



# WHO DO WE HIRE?

## FINDING THAT NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

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*Employers repeatedly find themselves trying to fill positions within their business. The most frequent question when this occurs is; “Who do we hire?” Such a simple question can lead to hours of frustration. Don’t panic, there is a process you can use to help overcome the challenge of prospecting through candidates to find that needle in a hay stack.*

### step

#### 1

Make sure you have a job description for the position to be filled. You don’t have one? No problem you can make one following these steps:

- I List the specific duties or tasks you want this position to fill. This can encompass many different things depending on the position.
  - a. Meet with families
  - b. Handle first calls
  - c. Write obituaries
  - d. Apply for death certificates
  - e. Embalm bodies
- II Describe the scope of the position. What is the purpose and responsibilities of this position?
- III Provide the name or designation of the person to whom the employee will report or the reporting structure.

- IV Identify any physical requirements of the position. Do they need to be able to lift a specific weight? Work special equipment? Stand for long periods? Drive a vehicle, truck, van or limo?
- V What qualifications, degree or licensing is needed to perform this position?
- VI What is this position called? Create a job title.
- VII What is the salary range for this position and any benefits that will be associated with working for your business? This is important information to ensure you can afford this position.

Once you have the information above you now have a good idea of what you are looking for in a qualified candidate. Put all these items into a written format. There is no specific style required here although you do want to think about its readability. A job description is a vital tool in your search for a well-qualified employee.

## step 2

Based on the job description make a list of the most important qualities you want the employee in this position to possess. Consider that it is not likely that you will find a candidate that has all the characteristics that you want.

Create a list of the “need to have” or priority qualities and “like to have” qualities. A list of 10 key qualities should be sufficient. Be prepared to use this list when narrowing down candidates to interview and ultimately for whom you may present a job offer.

## step 3

Use key descriptors from the job description to create a job posting. Post the position on your website and in various newspapers, industry publications, and educational centers, anywhere you can possibly find viable candidates. Once you begin to receive resumes the real work of narrowing down the candidates begins.

## step 4

Use the job description and the key qualities list you created to determine which of the candidates meet the criteria you have developed. Those that meet your initial expectations plan to interview.

The others can be set aside as backup. You may need to reference them as candidates that initially do not have the qualities you prefer but may be viable if you can afford to provide the appropriate training. Remember it is not likely that candidates will have all the skills and experience you require so you need to focus on those that have what you consider to be an absolute priority.



## step 5

Conduct your interviews. Be prepared for your interviews by gathering, in advance, a copy of the job description, a job application, any testing material you need for the position, an authorization for a background check (this may be part of your application) and a list of interview questions.

When conducting an interview be sure your questions clarify the candidate’s resume and help you determine how well they can fill the position requirements based on your job description.

Avoid “yes”/”no” questions and focus on questions that require the candidates to provide well thought out responses. For example, rather than asking: “Did you enjoy working at ABC Funeral Home?” ask “What did you enjoy most about working at ABC Funeral Home?”

After each interview is concluded place their appropriate information in one of two folders: 1) candidates who interest you and 2) candidates who don’t interest you.

## step 6

Once the initial set of interviews are concluded, it is time to go through the two folders you created. Starting with the “interested” folder compare the candidates’ resumes, applications and any other data you discovered during the interview against the job description and key qualities list. Rank the candidates from the highest to the lowest.

Now look at the “not interested” folder to determine if any of the candidates should be moved to the “interested” folder and ranked. If some need to be moved then do so, otherwise you can now file the “not interested” folder. Based on your ranking of candidates conduct second interviews with the top candidates.

Second interviews are focused on determining if the candidate will be a good fit for your organization. Focus your questions on how the candidate would handle various hypothetical scenarios such as: “How would you deal with a difficult family?” Compare their responses to how your organization handles those same type of scenarios.

## step 7

The final selection should come down to just the top few candidates. Once again compare resumes and job applications to your job description and key qualities list. Who best meets your criteria? Are they a person that you or your staff connected with in terms of personality and fitting into the organizational structure? If this is one and the same person you may have just found your next employee.

Before making a formal job offer do a reference check. Note: this is not a background check. A background check cannot be conducted until after a job offer. If the references come back acceptable then make a written job offer to this candidate contingent upon them successfully passing a background check. If they accept your search is over.

Don't be afraid to negotiate if the prospect comes back with some additional requests. If you can meet the requests then great, if not then you will have to move on to your next best candidate.



## step 8

What if you did not find who you were looking for? You have a few options:

- Go through your two folders and decide if anyone is worth bringing in for a second interview.
- Review the candidates that you did not interview. In both options consider if you can provide “in house” training which would improve the candidates ability to meet your desired criteria. This possibility may tip the scales for you to pursue someone you initially decided was not appropriate.
- Try to solicit a new crop of resumes using the same means you used initially or try some new locations and publications.
- Use a word of mouth campaign to try to locate candidates.
- Don't hesitate to look outside your immediate area. In today's market, we see employees moving from one location to another distant location to take an attractive job offer. This may require you to consider offering a moving fee to appropriate candidates. While that may seem like an unusual or extraordinary expense, it may be well worth it to obtain the right person for your organization.
- Grow your own candidates by creating an education program where you pay tuition for pre-qualified candidates to attend mortuary school with the agreement that they will work for you upon successfully completing the program.

All employers struggle to find good job candidates. The funeral industry, in particular, seems to have a declining number of available candidates. Don't give up. ☘

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