

EVOLVIEW

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Why Hiring Talent Based on Previous Experience is Hurting More Than Helping

BY DAVID OSTBERG



Typically, one of the first things a recruiter does when evaluating applicants for an hourly position is review resumes or applications to focus on candidates with previous relevant experience. However, by putting too much emphasis on prior experience — not to mention that ~ 30% of all resumes contain misleading or fictitious information — you may be unintentionally hurting your bottom line.

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The rationale for looking beyond previous relevant experience is simple:

Previous experience in an hourly job ≠ High performance in an hourly job

Consider this: you've inevitably hired, trained, and coached hourly workers who have eventually terminated due to lackluster performance or poor job fit. Yet, once these employees are back on the job market, they'll have previous experience on their resumes... and a well-meaning recruiter will

make the decision to hire them despite the high likelihood that they will underperform yet again.

Looking at experience-based hiring another way, you are most definitely bypassing applicants that, after some basic training, could have proven to be superstars in your organization. Not only did you reduce the candidate pool you have to choose from and miss the opportunity to hire a great employee, but you've dismissed the applicant on non job-relevant criteria while increasing the size of the available candidate pool for your competitors.

Don't let that happen to you.

Taking it one step further, if applicants have previous relevant experience as an hourly employee in an environment with processes and operations that differ significantly from those in your environment, their previous experience may actually make it more difficult for your coaches to train them on your organization's ways of getting the job done.

You should be asking yourself why you're screening on experience and what true value that approach provides. Are you taking that approach simply because that's the way your organization has always handled recruiting? Think of the saying... "If you always do what you've always done then you'll always get what you've always got."

So... how should you be evaluating all of the applicants who want you to hire them?

Make sure your recruiting team focuses on the traits and interests that separate the best from those who will just scrape by at a level that won't get them fired or who won't even graduate from training. Hiring experts agree — when hiring frontline, hourly employees, experience is considerably less important than are aptitude, workstyle, and motivational fit.

Assessment tools that are scientifically-developed and based on client performance data can predict an individual's likelihood of behaving or performing in certain desirable ways on the job. Effective pre-hire tools will help you evaluate what candidates "can do" and "want to do" to supplement what they say they "have done."

A well thought-out process that incorporates multiple hiring tools such as a realistic job preview, basic qualifications screening, validated assessments, and behaviorally-oriented structured interviews can and will significantly improve your frontline hiring decisions.

And remember... screening candidates based on their previous relevant experience may be doing more harm than good. ■

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