

CHOOSING A CREW THAT'LL STAY THE COURSE

Manager's Journal
by C. R. Reagan

Picking the right employees is always an uncertain process, particularly when you have to make a judgment about how someone will perform over his lifetime. But in 30 years of personnel work at DuPont, I learned some hiring principles that help you improve your batting average. Prior to my retirement last September, I spent a quarter of a century at the company's cellophane plant at Topeka, Kansas, where the turnover rate has averaged less than 3.2% per year. I'm convinced that the following 10 principals in hiring were an important factor in this exceedingly low rate:

1. Don't rush. Recognize the magnitude of the investment involved in hiring people. For those who remain for 30-plus years until retirement — a large percentage in our case — the company will be investing about \$1 million each in wages and benefits. Considerable study and discussion takes place before purchasing a machine or making a capital investment of that magnitude. The wrong person on a job can have far more harmful effects than a faulty machine. Machines can be repaired or replaced more easily than people, and a machine doesn't upset other machines in the way a disgruntled worker can affect other employees.

2. Decisions shouldn't be made by personnel alone. It is best for those who will supervise the employees to have a direct role in interviewing and evaluating candidates. This avoids the later charge, "He wasn't any good to start with. Personnel sent him to me." Supervisors will take a more active interest in making sure their employees succeed if they have a part in choosing them. Multiple opinions about candidates are also advisable: We found it useful for at least three people to talk with each candidate who advances to the interview stage. Individual evaluations and opinions would be discussed and reconciled at a meeting where summary evaluations would be made.

3. Properly validated aptitude tests can be useful. For some jobs, it isn't possible to predict a candidate's aptitude from his application form, from interviews or even from reference checks with previous employers. The more complex the job, the more importance aptitude tests assume. Appropriate aptitude tests are essential in choosing employees for electronic or instrument maintenance and computer operation, but they are of little benefit in filling routine manual jobs.

4. Don't hire someone out of pity because he needs a job. An employment decision has long-term consequences for your employer and for all those who will be working with the person hired. Altruism is an admirable quality, but it is wrongly placed here.

5. No one should be selected simply because his father, brother or other relative has worked out well. In our experience, the performance of a good employee has little predictive value about his relatives.

6. Current employees are an excellent source of recommendations. Allowance must be made for possible partiality when relatives or friends are involved, but we have found that most employees are quite cautious and consider very seriously whom they recommend. Also, they have firsthand knowledge of what it takes to be successful in the kind of work involved.

7. Study the school record carefully. Of all the reference

checks normally made, the school record has proven most valuable. It is the best barometer for predicting attendance, work habits and personality characteristics. It is difficult to disguise one's true nature for the number of years spent in school.

8. Maintain a hiring priority list. Keep a good backlog of top candidates. Include as many notes and records as possible, and set up a "priority to hire" list similar to the "draft" list used by professional sports teams. Some of your candidates will find other jobs and won't be available when you call them, but decisions to hire often must be made quickly, and having candidates pre-selected avoids the necessity of making hurried judgments.

9. Select employees; don't reject applicants. Our policy has been not to **reject** anyone. Instead, we have **selected** those who best meet our needs. This is a distinction that makes a difference in the company's public relations image and the various laws bearing on employment.

10. Cover job requirement thoroughly. During preemployment interviews, be sure to explain completely the specific requirements of the job. Before accepting the job, the candidate should fully understand what is required regarding shift work, overtime, etc., and how wage and promotion policies operate. This can avoid problems and dissatisfaction later.

Credit: Tee to Green 9/83

Dickey: My Dad is an Elk, a Moose and a Lion.

Mickey: How much does it cost to see him?

CONTINUING EDUCATION

GCSAA Continuing Education provides an excellent opportunity for the Golf Course Superintendent to broaden his/her knowledge in Golf Course Management. Research, language, and technology change through the years for greater turfgrass quality. The education seminars assist the superintendent in communicating more effectively and understanding the changes of turfgrass development.

On January 10 & 11, 1984, sixty-seven (67) Golf Course Superintendents and Assistants were in attendance at the Diseases of Turfgrass Seminar. This seminar was held at the Pheasant Run Golf Resort in St. Charles, Illinois and sponsored by the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. Dr. Houston Couch and Dr. Phil Larsen were the Professors who enlightened this class about new blights discovered and Hacker-Packers. Registration in the class came from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The seminar covered a very broad area of information. The outline included Nature of Diseases, Epidemiology, Turfgrass Diseases, Nematodes, Controls, Importance of Resistant Cultivars, Effects of Dilution, and Equipment used for treatment. Technical handling were plentiful for future reference. The Professors did an excellent job in providing an abundance of information to the class.

Chairman of the Continuing Education Program, for the Midwest, is Peter Leuzinger, CGCS from St. Charles Country Club. Pete is already making plans for the 1985 Continuing Education Program. Those of you who wish to express your thoughts for an educational program in 1985, please contact Pete immediately. In reviewing the overall success of the seminar, special appreciation has to be extended to Pheasant Run Golf Resort for their fine hospitality. The knowledge and growth of the Turfgrass Industry rests with its members.