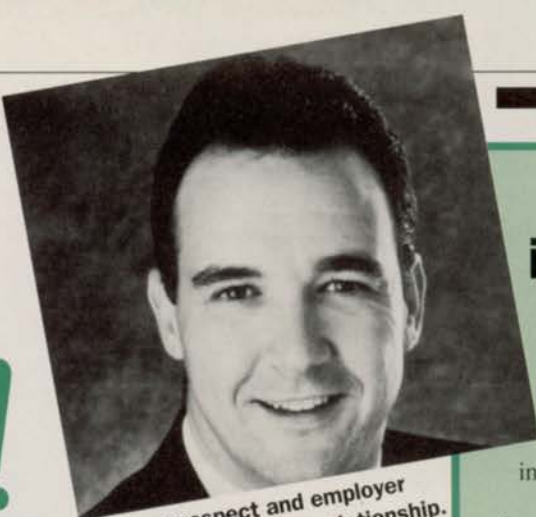


Hire a WINNER!



Carline: prospect and employer must care about their relationship.

Pairing the right prospective employees with your company is a tedious, time-consuming—but rewarding—part of the owner's job.

■ "Interviewing is one of the most frustrating things we have to do," says Steve Carline, a business consultant based in Boulder, Colo. "And if you don't spend time up front (interviewing and hiring), you'll spend it at the back end (replacing)."

Carline, who spoke at the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's Executive Forum, says that the five factors which contribute to hiring the right people are:

- 1) casting the biggest net possible
- 2) practicing innovative strategies
- 3) adopting a "be-first" mindset
- 4) finding the money somewhere
- 5) remembering that success breeds success

When you "cast the big net," you're opening the door to a wider group of people from whom you can select the best. This invariably means using every method possible to announce any vacancies, from newspaper advertising to career days and job fairs; to customers, schools and universities.

When you practice innovative strategies, you're assuring yourself that the actual hiring decision will be a good one. "People say things on resumés that are designed to deceive you," Carline notes. "We've got to be very, very determined to get through the resumé fiction. We have to manipulate the environment so people will give us the information we need."

One of the innovative strategies Carline suggests is to reserve a minimum of two full hours for each candidate. These can be

arranged in one two-hour session or two one-hour sessions.

When you adopt a "be-first" mindset, you're practicing the long-range planning it takes to hire the best people. Don't wait until the last minute, or even for the time of year when everyone else is also hiring. Be first.

Hiring the right people, Carline also notes, is dependent on finding the money to do the hiring process right. You not only have to invest your time, but your resources. When figuring out where the money is going to come from, remember that it takes American business an average of 1.5 times the employee's annual salary to find a new replacement.

Finally, "success breeds success." If your current employees consider themselves successful, they will get the word out to worthy friends and acquaintances that the company is worth working for. Winning people will hear about your company's success and come to you.

Carline suggests to have job descriptions for every position you will hire for. They should be very specific, as many as two to three typewritten pages each.

"Tell people before they come to work what they're getting into," he adds.

You should also have job descriptions for the management positions to which the new hire will report, and job descriptions for the new hire's peer workers.

Finally, Carline implores his clients to hire right kind of people. "Make sure the job you have is what they like. Do not hire skills, hire traits. You can teach people 'how to,' but you can't teach caring. We, as employers, have also got to start caring—about what we can offer/employees."

Carline is a trainer for CareerTrack Seminars, 3085 Center Green Dr., Boulder, CO 80301. His phone number is (800) 325-5854.

—Jerry Roche

Effective interviewing techniques

■ Steve Carline says that the "why"s to the candidate's answers are drastically more important than the "how"s.

You must also keep score of the impressions each candidate makes on you. Carline uses a CAT (Candidate Assessment Tool) to grade behavior in 12 main categories; each has an importance value to the company:

- adaptability
- competence
- experience
- manageability
- interpersonal skills
- attitude
- initiative
- maturity
- stability
- emotional control
- integrity
- values

For instance, if the candidate scores a 2 (out of 5) in an area that scores 1 (of 5) in importance, it doesn't mean as much as if he or she scores a 2 in an area that scores a 4 or 5 in importance.

Top 10 questions

Here are 10 of Carline's 36 "effective interview questions:"

- 1) How do you establish working relationships with new people?
- 2) How did you gain your knowledge of this industry/company?
- 3) Tell me about a specific area of responsibility you have enjoyed.
- 4) What have you been criticized for in the past two years?
- 5) How do you criticize subordinates?
- 6) What accomplishments are you truly proud of?
- 7) What steps have you taken to become more effective?
- 8) What does your current supervisor do to get the best out of you?
- 9) How would you define a successful career?
- 10) Give me an example of a crisis situation you were involved in.