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## TOP 10 HIRING MISTAKES

By:

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Recently, Deutsch and Remillard conducted an in-depth study of hiring practices in 134 different companies in the manufacturing, high-tech, distribution, retail and service industries. The study examined 225 executive-level hires to determine what worked well, what didn't work well, and where most companies tend to stumble.

Among its many findings, the study identified 10 common hiring mistakes that plague companies of all sizes. Those mistakes (in order of frequency) are:

1. **Inadequate job descriptions.** The job descriptions that drove the hiring process focused solely on experience and skills rather than company expectations for the position.
2. **Superficial interviewing.** The hiring process did not put candidates under the magnifying glass, verify claims or check facts.
3. **Inappropriate prerequisites used too early in the selection process.** An over-emphasis on specific education, technical skills, and industry experience screened out qualified candidates.
4. **Snap judgment.** Hiring teams relied too heavily on first impressions to make final hiring decisions.
5. **Historical bias.** Hiring teams used only past performance to predict future results.
6. **Performance bias.** Failure to understand that interview behavior and job performance are two different things, which resulted in making an offer to the "best actor," not the best candidate.
7. **Fishing in shallow waters.** Structuring the search to attract only the bottom third aggressive candidates; not actively seeking out selective "sleeper" candidates.
8. **Failure to probe for core success factors.** Not looking for evidence of the five best predictors of long-term success – self-motivation, leadership, comparable past performance, job-specific problem solving and adaptability.
9. **Ignoring top candidate's needs.** Not understanding what motivates top talent to take a job.
10. **Desperation hiring.** Not budgeting enough time for the search, resulting in shallow sourcing and superficial interviews.

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## Three Causal Factors

In most cases, suggest Deutsch and Remillard, these hiring mistakes are not caused by willful ignorance or negligence. Rather, hires that fail to produce the desired results are most often the result of a predictable combination of causal factors, including:

- **Inadequate preparation.** The company fails to take the time to outline a detailed, measurable definition of "success" that can be used to source, evaluate and select candidates. Instead, most hiring organizations rely on outdated or insufficient job specs that merely list desired attributes, educational attainment and other minimally useful criteria.
- **Lack of information.** Many hiring managers lack the information and training to hire effectively at the executive level.
- **Human nature.** Interpersonal situations like interviews are often guided primarily by gut feelings. The hiring team that has not been trained to minimize these distractions is easily influenced by preconscious perceptions and nonverbal cues.

The study also identified several other hiring mistakes. Although not as common as the top 10, note Deutsch and Remillard, these pitfalls still manifest themselves far too often.

- Ignoring cultural mismatches
- Not physically preparing (reception, waiting area, greeting, etc.) for successful interviews
- Failure to create compelling marketing campaigns to attract top talent to open positions
- Passive sourcing (waiting for resumes to come in rather than actively pursuing sleeper and selective candidates)
- Lack of preparation for interviews; no written questions
- Failure to evaluate candidates against an objective definition of success

"With high-stakes competition for talent at an all-time high, companies can't afford to make these kinds of mistakes on a regular basis," caution Deutsch and Remillard. "The problem is not a lack of desire to hire properly. In most cases it's a lack of replicable hiring methods to improve outcomes."

## A Methodology for Success

According to Deutsch and Remillard, all that's required is a structured approach that enables companies to avoid the predictable pitfalls that plague many high-level hires. Based on their experience hiring thousands of executives, Deutsch and Remillard have developed a methodology that consists of eight distinct steps:

1. Build a multi-faceted Success Factor Snapshot to guide the entire search process.
2. Implement a deep sourcing strategy to reach and attract selective and sleeper candidates.
3. Identify and verify success prospects.
4. Create structured dossiers on selected candidates to enable objective, unbiased evaluation and comparison.

5. Conduct Success Factor-based panel interviews using a "magnifying glass" probe methodology.
6. Proactively address and overcome obstacles to hire throughout the entire active interviewing process.
7. Streamline compensation and benefit negotiations through structured interview-based preliminary groundwork.
8. Follow through on the hire with proven transition communication and work style assessment, coaching and facilitation.

"Together," conclude Deutsch and Remillard, "these steps comprise the 'Success Factor Methodology,' a proven process for improving your ability to find, recruit and hire top-level executive talent. Each step in the process requires the full collaboration of stakeholders in all the business units affected by the potential hire. But when you employ the methodology in a consistent and systematic manner, the outcome is a hire with a significantly increased likelihood of long-term success."

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