



Dynamic New Alliances

COMMON RECRUITMENT MISTAKES

Before the interview

1. Make sure you write a job spec for the role - this shows you know what you really want out of this process. Be specific - this is a great opportunity for a fresh start. Your agency has probably evolved since you first recruited John Smith, so the chances are you're not looking for John Smith this time.
2. Make sure you have defined objectives for the interview itself. Chatting away and building rapport is great for getting to know a person but be sure you get to know if they are capable of doing the role you want them to do. If you walk away from an interview having had a great conversation but not knowing whether the candidate can do the job you want them to do, you haven't been interviewing.
3. Where possible make sure you are not hiring to solve a short term issue. If you're thinking short term, create a freelance position.
4. Don't use too many recruitment agencies. We have seen instances where clients have received over 60 CV's from several recruitment companies. As you can imagine there were many duplicates and as a result this very important hire was delayed by around two months. By using two or three recruiters that Agency would have received less, but more relevant CV's, thereby cutting time and costs. Working closely with fewer recruiters is more likely to ensure you find the right person quickly and with the minimum of fuss.
5. Make time to meet with your chosen recruitment partners - and set time aside for regular updates. How can recruiters understand the culture and ethos of an agency without seeing or experiencing it first hand? Recruitment isn't black and white; it goes beyond the job description. Several agencies could put together the same job description for a Creative Director for instance, yet the style and energy of those agencies can differ completely. Allowing recruiters to get to know you at the start will lead to better results at the end.
6. You expect candidates to have done their homework and at least know a little about your agency, so do yours too and get to know a little about them. This will create instant rapport and put them at ease. As a minimum at least have a copy of their CV in front of you. Also remember you could be carrying out a fair few more of these interviews, so prepare 4-5 generic questions that reflect the job role you're recruiting for, which will give you the chance to compare candidates impartially. If in doubt ask us to help with this.

During the interview





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7. Don't offer a job after only one interview. As certain as you probably think you are, you're actually putting both the candidate and yourself under a lot of pressure to be right. Just take a step back, have a sleep on it, meet again - the cost to you is so little. You wouldn't pop the question to someone on the first date - remember you could be working with the person for a long time, for richer or poorer!

8. We have heard stories of people waiting up to an hour to be seen, interviewers munching down breakfast slouching in chairs. Yes it is good to create a relaxed atmosphere, but having egg dribbling out of your mouth and trying to talk between mouthfuls of cornflakes creates an awkward atmosphere with long silences - just remember there is no such thing as an informal meeting, whether it is over coffee or beers. Both parties need to know that they are on display and are being judged. First impressions count.

9. In a bar or restaurant asking someone their age and whether they have children is just polite conversation, but in an interview you could be walking into a potential minefield. Ageism is a particular problem in advertising as there is a bias towards youth, and while they may well be familiar with the digital shift and the latest networking sites, they can lack the experience and control of someone slightly older. Don't confuse age with ability or energy.

After the interview

10. Please do feed back - quickly and as comprehensively as you can. Not getting closure or feedback leaves candidates with a bitter taste and in an awkward position. One in every four candidates doesn't receive any feedback at all - what if they tell 10 friends or colleagues? Your agency could lose 10 great potential candidates and see its reputation tarnished a little. No feedback is worse than bad feedback, and those social networking sites are powerful tools - just ask Apple.

11. Be clear from the start if it's going to be a long interview process. If you are clear with candidates, they know where they stand and will not feel neglected or unenthusiastic as the weeks and meetings roll on. We have seen this happen frequently at a more senior level. For instance, a candidate had been wined and dined, gone to meeting after meeting for several months. When the agency had finally landed their big deal, and the budget was there to bring them on board, the agency learned he had lost enthusiasm and taken a comparable role at a rival agency. Several months of dinner, drinks and meetings were wasted all because of poor communication; a simple sentence would have let the candidate know it was a long road ahead, and have saved the agency an expensive and unrewarding trip down it.

12. It's all too easy to fall into the trap of talking to friends and ex colleagues to get a bit of background on a candidate, but you could easily end up simply trawling through conjecture and gossip, which will cloud your judgement. Get the references, meet them and get the full picture - we have all made mistakes in the past. Remember they make the best of us stronger.





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13. This is pretty simple really - giving people a bad reference is against the law, if you have nothing positive to say, say nothing at all.

14. Racism is as simple as making a decision based on the colour of a candidate's skin, and sexism can be as simple as not employing someone because you think they are going to go off and have a baby. Very simply, don't do either.

15. So, you've taken in everything above, watched what you say, what you do and what you eat and drink. You've hired the dream candidate. We're all done right? No. The interview process doesn't finish until the probation period is up. Think forward to the candidate's first day, their first three months. A good induction is crucial to create a safe, productive and enjoyable environment for your new employee. Most people dread the first day, and it's your job to ensure your candidate comes back on day two, three...

