



Temporary Excellence

By Chanon Collins

As the school year ends and summer approaches, the availability of temporary employees soars. Students clamor for employment for a few months and employers increase their numbers to serve the increasing number of customers during the vacation months. While it seems that the hiring of temporary employees is inevitable at certain times in the life of your organization, this activity should be viewed as an opportunity to create temporary excellence.

Screening and interviewing temporary employees is a crucial step in ensuring a successful experience for both the employee and your company. Julie O’Leary, Business Manager of Maister Associates, Inc, of Boston, Massachusetts, believes that business owners should “hire for attitude, and train for skill. Skills you can teach – attitudes and character are inherent.” Don’t just look for a warm body to fill a position, search for an individual with an attitude that is compatible with those of your organization. If your new employee has the right attitude, you will have already deleted potential problems in the future.

Once you have selected those employees who will mesh with your company, they need to be given specific instructions on those duties for which they are and are not responsible. Time is wasted by many duplicating tasks due to a lack of communication. Along with the listing of each activity, give the employee a contact person to call for specific help. As the company owner or manager, you need to spend your time working on long-range goals and profit improvement, not hand-holding new employees. This is not to say that you ignore the temporary positions, but allow your team members to illustrate their skills and knowledge by assisting others.

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If your temporary employees will be responsible for using your computer system, be sure to train them sufficiently so that sensitive materials cannot be damaged or misplaced. While most temporary employees are familiar with current technology, they are not versed in the internal network of your organization. Giving detailed instructions on file placement and format will increase productivity.

Temporary employees have worked in numerous places with varying dress codes and employee expectations. Be sure to inform your temporary employees about company dress codes, provide team shirts or uniforms when appropriate, and make sure that each expectation is understood. This vital communication will eliminate future misunderstandings or embarrassments.

Since temporary employees are filling a position for a short time, their work needs close supervision. Select a mentor for this new employee so that the work can be reviewed and the new employee has a contact with whom he or she feels comfortable asking questions. It is unrealistic to expect temporary employees to have an in-depth knowledge of the systems and procedures of your organization.

Once their time with your company is complete, remember to acknowledge the contributions of temporary employees. A sincere thank you and a pat on the back goes a long way in establishing a rapport that could be useful in years to come.

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