

Using tech to find top talent

*City Wide, Canadian Tire and Intek
see results with pre-screening software*

By Rachel Toner

It's a well-known fact that hiring the wrong person can be a costly mistake for an employer. A bad hire can also mean wasted time and resources, a strain on training resources, low performance outcomes, employee disengagement and legal bills.

With this in mind, HR is recognizing that successful hiring requires something more — an extra tool that digs deeper than the surface of a resumé or traditional interview techniques, and provides high-tech insight, understanding and analysis of the science behind hiring an ideal employee.

Three employers — City Wide Communications, Canadian Tire and Intek Communications — have made use of recruitment software to see shorter, more efficient, cost-effective recruiting processes, along with long-term success and engagement from employees.

City Wide combats turnover

Internet provider City Wide Communications, serving customers across Eastern Canada, has been in business for more than 20 years. Now under new ownership, it is experiencing huge growth, nearly doubling its workforce since the start of the year.

That means an increased number of customer enquiries and support calls to the company's busy call centre. These centres often have a high staff turnover, thus requiring regular job postings, which then attract many applicants.

"Staff recruitment for our call centre comes with a number of challenges, and with things moving so quickly here, saving time and hiring accurately have become absolutely crucial," says Murielle Akroyd, customer service manager at City Wide Communications.

For this reason, the company uses TalentSorter from Fit First Technologies, which can identify the key traits that contribute to success in a specific job position. The software pre-screens applicants for fit, develops a customized, ideal candidate profile, and prepares an interview guide to ensure recruiters and hiring managers ask the right questions.

"With each new job posting, that big pile of resúmes is quickly narrowed down before I even see it. The software seamlessly screens candidates for the right traits needed in a call centre environment," she says.

Akroyd can then shortlist candidates for a pre-screen interview over the phone, where she relies on the data provided to ask questions specific to a particular candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

While a resumé may have highlighted good industry knowledge or previous call centre experience, the additional data provides other insights.

"Job commitment, attitudes towards time management, and the ability to function under pressure are important areas where I rely on the software to ask and analyze targeted questions that will then provide me the X-ray vision I need to be fully prepared and interview-savvy," says Akroyd.

As a result of the new technology, City Wide has seen improved candidate pre-screening, faster hiring, reduced staff turnover, reduced time and resources for training, more committed employees, improved employee time management and happier customers.

Canadian Tire sees less absenteeism

A few years ago, a Canadian Tire franchise located in Atlantic Canada was also struggling with high staff turnover rates. It had been in business for 15 years, and had 85 employees.

The store realized it was losing a lot of people at about the seven-month mark, which was a big problem, mainly because of the amount of management time tied up in interviewing, training and handling customers, as well as operational problems that resulted from inexperienced staff.

"As we started hiring people, we saw some very positive changes. Absenteeism went from being a daily occurrence to monthly."

To address this issue, Fit First built a system where candidates went online for their first interview. There, jobseekers were introduced to a screen that evaluated them in three areas — attitudes towards reliability, integrity, and work ethic. Then, the store's HR team was able to determine a candidate's outlook on reporting for their shifts and working eight hours, along with risks of stealing time, money or property.

A year later, turnover hadn't actually gone down that much. In fact, it actually spiked a couple of times over the year because as the Canadian Tire started hiring people with higher standards of integrity and performance, the poorer performers started leaving.

"As we started hiring better people, we saw some very positive changes overall," says the store's HR manager, Emma Kelly.

"Absenteeism went from being a daily occurrence for the cashiers to maybe a monthly occurrence."

The store gained much from the software: Employees with better standards of integrity and performance, lower absenteeism, increased productivity, less overtime, fewer work accidents, happier customers and increased sales.

Intek Communications cuts training costs

Since 2012, the HR team at Intek Communications, a telecommunications company and dedicated partner of Rogers Communications, has relied on the TalentSorter platform.

As part of Intek's hiring process for highly trained technicians, it sends all new hires through eight weeks of paid training before they start the job. Although necessary, this is a huge expense to the company if one of the new hires drops out of training or quits soon after starting employment.

With the TalentSorter platform integrated into its hiring system, Intek gained a much more complete image of the whole person being considered for the job. Thus, a candidate's score on such things as reliability, stability, optimism and job commitment all contributed to better decision-making for Intek's HR department.

"We became a lot more confident and reassured that our resources were going into training someone who was the right fit for the job, and we knew that they were likely to stay with the company," says Amanda Yeaman, HR manager at Intek in Toronto.

In addition, the software has played a key role in the smooth, steady growth of Intek as it's expanded significantly in recent years. Since last year, an additional 96 employees have been hired, including staff in new regions of Alberta and British Columbia.

With the new technology, Intek has found better candidates pre-hire, reduced training resources and costs, reduced turnover, endured fewer customer complaints and enjoyed an easier company expansion.

In general, the resumé is still an important part of the overall hiring brickwork needed to ensure a potential candidate has the right the knowledge, skills and experience.

However, its poor track record for predicting a new hire's retention, performance and overall job success has seen many HR departments stepping back from relying on the resumé as the starting point in the screening and sorting process.

By and large, "finding the right person is far more valuable to the organization than finding the perfect resumé," says Fit First Technologies co-founder Jan van der Hoop.

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