The State of Hiring & Recruitment

By Greg Call

DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE with your self-storage applicants, their strengths and weaknesses, reliability and purpose? Do they seem genuinely interested in the position you offer? Do you ask relevant questions during the interview process? Do your candidates? Do they seem qualified at their current or past jobs? Do you check their references and backgrounds and talk to previous supervisors? Do you verify dates of employment, salary, eligibility and their reasons for leaving past positions?

The hiring process can be a mine field, with potential disaster at every turn. Following are some employment catastrophes to avoid:

- The Cloning Disaster—Hiring someone like yourself, or someone just like the person already in the position.

- The Stereotype Disaster—Believing administrative personnel are always women and maintenance personnel are always men. These are false assumptions and should be avoided.

- The "Candidate is too Strong" Disaster—Beware of telling a candidate he is overqualified or too strong for the position, which may be inadvertently telling him he is too old. Proceed with caution. When telling a candidate he didn't get the job, simply say, "The candidate who most closely matches the skills and qualifications for the position was selected."

- The "Halo Effect" Disaster— You single out the one thing you like in a candidate and it clouds your judgment. This is the same as allowing one thing you don't like about an applicant to affect your decision. Always look at the big picture.

Making yourself aware of these disasters will make your recruiting process more efficient and help you avoid legal liability. Research indicates a fundamental key to business success is hiring, training and retaining quality employees.

The most effective recruitment methods produce a plethora of applicants to be sorted and qualified. A good human-resources department will maintain and administer the process with consistency. Even without a dedicated HR staff, a formal, communicated hiring policy will increase the likelihood of selecting the right candidate who has knowledge and experience to be an asset to your business.

Define Your Needs

Your first step is to evaluate the need to hire. If the open position is the result of a termination, consider absorbing merging it into another job description, changing it to part-time status, filling it on a temporary basis, or eliminating it entirely. When a new position is created as a result of increased responsibilities or workload, the company should ask if this is a good time to consider more efficiency and use current personnel.

Have a process to identify and prioritize job openings. Remember the importance of record-keeping in recruiting. Accurate documents need to be maintained for each step, including the job description, recruiting methods used, applications received, candidates interviewed, candidates chosen, and the reason for their selection. Good records will provide evidence for valid selection criteria, which will help reduce the risk of faulty hiring practices.

Sources of Applicants

There are a number of avenues open to businesses seeking recruits. One of the most popular is the Internet. Traditional venues, headhunters and newspapers now compete with web recruiters. Determine your needs—when you need the hire and what his skill sets must be—and select an applicant source that will best match your requirements. You may want to try several.