

Increase applicant numbers – draft a behavioural job description

As we all know drafting a job description is the first step on the road to recruiting someone to the role. The number and type of applicants you receive will depend very much on the quality of the description. A normal specification typically sets out a job's goals, responsibilities and duties. Experience and educational requirements are things which need to be considered here. However, a vital element is often missed: how that person will perform the role. All duties translate into behaviours and it is the behaviour they show at work that will ultimately determine if they will be successful or not.

Recruiting someone is about buying behaviour. You don't want to find you have bought an apple when what you really wanted was an orange. If you set out in the description what it is you want to buy then both you and the candidate know exactly where they stand.

What you need to think about:

If you need a sales person how do you want them to sell. Do you need them to be assertive, goal oriented, confident, driven and independent? Or do you want them to be persuasive, friendly, positive and communicative? The type of behaviour you buy will depend on the type of sales person you get. An assertive, goal oriented individual will work well if faced with the prospect of cold calling whereas a more friendly, persuasive style could work better servicing existing clients.

So many jobs stipulate that they want a 'good communicator' but what does this mean? How do you want them to communicate? If its face-to-face then they will need to be friendly, outgoing and persuasive. Do you mean in writing? If so they might need to be more careful, systematic and accurate, depending on the level of detail needed. If by communication you really mean instruct and tell then that will require someone who is quite forceful, direct and assertive, someone who wont take no for an answer. As you can see each style of communication requires very different behaviours. If what you want is some who is friendly and outgoing but what you 'buy' is someone who is assertive and direct then they are not going to work out in the job.

In a similar way when a job description stipulates that they will be managing people, what kind of manager do they need to be? Do you want them to take a carrot or a stick approach? Have you looked at the behaviour of the team they will be managing? How do these people prefer to work? You need a manager who will be able to manage the team in a way they will respond positively.

We all work in a particular way, we all behave in a certain style. A mask at interview will only last for so long. By adding a behavioural element to a job description you are making clear from the outset how you want the job to be done and the candidate knows what is expected of them.

If you want them to manage, what type of manager do you want them to be, who will they be managing. These are important considerations. Just because someone has management experience does not mean they will manage the people in your team. What sort of behaviour would that team respond to? Do you need a manager who will drive to accomplish results in spite of opposition or antagonistic.

The behaviour you are buying from a candidate is just as important as their skills and CV, and yet most of the time this is overlooked.

Look at the role you want them to perform and how you want them to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Be clear in your job description and your advert so that you, and the candidate, know where they stand. If you do this you will recruit the right person for the job.