

How to Attract and Retain the Best Employees

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The goal

Best Person

Not

Any Person

Finding the best employees

1. No simple recipe
2. Cannot depend on luck
3. Essentials: *Time, backup labor, cross-training, avoiding hiring crises and persistence*
4. Follow through on hiring basics leads to success

Keeping your best employees

1. Hiring the right people is just the first step
2. Need to also:
 - a. Understand what they want
 - b. Train them for their success and yours
 - c. Communicate openly and honestly
 - d. Reward based on merit
 - e. "Walk in their shoes" now and then

What do your employees want?

- ▶ Fairness
- ▶ Opportunity
- ▶ Clear expectations
- ▶ Information
- ▶ A sense of importance
- ▶ Feedback on performance
- ▶ Knowing how to improve
- ▶ Appreciation
- ▶ Both monetary and non-monetary rewards

Outline

1. Doing an HR checkup for your farm
2. Building on what you control
3. Putting together a pool of applicants
4. Interviewing effectively
5. Putting an action plan in place

Part 1 – Doing an HR checkup for your farm

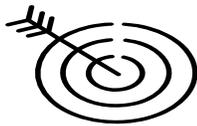
- Your HR situation will be about as good as you choose to make it!
- No two farms are alike
- Improving hiring starts with understanding your reality

Outline for an HR checkup

1. Vision of HR success
2. HR strategic goals
3. Organizational structure
4. Farm culture
5. “Right” HR practices
6. HR capabilities

1. Do we have a clear **vision** of HR Success?

Did the best archer shoot this arrow?



The take home message about vision

A clear written vision of what you want to accomplish through human resource management helps you succeed as a planner and manager.

2. Do we have written strategic HR goals?

- HR strategic goals are as helpful as production, marketing and financial goals.
- Basis of HR strategic goals:
 - Mission for the business
 - Human resource vision
 - SWOT analysis
 - Internal HR **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses
 - External HR **O**pportunities and **T**hreats

Some examples of goals

1. Decrease turnover from 15% to 5% by the end of 2018
2. Fill all senior management positions through internal promotion by 2018.
3. Substitute part-time positions next year for 2 of our current full-time positions

The take home message about strategic goals

HR managers with specific goals accomplish more than those who have no or only vague, unstated goals.

3. Have we crafted an organizational structure that fits our HR vision and goals?

- ▶ Every business has an organizational structure - formal or informal, confused or orderly, understood or misunderstood, helpful or hurtful
- ▶ Incorporate job titles and job descriptions into the structure

The take home message about organizational structure

Your organizational structure is either an asset or a liability; it is never an unimportant detail. It should make explicit what has been vague, unmentionable or avoided.

4. Do we have a farm culture than fits our goals?

- ▶ Shared norms of behavior and values that support vision, goals and structure
- ▶ Culture can be changed top down by management but never bottom up by employees
- ▶ Results from a changed culture
 1. Actions that support HR vision and goals
 2. Better direction of employee behavior

The take home message about farm culture

Your farm's culture (how you act and what you value) helps positively direct employees and family. Teamwork, self-motivation, self-discipline and trust can be improved.

5. Do we have the "right" HR practices in place?

1. HR planning
2. Job analysis
3. Job design
4. Job descriptions
5. Employee handbook or written summary of key policies and procedures
6. Steps for making your farm a preferred place to work in the community

Hiring practices

1. Building a pool of applicants
2. Application forms and application process
3. Evaluation of applicants including interviewing
4. Job offer

Practices to “equip” employees to succeed

1. Orientation
2. Training of new employees
3. Training of experienced employees for new responsibilities
4. Retraining

Ongoing practices

1. Safety in the workplace
2. Communication
3. Performance evaluation and feedback
4. Motivation
5. Conflict resolution
6. Discipline and discharge
7. Compensation
8. Benefits
9. Operating within federal and state laws

The take home message about “right” practices

Any one of the practices can be critical to HR success or failure. There are no unimportant practices.

6. Do all of our managers & leaders have the ability to handle their HR responsibilities?

- ▶ Outstanding experience at one level is not enough to guarantee success at the next level
- ▶ Best supervisor is not ready to be assistant herdsman

The take home message about training HR managers

Outstanding success at one level in the business does not by itself prepare a person to succeed as a manager at the next level.

Checklist of questions to guide your HR checkup

1. Do we have a clear **vision** of HR success?
2. Do we have written HR strategic **goals**?
3. Have we crafted an organizational **structure** that supports our HR vision & goals?
4. Do we have a farm culture that fits our goals?
5. Do we have the “right” HR **practices** in place?
6. Do all managers have the **abilities** to handle their HR responsibilities?

Part 2 – Building on what you control

- > Commit to hiring the right people
- > Build a reputation as a great place to work
- > Base hiring on job descriptions and qualifications to succeed
- > Tailor a hiring plan to you and your needs

1. Commit to hiring the right person

- > Hiring is rarely as easy as picking the best looking apple from the tree
- > Strong commitment to a carefully designed hiring process gets the “right” people
- > **Dedication** to hiring and a **fanatical insistence** on success are critical

2. Build a reputation as a great place to work

- > Good news is that you own your reputation as a place to work.
- > You:
 - Hire
 - Orient and train
 - Build relationships (**or not**)
 - Reward fairly (**or not**)
 - Help your people create opportunities for themselves

Making your business a preferred place to work

1. Like, enjoy and appreciate your employees
2. Use written job descriptions
3. Provide training
4. Show trust
5. Catch people doing things right
6. Develop pride in your business

Preferred place to work (Continued)

7. Celebrate successes
8. Communicate clearly and often
9. Compensate fairly
10. Promote from within
11. Make the business family-friendly
12. Be proud of advancing employees

3. Put one person in charge of hiring

- Small businesses, unfortunately, typically have a group of mildly interested managers sharing hiring responsibility
- Hiring the right person requires knowledge, skills and special abilities
- A hiring leader driven by passion for finding the right person is best
- Success is most likely when a single person has clear responsibility for hiring success

4. Base hiring on job descriptions and qualifications to succeed

- No job is perfect
- Managers can design jobs or let employees decide their jobs
- Managers cannot ignore the work that must get done

What do you need from your next hire?

