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To attract quality employees, companies should have a positive work environment

By Lori McGinnis

Employers looking for quality employees need to identify what kind of people they want and be appealing to prospective employees, experts say.

The most important thing a business can do when looking for quality employees is to have a strategy that meets its business objectives, said Nancy Nogg, business development manager with WSI Omaha.

Being well-known in a particular industry and offering a positive work environment will help companies attract quality employees, said Machael Durham, president of Durham Staffing Solutions in Omaha.

Being an employer worth working for will help a company attract and retain quality employees, said Mark Hirschfeld, vice president of Right Management, Omaha.

Salaries and benefits are not the chief reason employees leave a company, said Kimberly Rath of Lincoln, president of Talent Plus. Rather, they leave because they do not feel their talents are being



Vice President Mark Hirschfeld, left, and David Hughes, vice president of client services, at Right Management.

is more than skill. It requires employees to have a passion for the work, Nogg said.

about the process or that person could spread negative comments about the company, she said.

Employees are looking for opportunities with companies that offer long-term stability, advancement opportunities, appreciation, flexibility and benefits, Durham said.

"Companies can attract quality employees by creating brand name recognition within their respective industry, and offering a positive work environment with perks," she said.

Using a staffing service that screens employees can help companies avoid bad applicants, Durham

said. Effective job descriptions will allow candidates to know what is expected. Job shadowing before making an offer can work as well.

The interview process also will allow companies to recognize quality employees. Candidates who research the company before an interview and don't ask about salary or benefits in an initial interview may be better candidates.

Companies can retain core employees by showing them they are appreciated, Durham said.

"Knowing your employees and what is important to them will help companies accomplish stronger

Continued on next page.



Nogg

used, she said.

The biggest mistake a company can make is not having a plan when it sets out to attract and retain employees, Nogg said.

"If people want to attract the best employees and maintain the best employees, they need a strategy," she said.

That strategy needs to identify business objectives as well as explain how to identify talent. Talent



Durham

"You can teach a monkey to do anything, but if it doesn't want to or doesn't have the passion, it's harder," she said.

A company needs to maintain a good reputation in the industry, and that requires continual communication with employees and prospective employees, Nogg said. Even during the job interview process, a company must keep the prospective employee informed



Rath

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Continued from preceding page. retention," she said.

Employees, particularly good ones, are unlikely to consider an employer that has a reputation in the community of being difficult to work for, Hirschfeld said. Poor working conditions and bad managers will drive prospective employees elsewhere.

"If you are going to attract quality employees, you must be an employer worth working for," he said. "Better pay and benefits will not be enough to entice great talent if they can't stand the work environment you provide."

Companies that have a great work culture and a positive reputation don't have to invest as many dollars in recruiting, as people come to them, he said. Potential employees who are referred often make the best employees and stay longer.

Supervisors who ask the right questions in a job interview will be able to separate the good candidates from the bad, Hirschfeld said.

Ask a question such as "Tell me about some problems that you have effectively solved recently" and look for specific examples in the responses. That will help

the interviewer know what kind of competency the person has in that area.

Employees are looking to be respected and be in a position where they feel their talents are best being used, Rath said.

"Contrary to the media, while benefits are important, most employees don't leave because of salary and benefits," she said. "They leave because their talents aren't utilized or they are not managed well."

In order to retain quality employees, Rath urges companies to "select hard so that you can man-

age easy."

The selection process should find the person whose talent fits the job, but it is not enough to simply hire for talent and fit, she said. A company must have a culture that allows the employee to grow. Employees want to perceive that the company cares about them, rewards them and recognizes them.

Based on documented performance outcomes of Talent Plus clients, when talented people are put in the right position and are continuously developed over the long term, they achieve peak performance and thrive, Rath said.