

When the Student is Ready (Part III)

Our lack of readiness to hire talented people can manifest itself in many different ways. Here are two more for you to consider.

What kind of employee would be attracted to the work setting you present? First, take a look around your office or warehouse area. Ask yourself what kind of employee would be attracted to the work environment you see. Most business owners like to think they have the best company in town. But, is your physical environment ready to attract the kind of people you say you want? (This is not saying that if you work from your home or from a small office that you can't attract top people. You absolutely can. But you may have to look longer and harder for those people because the pool of candidates to choose from might be smaller.)

Next, take a look at your employment documentation. Do you have job descriptions, compensation plans, employee handbooks, or any other documents that would show the candidate the company is serious about recruiting and developing top people?

Since you're the one who's generally responsible for the physical appearance of your company, as well as the documentation that your company uses, you're the one who is determining the type of person you're ready to work with.

Ask someone outside your company, someone whose opinion you trust, to take a look at your physical location and hiring documentation and give you their unvarnished opinion of it. Do they think it will attract the kind of people you want to attract?

Are you sabotaging your efforts to hire talented people on a purely subconscious level? Few people would actually say, "I'm afraid to hire

a really good person if they apply. So, I'll just avoid all this unpleasantness by making it difficult for people to apply." Yet, they say it with their actions. As crazy as it might sound, this happens all the time.

Consider the scenario where a business owner places a help wanted ad in the paper or on the Internet. Candidates contact his company to schedule appointments for interviews, only to have the owner wait a week or more to get back in touch with them! This will pretty much thin the crowd of top candidates. They've all found good jobs elsewhere!

When the candidates do make contact with your company, how prepared are you to speak with them? Do you send a subconscious message that hiring people is a pain in the neck? How enthusiastic do you or your people sound about working at your company? Do you convey with your voice that your company is a fun, energetic place to work? Or is the tone of your voice telegraphing a totally different message?

If you employ any of these tactics, could the reason be that you're really not emotionally ready to pull the trigger on hiring someone? In other words, as my mother used to say, "maybe your actions are speaking louder than your words."

Next week I'll close this four-part series with two more areas to evaluate your emotional readiness to pick winners in your company.