



UNIT - 2

FINDING CANDIDATES AND ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

Staff Training Solutions

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Develop a fair and consistent interviewing process for selecting employees.
- ✓ Prepare better job advertisements and use a variety of markets.

Unit 2

Finding Candidates and Advertising Guidelines

Determining the Skills You Need

Technical Skills

Technical skills are the skills that call upon specific technical knowledge or experience.

How do you determine technical skills? Ask yourself these questions:

- ✓ What specific kinds of machines will the employee use?
- ✓ What specific kinds of computer hardware/software will they use?
- ✓ Is there a certain specific and prescribed way they must manipulate tools?

You need to ask yourself, what do you really need? You'll have to decide if previous experience in these technical skills is important, or if you will train the successful candidate. Though technical skills are often more easily learned than performance skills, many jobs demand that a person arrive with their technical skills already in place. As you review the position description you can decide what is really needed. You'll also need to consider whether some tools or machinery require safety training or certificates (company vehicles, forklifts, cranes, saws, and so on).

Performance Skills

Performance skills are those tasks and responsibilities assigned to the position. They are closely tied to work habits that reflect the way a person gets a job done. They may relate to managing other people, making decisions, following guidelines, or dealing with the public.

A customer service supervisor, for example, might need to supervise three customer service representatives, apply established guidelines to specific customer inquiries, and solve work unit problems.

Finding Candidates

There are three important considerations when you are looking for candidates. Your methods must be:

- ✓ Timely
- ✓ Cost-effective
- ✓ Promote positive employee relations

File Searches

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ People were interested or they wouldn't have applied	✓ Must have an excellent filing system to keep track
✓ May not have to advertise	✓ Good applicants can get missed if not cross-referenced properly
✓ Fast	

Internal Searches

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ Good for morale to know employees can move up	✓ No new people
✓ Candidates are a known product so take less of a chance	✓ Can cause friction between employees

Placement Services

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ They do some of the screening for you	✓ May not screen thoroughly
✓ Fast	✓ Often send unqualified people
	✓ Can be expensive

Referral Programs

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ Referrals are usually familiar with your company	✓ Usually are not good quality candidates
✓ Can cause cliques in the company	✓ Can cause hard feelings if a referral isn't hired

Third-Party Recruiters

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ Have a wider coverage area for positions that are difficult to fill	✓ Company is responsible for the professional conduct of the third-party recruiter
✓ Can compensate for not having time or skill in-house	✓ Can be expensive

Headhunters

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ Casts a wider net for hiring senior managers and those difficult-to-find employees	✓ No standards for headhunters, but your company remains responsible for their actions
✓ A less controversial way of hiring employees away from competitors	✓ Expensive

Internet

Advantages	Disadvantages
✓ Targets people who are computer literate	✓ May eliminate good candidates
✓ Wide coverage	✓ Can bring in a lot of unqualified candidates
✓ May be less expensive than print advertising	✓ Need to make sure candidates know how to find your ad or career section of your website

Advertise

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Good image-builder for your company if the ad is well-done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ May not motivate people who are already employed to apply
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Many potential candidates will be looking for ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can result in a lot of resumes

Thinking Out of the Box

If your help-wanted sign or advertisement just isn't attracting the kind of people you need, try the following sources:

Competitors	If they've been turning away applicants, they might send you their extras.
Persons with disabilities	These are the people who are most often overlooked at hiring time, and are the most vastly underemployed group. Also, their skill levels can be extensive. If these people can keep up with the job, you might end up with a dedicated worker who'll be looking for a chance to make a positive impact on your organization.
Military retirees	Because of the military's structure, a lot of these men and women retire in their mid- to late-forties. They're generally hard-working, in excellent physical condition, and very disciplined. They're equally good as leaders and followers, and so we encourage you to look specifically for members of this group.
Retired baby boomers	Again, there are a lot of experienced retirees out there who have a lifetime of skill and experience behind them. They can be a real asset, and often have retired early, but keep options open to do other things.
Outplacement firms	These people get paid for placing good applicants, and going this route could save you expensive advertising.
Companies that have announced cutbacks	Executives at downsizing companies are usually more than happy to send you their soon-to-be-unemployed people, as most upper management folks actually do care about the welfare of their employees.

Educational institutions	Professors you've made friends with will give you the inside track to their best performers, and those top performers could be yours.
Employees	Ask established employees for people they know who can do the job. Because your employees will have to work with those people, they'll usually make a good choice.

Advertising Guidelines

Five Key Points

If you do think advertising is the way to go, don't just send off to websites or the newspaper what you sent off last time. Here are some key parts of your ad.

Information about the company.

Who are you? What do you do? Particularly for internal postings and for local sites, we forget to sell ourselves. Remember that employees and other members of the community will read this. They'd like to see you boost your company image.

What position is being advertised?

If you read employment ads enough, you'll see companies that forget to mention what the candidate would be doing if they were hired.

What qualifications do they need?

