

Tips for Food Industry Recruiting and Hiring

Doing the Groundwork

Recruiting and hiring for the food industry is unique. We don't sell widgets or washing machines. We deal every day in a perishable, lot and date coded, seasonally sensitive world. But because the food industry is intense and fast moving, don't rush into hiring someone just to fill a job. There is never a good time to hire the wrong person. Groundwork makes a difference in getting the right person on board.

It's not enough to look outward to what are our food industry standards. As part of your recruiting ground work you or an experienced food industry recruiting consultant need to look inward to your business. Do you really know where your company is in its development, operational systems, financial condition and market position? The right hire only works if their skills meet your actual needs.

Even if you don't currently have an open position, have you taken a hard look at your current staff? Every business has people they're not satisfied with. Constant improvement is always required in the food industry. Cut the slowest every year. To coin a phrase, there can be a shelf life or expiry date on staff members, management and even leadership.

If all your time is taken running your business or department, enlist a food industry recruiting consultant to help. Someone who knows the specific skills unique to the food industry. Someone who knows the industry players and a wide range of people who at different companies in different roles. Someone who has hundreds of industry resumes come across their desk. They can more quickly help identify and recruit the right candidate.

Next decide how you are going to proceed with recruiting. Filling a new position or replacing an existing person requires different approaches. Above ground in public or below the radar hiring? Access to an outside independent food industry recruiting consultant who can be private and discreet works well. Someone who can communicate in off hours, evenings and weekends. And sometimes help you with keeping bad people out of the company to limit hiring liability exposure. They can even help write an effective job description that is current to the food industry.

Making the Right Decision

Once you have done the groundwork, use food industry specific tools and processes to help you successfully making the right hiring decision. Before you start contacting candidates understand or get an experienced food industry recruiting consultant to identify the need specific to your kind of company. There are differences in the talents and skills needed from the right candidate to fit in for food production versus food distribution, small business vs large operation and family-owned versus vs corporate-owned. Create clarity in advance on the job's compensation structure.

Many internal Human Resources are inadequate to hire the entrepreneurial people and specialists needed for food industry jobs. They are generalists and typically hire the safest candidate. An independent food industry recruiting consultant can help prioritize the most needed talents, experiences and personalities. They are on the lookout for a breakout candidate that will help your business succeed.

After you or your food industry recruiting consultant finds and screens resumes but before interviewing anyone have a talent scoring matrix

developed. There are specific ones developed for different food industry roles. Use or have your food industry consultant use during both the phone and after the in-person interviews. If you're too busy, an unbiased, independent consultant can also get qualified candidates screened, interviewed and scored. They can move candidates to the "2 yard line" so owners or managers can do the final interview and hiring decision.

Success Beyond the Hire

After you get someone hired, you need to make sure you've got a food industry specific system in place to create success beyond the hire. Or you may be looking to filling the role again--soon.

Often food company owners or managers lose interest in people as soon as they hire them. They make the mistake of believing they now have someone with the talent, experience and skills to meet the needs of the role in their business. They are surprised when the person feels isolated, flounders and doesn't meet expectations at the speed required. You need to create or get help creating a post-employment success integration plan for all new key employees.

Start with a two-week full immersion plan that give them one on one interaction with all the other people and departments they need to know about. Or get food industry recruiting consultant to create one for you. Don't just park someone at a desk or in the warehouse, wait, and hope for the best.

Next or get help developing a written role plan with goals, objectives and measurable step by step benchmarks. Something specific to your company and developed by someone who already knows the food industry. Generic

HR plans will not help your business or the new hire. Get the 90-day onboarding and training plan in place and discuss with your new hire.

Include specific numbers and timelines. If you have been heads down running your business or department for years, get help. Use a food industry recruiting consultant that knows the current food industry market on salaries, commissions and bonuses. Someone who knows the quirks of our broad, if somewhat tribal industry. For many sales, business development and management roles a bonus plan may be applicable. Put together or have a food industry recruiting consultant create an achievable detailed bonus plan.

Now, with an immersive, personalized introduction to your food business, specific goals and objectives plan with benchmarks, and a clear path to their comp plan and bonuses, your new food industry hire will be enthusiastic and ready to succeed.

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