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AI FOR HIRING

5 HIRING MISTAKES TO AVOID IN IT RECRUITING

Technical recruiting isn't for the faint of heart. Technical recruiters must speak fluent programmer jargon and know the difference between a web developer and web services developer. Recruiting managers and technical recruiters need to screen and assess tech candidates for their java skills, or rate their ability to construct basic SQL queries. Without a background in IT, engaging tech candidates is nearly impossible until you've got enough knowledge and experience under your belt... or they'll see right through you and go running.

#1 Mistake:

Getting too creative with job descriptions

You might make some assumptions about the type of people who will be applying for your tech job. You might be tempted to put "javascript guru" or "css wizard" to make your business sound fun and trendy. Unfortunately, these assumptions may alienate some great candidates who don't necessarily fit the generic "techie" model.

Instead:

Get right to the point and stick to the basics. Write a job description that covers everything important and leave out anything that isn't vital. Make sure to include the following:

☐ **An industry-standard job title.** Your applicants shouldn't have to guess what the job will be.

☐ **A list of the most common duties.** These should be represented as percentages (20% javascript writing, 40% online support, etc).

☐ **Any necessary skills.** Anything you include should be absolutely vital to the job they will performing. Any other negotiable skills can be saved for a phone or in-person interview.

☐ **The salary.** Instead of a particular number, try using a salary range (i.e. $20,000-$35,000), that allows for variations in skills and experience.

Ready to give it a try? Write your own below:

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#2 Mistake: Not testing for proficiency

Credentials shouldn't make too much of an impact—they might be meaningless. Any candidate might look good on paper, but that doesn't necessarily translate into a high-performing employee. Of course, they give you a general idea of candidates that might fit, but they are no longer the best way to identify great employees.

Instead:

Create or utilize skill proficiency tests to weed out under-performing candidates. After you've rounded up a few candidates who look good on paper, give them a challenge. There are a couple of different ways that you could set up this kind of test:

- [ ] **Give them a test project.** Whether it's designing a web page or troubleshooting problems within a system you've provided, a complete-at-home project is simple to assign and assess.

- [ ] **Use an online exam.** Websites like **eSkill** and **TechnicallyCompatible** provide exams that tell you exactly how proficient a certain candidate. Some programs may cost money, so be sure to factor that into your decision.

- [ ] **Bring them in for a job shadow.** If you have a team member who does similar work to the job you're hiring, bring candidates into work side-by-side with them. Depending on amount of time you bring them in, you may need to compensate your candidate, but this is also a great way to see how they work with your team.

#3 Mistake: Not knowing industry compensation standards

Find quality tech hires who also fit your culture is not easy, and with the rising demand for IT-industry jobs, it's not likely to get any easier. One of the easiest and fastest ways to lose great candidates is to not compensate them properly. Because there are so many specialized areas of tech jobs, it can be easy to get lost and offer your hire too little or too much.

Instead:

Do your homework and use research. As in your job description, keep a salary range open for your candidates. However, you must know which candidates will be qualified for high-end pay, and which will receive the low-end. Here are a few tips:

- [ ] **Check out your competitors.** One of the easiest ways to find out industry standard pay is to look at other companies' job descriptions. Look at several and go from there.

- [ ] **Ask recruiting agencies.** A recruiter's entire job is knowing industry standards and how to get hires on board. If you have an inside contact, this would be the time to reach out to them. Don't forget to check **Glassdoor.com** reviews too!

- [ ] **Use a compensation data tracker.** This is especially effective for contract or temporary hires. They usually cost money, but websites like **PeopleTicker** and **SalaryExpert** give you real-time data on thousands of jobs.

#4 Mistake:

Failed to consider company culture

Even a candidate with incredible credentials and impeccable skill assessments may perform poorly if they don't feel like they fit in. One of the most under-valued aspects of hiring across all industries is company culture. Failing to find a hire who fits in with your current team is sure to cost you in the long run.

Instead:

If you haven't defined your company culture already, do so before bringing on new hires. Determine what your core values and goals are, write them down, and keep them in mind. To determine if a candidate fits, try these tips:

☐ **ALWAYS bring them in for an in-person interview.** It's impossible to tell what a person is really like over the phone. You want to be able to see their body language, their reactions, etc.

☐ **Introduce them to the whole team.** First impressions are a big deal. Even in a short introduction, your team members might catch on to something you missed.

☐ **Ask specific questions.** During an interview, certain questions can give you insight to a candidate's personality. Here are a few to get you started:

What would be the greatest work day of your life?
How well do you adapt to change?
What are you passionate about?

#5 Mistake:

Paying up front

Even a candidate with incredible credentials and impeccable skill assessments may perform poorly if they don't feel like they fit in. One of the most under-valued aspects of hiring across all industries is company culture. Failing to find a hire who fits in with your current team is sure to cost you in the long run.

Instead:

Come up with a compromise that suits both of you. Sometimes you may not be able to avoid paying something up front, but here are a few things you can try instead:

☐ **Meet them halfway.** If your candidate is open to it, you can pay half the amount at the beginning then the other half when the job is completed.

☐ **Adjust the contract.** If you have found the perfect candidate, but they are insisting full pay up front, you can add a clause into the contract that demands reimbursement. If goals are not met, you get your money back, and if they are, all the better for you and your hire.