



Employee Management

Article by Nels Lindberg, DVM

The easiest way to not fire is to not hire.

We've all heard the analogy or the story about how we must get the right people on the bus or—even taking it a step further—we must get the right people in the right seat on the bus. But all too often, in virtually all small business settings, not just the veterinary or agricultural space, we often fail at this basic principle. Life in the clinic gets hectic, and we wait too long to hire anyone because we don't want to be overstaffed and have the dreaded, "I'll wait for them to do it syndrome." We often procrastinate because we don't enjoy the process, and end up hiring the first warm body that comes through the door.

As we think about our failures in the hiring aspect of what we do, we think about all the "cancers" we may have hired—from gossips, drama kings and drama queens to the lazy deadbeats whom have no passion or hunger for much

of anything. Or, maybe, the go-getter who seems to have no patience and expects to receive the world and run the show in two years, or maybe in six months.

As we think about all those failed hires, we reflect and ask ourselves, "How do we not make those same mistakes again?" The key point is: it is easier to not hire than it is to fire. The quicker we hire, the greater the chance we may have to fire or the employee quits sooner than expected because, out of desperation, we didn't take the time to do our due diligence. Or maybe it's because no one ever taught us how to implement an almost fool-proof hiring process.

The No. 1 key to the whole process is to take more time! Most of us don't have time on our side, but we can all think of a number of folks we wished we would have taken more time to hire. Therefore, in the hiring process, we must execute several "to-do list" items.

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"If we hire for talent and not team, we will lose the hiring game. We want to identify rock stars and get them on our team. We want to be a magnet for people better than us."

First off, conduct multiple interviews. Use this time to find out how and where they were raised, when they first started working, what their passions are, what their biggest mistake in life has been (which shows humility), and try to find out what kind of difficulties or tragedies they may have experienced. These types of life experiences grow people through maturity and wisdom; they build grit and character and bring people back to "center." An interviewee's response to difficulties encountered shows the "potential" in him or her.

Secondly, invite the prospect to work for a few days. We do this so we can let our people "peel back the orange." We use this process for the entire team or at least for the part of the team with whom the prospect would work. The goal is to "interview" the candidate by working side by side, engaging through casual conversations, and looking for any warning signs, pros or cons. At our practice, this allows for the entire team to give their input on the hire. Your team of rock stars has good intuition as well, and they don't want "discontented" either!

Thirdly, do your homework. Check this person out on Facebook, call all references, ask others on the team if they know this person and what they know about him or her. The power of social media today can allow us to find out just about as much as we want from a person's Facebook page and figure out who they are. Are they dramatic (continuous posts of issues), needy (nonstop posting of selfies), negative (always complaining about something), non-productive (posting all day long at their current job), or even divisive (posting on politics or religion all too often)?

Fourth, pay your current team members if they recommend someone who is a good hire. We currently pay our people \$250 for a hiring recommendation. This is a great method because, if your culture is positive, rock stars don't want to bring in "crazy," "drama" or "drunk."

We base hiring on some key characteristics and core values: grit, potential, hunger, passion, humility, vulnerable honesty, self-awareness, and a "damn-the-torpedo" spirit! Many organizations have figured out that hiring based on resumes, grades, GPA, SAT scores or colleges are not predictive of job performance or success. What are predictive of success are the key characteristics and core values listed!

In the end, it is up to us and our team because a great person and culture attracts great people and knows how to hold them together. If we hire for talent and not team, we will lose the hiring game. We want to identify rock stars and get them on our team. We want to be a magnet for people better than us.

People are not your most important asset. The *right* people are your most important asset. It takes extreme discipline and stoic resolve to get the *right* people on the bus and on the *right* seat on the bus, before you smash down the pedal of your practice and drive it.



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Follow Dr. Nels on Facebook, Twitter and at www.drnels.com, which features his "Leadership Thursday" blog post.



See Dr. Nels' Hiring
Process tips



Hiring Process

by Dr. Nels Lindberg

FIRST – Get prepared for the interview. The easiest way to not fire is to not hire. Be selective in who you are hiring!

- Do multiple interviews with each candidate.
- Conduct spousal interviews.
- Never look past the references. Contact all of their references.

Characteristics to hire:

- Hungry
- Smart
- Integrity
- Chemistry
- Competency

Be looking for:

- Emotionally Wholesome
- Mentally Wholesome
- No Egos
- No Needy People

SECOND – Conduct a stellar interview. Really get to know the candidate, and identify if they will be a good fit for your culture.

- What's your story? What have you been doing in life? Where have you been?
- Where don't you want to be and why?
- Tell me about the worst bosses you've ever had.

- What is a common misconception about you and why?
- What are 3 words your friends would use to describe you?
 - What 1 word would you use to describe yourself?
- What skills/behaviors are essential for success in your position?
- What's a time in your life when you were totally broken and how did you get through it?
- Use the Humble, Hungry, Smart technique. What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses?
 - What would other people say about you?
- What excites you? What sets your soul on fire? What are you personally working on in your life?
- What are your personal financial goals?
- What are the three biggest mistakes you've made in life?
- What is the bravest thing you could do today?
- Ask them questions more than once.
 - What's important to you?
 - What's the best you want for yourself and others? What drives you? What motivates you?
 - What makes you super excited?
 - Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 years? What sets your soul on fire?