First decide:

1. How you want the position to help the business
2. What it will take to succeed in the position

Second:

1. Job analysis – Duties, tasks or activities of the job
2. Job design – Structure and job enrichment
3. Job qualifications – Knowledge, skills, abilities and physical demands for success in the position
4. Job description – Written job title and duties based on job analysis, design and qualifications

5. Tailor a hiring plan to you and your employee needs

- A written and detailed hiring plan will help everyone involved
- Acceptance of plan by all senior managers dramatically increases chances of finding the right person
- Senior managers should each be willing to help leader of hiring find the right person

Part 3 – Putting together a pool of applicants

1. No one method is best for every employer in every situation
2. Experiment to find out what works best for you
3. Be creative
4. Take advantage of your reputation as a preferred place to work
 - Most powerful tool for attracting applicants
 - Best way to keep high quality employees

Some methods

1. Welcome informal contacts and walk ins
2. Welcome what for you are nontraditional employees
3. Offer student internship programs
4. Consider one or more seasonal or part-time positions
5. Offer current employees incentive to suggest good applicants
6. Advertise
 - Think first of social media, Internet and a business website
 - Also consider print sources that potential applicants are likely to see
 - Use attention grabbing help wanted ads

But we need someone NOW!

1. Limp through the next few days or weeks
2. Ask yourself if you would accept:

"We just have to learn to get along with sick calves, mastitis and more debt!"
3. Refuse to lower your standards, take shortcuts in hiring or bring on people you know are not right

Part 4 – Interviewing effectively

1. Hiring the right person requires effective interviewing
2. Nearly 100% of new hires involve a face-to-face interview
3. Good applicants expect a good interview
4. Poor interviewing can easily lead to hiring a poor fit

Three steps for interviewing success

1. Preparation
2. Interview
3. Follow up

Preparation requires answers to these questions:

1. Who will be on the interview team?
2. Where to conduct the interviews?
3. Questions to ask?
4. How to use the interview time?
5. How to summarize & report evaluations?

Questions

- ▶ Have more questions ready that you will use
- ▶ Ask questions that encourage applicants to use their own words
- ▶ Avoid questions that can be answered yes or no
- ▶ Cover a variety of topics
- ▶ Focus on what an applicant has done in previous jobs (behavioral interviewing) not what he/she says would do if hired

Questions to ask?

- ▶ Ask same basic questions of all applicants
- ▶ What is legal?
 - *Questions directly related to the job and the ability of any person to do the job*

Types of questions to avoid

1. Traditional with easily practiced answers
 - > "What are your goals and aspirations?"
 - > "Why do you want this job?"
2. Opinion
 - > "What do you think about . . . ?"
 - > "What are your strengths?"
3. Yes/No
 - > "Do you understand the importance of being on time?"
 - > "Are you a hard worker?"

The power of behavioral interviewing

1. Past behavior & performance are the best predictors of future behavior & performance
2. Questions are based on specific job duties, responsibilities and expectations
3. Helps bring focus and validity to interviews thus overcoming two common interview deficiencies

Sample questions for behavioral interviewing

1. Describe an equipment-related problem you have solved in the last year. How did you go about solving it?
2. What has been your most important accomplishment in your current job? What were your steps that led to this accomplishment?
3. What is the most difficult challenge you have ever faced? How did you handle it?
4. How do you provide performance feedback to the three people you supervise in your current position?
5. Are you friendly to the three people you supervise or do you try to make them your buddies? Why?

Some unusual questions

1. Describe the best supervisor, coach or teacher you have ever had.
2. Describe the person who is your all-time favorite co-worker.
3. What has been your most important accomplishment outside of work?
4. What is your best friend from high school doing now?
5. What is the one question you are most afraid I will ask you?
6. Why should we hire you?

Interviewing guidelines

1. Pre-test your questions
2. Maintain control of the interview
3. Put the applicant at ease
4. Avoid an interrogation atmosphere
5. Stick to your plan
6. Listen
7. Take few notes during the interview

More interviewing guidelines

8. Allow interruptions only for emergencies
9. Be mindful of your own personal biases
10. Fulfill your commitments to each interviewee
11. Be patient and encouraging
12. Complete all interviews before sharing evaluations with other interviewers

More interviewing guidelines

13. Be cautious about making commitments to strong applicants during the interview
14. Avoid interesting side issues
15. Avoid quick judgments during an interview
16. Make a positive impression on every applicant
17. Explain the next steps in your hiring process

Part 5. Putting an action plan in place

- ▶ Most common next step is to go home and do nothing
- ▶ A second possibility is to dream and talk about how nice it would be to have fewer labor problems
- ▶ Most helpful will likely be to follow through on an action plan
- ▶ The result can be finding and keeping people who will help your farm thrive
- ▶

In Conclusion

1. Investing in terrific employees more important than keeping labor costs low
2. Hiring the right employee requires planning, training and disciplined follow through
3. Being a good place to work is your most powerful hiring tool
4. Take advantage of what you control
5. Be creative, different, aggressive and persistent in landing and keeping the right people

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