Sometimes we think the way to discourage a lot of resumes is to list miles of qualifications. That isn't so; all this will do is discourage the ones you really want to apply. Analyze the job. What technical and performance skills do you need? What would be nice to have? Hiring a receptionist who has a degree in secretarial sciences may mean you will be hiring for that position again in a few months.

What are the responsibilities and challenges for this position?

What will this person do? Is there challenge or a chance to grow? The best candidates will be looking for something more than a paycheck.

Performance clause.

This is a sentence included near the end of the advertisement which instructs applicants to provide customized information when applying for the position. This may be the most important feature of the ad. It is also the most controversial because it doesn't mince words, and it requires applicants to do extra work when applying for the job.

An example of a performance clause: “Applicants will not be considered unless they include a one to three page point form attachment with their resume, demonstrating how their skills and experience corresponds to each of the listed qualifications.”

Other Tips

Position is important.

Don’t overlook the classified ads and websites with offbeat ads (like Kijiji, Craigslist, or Facebook’s Marketplace for example). The right candidate for some positions would never think of looking in the business section for a position. Similarly, those who look at business pages for their next job may never look in the classified section. When a fast-food company was looking for part-time moms to work over the school lunch hour, they put their ad in the women’s interest areas. A stereotype? Maybe, but it worked.

Position on the page is good fodder for an argument.

Most researchers agree that the right-hand page of any newspaper or magazine is seen slightly more often than the left. With webpages, you want to use search engine optimization and keywords to ensure that your listing gets picked up in searches.

Graphics should be clean and easy to read.

Often a sans serif font for the heading and a serif font for the ad will make it look friendlier. Try not to rely on your newspaper or website to choose the graphics. They will choose the one they used for everybody else’s ad, and yours will not stand out.

Include a call to action.

Remember to include information about applying right now. In today’s fast world, faxes or e-mail are the norm for most companies. If they are for yours, include your fax and e-mail address. Make sure that you send some kind of auto-confirmation message to the applicant so that they know you’ve received their submission, and they do not have to call and follow up.

Use white space.

Ads cost money and we hate to waste space. But cramming too many words into an ad makes you look cheap, and is often so unattractive people don’t read it. Generous white space and words that have been carefully chosen to say what must be said is much more effective.

Ten Tests for Advertising

Does the ad concentrate on the job?

Does it sort out and emphasize important details?

Does it highlight unique opportunities?

Is the ad specific?

Is the ad realistic?

Does the ad avoid clichés?

Does the ad speak to the reader?

Does the look of the ad portray the company image? The position's importance to the company?

Would a stranger understand the job opportunities?

Does the ad sell the reader on the job?

Screening Resumes

The Screening Process

This is where you have to start thinking about how you make decisions and how you can defend those decisions, should you be taken to task for not hiring Jim’s brother or giving Thomas an interview. This is where you take the time to develop a resume screening guide that you use for evaluating that pile of resumes. Already some of you feel anxiety building up in your chest, thinking, “But what if I miss the best candidate?”

Don’t worry. Your resume screening guide should allow you to search for those things you absolutely must have, and still leave room for a little bit of flexibility. Let’s look at a sample screening guide.

Resume Rating Guide

Knockout Factors		
Area	Yes	No
Grade 12 or equivalent	Rate	Send letter of rejection
Bilingual (Spanish-English)	Rate	Send letter of rejection

Rating Guide			
Area	Breakdown	Possible Points	Points Awarded
Application	Complete	5	
	Legible	5	

	Resume attached	5	
Education	Post-secondary	5	
	Post-secondary in related field	5	
	Bachelor degree	5	
Office Experience	Multiple phone lines	5	
Experience in clerical or administrative field	6 months to 3 years	5	
	3+ years	10	
Computer Experience	PC experience	5	
	Macintosh experience	15	
	Reports	5	
	Spreadsheets	5	
Keyboarding	40-59 WPM	5	
	60+ WPM	10	
Human Resources	Target Group Member	5	
TOTAL		100	

This is a rating form developed for a receptionist who would be expected to do some computer work and document preparation as part of their job responsibilities. Let's go through it.

First of all, the company had decided Grade 12 or the equivalent was a must. They did decide what they considered the equivalent: Grade 11 and vocational school or successful completion of a high school equivalency. If the candidate didn't meet these criteria, they weren't accepted.

Since they had a number of Hispanic customers who couldn't speak English, they felt they had to have a bilingual person answering phones. This was another knockout factor.

They also felt it was important that they had a completed application, signed by the candidate, as a legal document. (Resumes are not legal documents.) They wanted the application to be complete and legible as they felt that said a great deal about how much effort the person was putting into applying for the position. Of course, they wanted a resume as well. They awarded points on all three counts, for a total of 15 points.

While Grade 12 was a necessity, they felt there were opportunities attached to this position, so they would like to see that the successful candidate had additional education or training. The marketing secretary was leaving at the end of the year to go back to university, and if the candidate worked out well in this position he/she could move on.

Therefore, post-secondary education such as community college was worth five points. If the education was in a related field (business administration for example) they would get another five points. If the applicant has a degree they can get another five points, for a total of 15.

