

Successful Dealer Operations

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Technology And The Hiring Process

Software can help make the hiring process more efficient.

By Denise L. Rondini, Executive Editor, drondini@randallreilly.com

As business continues to grow, dealers will likely be adding staff. However, many dealers are not currently in a position to hire effectively.

According to Nick Goodell, general manager of the trucking and transportation practice at Compli, the hiring process starts before you are even looking to fill a specific position. "Ideally you are going to have some people who are good candidates before you even have an opening for a position."

One way to do that is by marketing your dealership via social media and positioning it as a desirable place to work. Other ways to build up the candidate pool include keeping information on prior job applicants or ex-employees with whom you had an amicable parting. "Perhaps someone left because they had a child," Goodell says, "but now the child may be older and that person may be interested in returning to work."

It is important to maintain a searchable database and manage the information and data on potential applicants so it is available when you need it.

Kyle Walker, director of partnerships at Compli, says that having an applicant tracking system is a good way to manage the pool of potential candidates.

The tracking system can help you prescreen applicants. For example, if you are hiring a technician and a candidate does not have the proper certification, he can be screened out by the system.

"This will save time, energy and resources because you will not have to interview someone who is

Week of Feb 9, 2012

Economic Update

- Preliminary North American Class 8 truck net order data dropped 17% to 24,900 units in January following a strong result in December, according to FTR Associates. Year over year orders were down 9% in January.
- The for-hire trucking industry added 5,300 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis in January while payroll employment in the entire U.S. economy surged by 243,000 civilian nonfarm jobs, according to preliminary numbers released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- The national average retail price for on-highway diesel increased 0.6 cents to \$3.856 a gallon during the week ended Feb. 6. The latest price is 34.3 cents higher than the same week last year.
- U.S. freight railroads' carloads were up 6.2% for the week ended Feb. 4 compared to the same week last year. Intermodal traffic was up 16.8%.
- First-time claims for unemployment insurance dropped by 15,000 on a seasonally adjusted basis to 358,000 for the week ended Feb. 4 from the previous week's revised figure.

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not qualified for the position,” Goodell says.

The next step is to test the candidates to see if they have the traits and characteristics that are complementary to the requirements of the job.

“If you automate your screening process you will end up with the candidates who are very qualified for the position, then you can use the interview to look at some of the more subjective criteria,” Goodell says.

Before you begin talking to candidates make sure you have a well-defined hiring process and that you have determined exactly what characteristics and skills you are looking for in an applicant for a particular job.

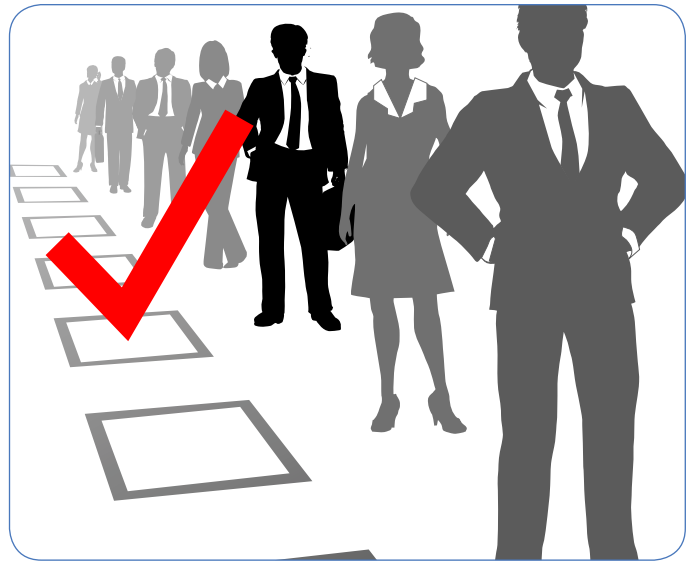
“You also need to be honest about what the job entails,” Goodell says. “If there is a downside to the job, for example if it requires the person to work evenings, you need to spell that out so the candidates know exactly what to expect.”

Additionally, all the people from the dealership who will be involved in the hiring process need to understand and follow the proper procedure for each candidate.

“There needs to be a clear understanding from the management side of what the dealership is looking for from a candidate, what questions will be asked and what kind of screening will be done,” Walker says.

Leveraging technology can simplify and clarify the hiring process. “A full applicant tracking system gives you the ability to go in and look at all the applicants in one place,” Walker says. “It gives you the ability to track background checks, drug screening and collect all of your information in one place.”

In addition, he believes the more you automate the process, the easier it is for people to understand. “If you give them a simple process with clear steps, they can focus on the expectations of the



job and how the candidate meets those expectations.”

In addition, the software solution you use in the hiring process can serve as the basis for the new hire’s employment record. “The hiring process really is where the employee record begins,” Goodell says. “The documentation carries through to their entire life as an employee with your dealership.”

You can use it to communicate to the employee things like your mission statement, dealership policies and procedures and training materials.

“A technology solution also creates an audit trail and actionable intelligence that you can use to better manage your employees,” Goodell says.

“Technology gives you a completeness that is so important. That way you are not managing training separately from the hiring process, separately from the disciplinary system,” he adds. “There is one record that documents every interaction with that employee and creates an audit trail and an efficient record.” ■

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