

Recruitment Made Easy

Hiring the Right Dudes or Dudesses for Occasional Project Work

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Here's one approach to getting your money's worth

Every now and then we all need some temporary help with various projects. Although we can do it ourselves, it is likely more cost-effective to hire someone else to do it for us on a contract basis. That way, we can focus on high-fee activities.

But where to begin? Let's start with a shift in our thinking: forget about resumes. Can you imagine yourself trudging your way through a truckload of paper full of self-aggrandizement? I cannot.

Instead, I'm going to share with you a system I stole a few years ago from several people, and then modified to suit my needs.

It is based on "two-step" advertising methods, so you get instant response from only the right people. I've also used this method with clients (for both small businesses and some pretty big companies) to recruit permanent staff. Here's how it goes—

First, place a classified ad in the appropriate newspaper. You will get lots of calls, but never mind. Read on. The ad asks responders to call a dedicated voicemail number, on which they cannot leave messages.

The voicemail message gives a detailed description of the position you are seeking to fill. It also explains in some detail what skills and attributes you require from the person, and gives clear instructions to callers about what they must do next. The message explicitly tells callers not to send resumes. You give out no phone number. It is your choice whether or not to mention the company's name. (Personally, I would, but I would also stipulate that other forms of contact with the company regarding this matter will be ignored.) Give out a fax number or email address as well.

Prospects are asked to answer three questions on a one-page document.

- 1) What makes you the right person for this gig?
- 2) What are your past experiences and traits that qualify you for this gig?
- 3) What sort of dough do you expect for your work?

Remind them that they should send no resume and no cover letter, only one sheet that answers the three answers. For contact information, ask only for their first names and nicknames.

Ask them to check the same voicemail in a week, so they can hear whether or not they have been shortlisted. The shortlist uses their nicknames.

After you have made your shortlist, announce it on the same voicemail, using candidates' nicknames, so the right people can be in touch with you. Now comes the fun part.

Responses from qualified people will start coming in. Their letters will be interesting. Can these people follow instructions? Eliminate any letter that goes beyond the three answers.

This way you only get good and great candidates. As you start

reading each letter, you find out more about each person.

The good news is that after this process and the interviews with candidates, you move ahead without wasting your time on resumes. Ignore references. Look, if you cannot read a person face-to-face, no reference will help you.

And never mind technical skills. For good collaboration, you need the right person more than just anyone with the right set of technical know-how. If you have a belligerent egotist who can type at 60 wpm, then ignore her and work with that passionate, enthusiastic and authentic cheerleader who can do only 20 wpm, but does it with zest and a shine in her eyes. You will have a better experience, and she will do 60 wpm before you can say Jemima Puddleduck. Remember: Passion teaches us in an hour what experience teaches us in a millennium.

This method can totally eliminate unqualified people—and the person you will end up with will be a pleasant experience. You will also have a pool of good people on file for future projects of any nature.

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