Since the most critical part of the job was answering phone lines, they were looking for somebody who had experience with multiple phone lines and could hit the ground running. This was worth five points.

They were looking for somebody with experience since they didn't think they had time to do a lot of training on the basics. So, the candidate got five points for less than three years or 10 points for more than three years.

They were using Macintosh computers and it had been their experience that PC-trained people never fully adjusted to Macs. They were prepared to give 15 points to those who had experience on Macintosh, and five points to those who were PC-trained. Next, the ability to do reports and spreadsheets were worth five points each for a total of 10 points.

Keyboarding skills were important too. They would test for accuracy, but they were looking for basic speed. The candidate could get up to 10 points, depending on skill.

The company had also applied for funding for a target group that included minorities, women and those with disabilities, but this was only given five points. They would hire a good candidate whether they met this criterion or not.

Using the Screening Guide

When you use a screening guide, you can decide on a pass mark and then go through the resumes (or have someone else go through them) to short list candidates. In the example above, you may decide that only applicants with a score of 75 or higher will be shortlisted.

Probably the most important feature of a resume guide is that it is defensible. It is a test that all candidates must pass in order to be considered for the position. When applicants follow up and ask why

TOTAL		
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Performance Assessments

One of the greatest challenges during the selection process is administering the process in a timely manner so that you don't lose top performers to the competition, or to jobs in other organizations. It is also important to make efficient use of your time so that time away from regular duties during the selection process is kept to a minimum.

These challenges can be overcome through the use of performance-based assessments. Assessments completely evaluate an applicant's skills/abilities and personal suitability for the job, using a series of written performance-based exercises and questions. In a sense, it's like a written interview but much more.

Technical Exercises

Performance-based assessments include written exercises that help to evaluate short-listed applicants before they proceed to the interview. Develop them by collecting a sample of the key duties and challenges unique to the actual job vacancy.

The range of activities an incumbent would typically perform on the job over six to 12 months is translated into a set of paper-based or computer-based questions and exercises that take the applicants approximately one to three hours to complete.

Advantages

- ✓ More than one applicant can perform an assessment at the same time.
- ✓ They can be completed and submitted electronically, either on-site or from anywhere that someone has an Internet connection.
- ✓ Some of the exercises and questions compiled during development of assessments will be better suited to, and subsequently used as, performance-based interview questions.

Examples

- ✓ A computer analyst would be required to debug software.
- ✓ A manager would be required to review an employee's work, identify mistakes, make suggestions for improvement, and provide feedback.
- ✓ A marketing coordinator would be required to create and lay out promotional materials using appropriate software.

- ✓ An executive director would be required to develop strategies, take action, and make decisions based on the contents of a briefing file.

Performance-Based Exercises

- ✓ In addition to technical exercises, applicants must also solve a set of work-related problems that demonstrate their ability to perform well within the confines of a certain department or company culture. Performance-based exercises and questions are easy to develop, as they are derived from the job. Furthermore, they can be developed to simulate any type of corporate culture, work environment, or job problems. Even teamwork, management skills, and interpersonal interactions with co-workers or customers can be assessed.
- ✓ Assessments do not all have to be written exercises. Physical jobs lend themselves to physical testing: restaurant chefs should do meal preparation and cooking; trainers should demonstrate training; and sports announcers should do a voice demonstration.

You can identify possible performance-based exercises by:

- ✓ Reviewing the detailed, job-specific, or technically essential qualifications for examples of work, including duties, activities, documents produced, services provided, and assignments. You want situations where the employee is involved in gathering or processing information, products, and/or services; making decisions; or taking actions.
- ✓ Describing the type of information needed, including typical instructions or requests, real background information employees need to complete assignments, or summarized files to review for action.
- ✓ Gathering background information for each performance-based exercise, including files, instructions, and requests. This information should be summarized in a narrative or point-form format. It should typically only be one to two pages in length, plus actual documents or printouts from the job (if they are also only a few pages in length).

To create performance-based exercises, include background information and two to four of the following statements for each:

- ✓ Describe what actions you would take.
- ✓ Describe any risks associated with your actions or steps and alternatives you would suggest to minimize risks.
- ✓ List the key elements you would include and provide reasons why.
- ✓ List the information you would collect and how or where you would collect it.
- ✓ Describe the steps you would take, including time frames.
- ✓ Outline the process you would recommend.
- ✓ List the issues or items that should be considered.
- ✓ List who you would involve, what their roles would be, and why.
- ✓ Describe how you would prevent this type of situation from occurring in the future.
- ✓ Outline three to five options you would consider and provide reasons why.

- ✓ Indicate three to five significant changes that occurred over the past year.
- ✓ Indicate three to five significant changes or challenges you are expecting the next three years and outline your strategies.

Completing the Assessment

Once the exercises are designed, title them, and add a suggested completion time. (Completion time can range from 10 to 45 minutes for each exercise, depending on the number of questions or tasks and amount of work required.) Make sure you have also included expected answers for the recruiter to refer to and a method for scoring.



Further Reading: