](mailto:advice@balanceatwork.com.au) or visit our website [www.balanceatwork.com.au](http://www.balanceatwork.com.au). We look forward to assisting you!**