

# Eight Hiring Mistakes Employers Make: From Application to Interview

From [Susan M. Heathfield](#),

## Four Mistakes

Hiring decisions that result in "bad" hires sap your organization's time, training resources, and psychic energy. These are the top hiring mistakes to avoid during your recruiting and hiring process. Do these eight activities with care; your recruiting, interviewing and hiring practices will result in better hires. Better hires will help you develop a strong, healthy, productive, competitive organization.

Here are eight recruiting and hiring mistakes to avoid.

### Do Not Pre-screen Candidates

A half hour phone call can save hours of your organization's time. Pre-screening applicants is a must for recruiting and hiring the best employees. You can discover whether the candidate has the knowledge and experience you need. You can screen for applicants who expect a salary that is out of your league.

### Fail to Prepare the Candidate

If your applicant fails to ask about your company and the specifics of the job for which he or she has applied, help the applicant out. Prepare your applicants better for the interview, so interviewers spend their time on the important issues: determining the candidate's skills and fit within your culture. Prepare the candidate by describing the company, the details of the position, the background and titles of the interviewers, and whatever will eliminate time wasting while the candidate interviews within your company.

### Fail to Prepare the Interviewers

You wouldn't choose a college for your child or launch a project without a plan. Why, then, do organizations put so little planning into interviewing candidates for positions? Interviewers need to meet in advance and create a plan. Who is responsible for which types of questions? What aspect of the candidate's credentials is each person assessing? Who is assessing culture fit. Plan to succeed in employee selection in advance.

### Rely on the Interview to Evaluate a Candidate

The interview is a lot of talk. And most frequently, because applicants are not prepped in advance, a lot of interview time is spent giving the candidate information about your organization. Even more time is invested in different interviewers asking the candidate the same questions over and over.

During an interview, candidates tell you what they think you want to hear because they want to successfully obtain a job offer. Organizations are smart when they develop several methods for evaluating candidates in addition to the interview.

According to the Chally Group, a Human Resources consulting firm, in, *The Most Common Hiring Mistakes*, research at the University of Michigan found that, "The typical interview increases the likelihood of choosing the best candidate by less than 2%. In other words, if you just 'flipped' a coin you would be correct 50% of the time. If you added an interview you would only be right 52% of the time."

## Four More Mistakes

Here are four more mistakes you need to avoid as you work with your candidates from application through interview.

### Do Nothing But Talk During an Interview

Every interview needs to have components other than questions, answers and discussion. Walk the candidate through the company. Ask about his or her experience with situations you point out during the walk. In a manufacturing company, ask how the candidate would improve a process.

Watch the candidate perform a task such as separating parts or components to get a feel for their "hands-on" ability. Have a documentation or writing candidate write a description of the steps in one of your work

processes. See how quickly a person learns a particular task. Ask how the candidate would approach improving the quality of a given accounting process.

As long as you use tests and tasks that are directly related to the position for which the individual is interviewing, you will earn reams of relevant information to use in your selection process.

### **Evaluate "Personality," Not Job Skills and Experience**

Sure, it would be nice for you to like everyone at work.

But, this is much less important than recruiting the strongest, smartest, best candidates you can find. People tend to hire people who are similar to themselves. They are the most comfortable with those candidates, of course.

This will kill your organization over time. You need diverse people with diverse personalities to deal with diverse employees and customers. Think about the customer that drives you crazy. Isn't it likely that a new employee with a similar personality would have the same problem? Likewise, hiring a candidate because you enjoyed and liked him or her, as the main qualification, ignores your need for particular skills and experience. Don't do it. {/p}

### **Fail to Differentiate, Via Testing and Discussion, the Critical Job Skills**

How do you differentiate one candidate from another? Everyone has a "wish list" for all of the qualities, skills, personality factors, experience and interests you want to see in your selected employee. You must decide on, and perhaps, test, the skills you most desire in your candidate.

What are the three - four most critical factors for contribution and success given the job, the skills of the other employees and the needs of your customers? Once you have identified these, you cannot "settle" on a candidate that does not bring these to your workplace. Or you will fail.

### **Develop a Small Candidate Pool**

Take the time to build a candidate pool with several candidates who meet the needs of your organization. If you don't have to make a choice among several qualified candidates, your pool is too small. Don't "settle" for someone if you don't have the right person with the skills and experience you need. It's better to reopen your search.

These mistakes are often fatal to a candidate's ultimate success within your organization. If you do these activities successfully, you increase the probability of a happy, successful employee contributing what you need from him or her to your organization.

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