The Five Colossal Mistakes Hiring Managers Make

In hospitality, having the right team will make or break your business. So how do you hire the right staff? Here are five common errors hiring managers make and how to avoid them.

If you can recruit employees with an innate passion for hospitality and a strong sense of team, it will improve the guest experience, reduce employee turnover, improve morale and increase the bottom line. Conversely, poor hires can hurt your business and cause good employees to leave.

Here are five mistakes, all of which I have been guilty of at some point in my career, that result in a bad hiring decision.

Mistake #1: Relying too much on experience

One of my first hires was a prep guy who had 30 years experience being a prep cook. I was so impressed I didn't realize the potential for the candidate growing tired and bitter over time.

- **Avoid:** Hiring someone only because they have a huge amount of experience in the position you need filled. Remember, they might have so much experience in that job because they were never capable of doing another role. You are always better off evaluating candidates and hiring for personality and potential versus past experience.
- **A better approach:** Look for career growth before experience. Evaluate the candidate's ability to learn, grow, and work with others, not just how many years of experience they have.

Mistake #2: Relying too much on education

We have all seen resumes of people with multiple advanced degrees and diplomas. Education alone is not an indicator of future success. It only demonstrates that the candidate is capable of getting an education.

- **Avoid:** Choosing between candidates simply because one has more education. It doesn't mean the highly educated candidate is better than all the other candidates that don't have all those impressive letters beside their name.
- **A better approach:** Get the candidates to talk about examples of what they have

accomplished and how they have interacted with customers, peers and done the kind of tasks you need for the position.
- **A better approach:** Give the candidate scenarios of situations likely to arise in your business and ask them to give examples of how they personally would respond.

Mistake #3: Being dazzled by the "halo effect"

Sometimes we just click with a candidate and build instant rapport during an interview. Be very careful to differentiate between someone you "like" or "admire" versus someone who is a good fit for the role.

- **Avoid:** Making your hiring decision based on gut feel. That halo may make you forget to focus on some basic competency areas.
- **A better approach:** Use a consistent template to rate all of the required skills for the position so as not to be swayed by your personal biases.

Mistake #4: Fall for someone with the gift of the gab

Especially in the hospitality business, keep in mind these candidates are experts in building rapport and selling. In the case of servers and bartenders, their livelihood depends on it.

- **Avoid:** Getting so enamored by a great pitch that you think the person is a star before doing your due diligence.
- **A better approach**: Ask for examples and evidence examples of their success. Look for proof such as awards or customer letters, and explore their ability to think on their feet through scenarios.
- A better approach: Look for humility and the ability to learn from mistakes. Ask the candidate to describe a mistake they have made or a complaint they have received. A truly great candidate will always be confident enough to share a lesson they have learned or a mistake they made. A big talker will always resist showing character flaws.

Mistake #5: Failure to do a background check

This seems so 1980, but references are critically important. I have seen so many managers get too busy, or need to move too fast to check references. Past performance almost always repeats itself, good and bad.

- **Avoid:** Skipping reference checks. Furthermore, know who the references are – roommates and friends do not count!!
- **A better approach:** Always check references and wherever possible full background checks are even better. Criminal record checks and education verification often reveal surprises references alone would not catch.

We all know the great candidates get hired quickly, but having a disciplined hiring process in place will not slow you down. It will help save you time, money and grey hair down the road.

Don't be dazzled by snake charmers. Sometimes you have to dig a little deeper to reveal the real gems.

By **Debby Carreau**

For the past 20 years, Debby and inspired HR have been helping teams deliver superior business results by making strategic decisions about human capital. In any industry you can't beat real-world experience, and that's what makes Debby a premier Human

Capital consultant in a multitude of business sectors. She uses her experience as a senior leader in operations and Human Resource Management to provide pragmatic advice on attracting and retaining top talent, and developing programs and systems to get the most out of your team.