

Is your recruitment process *working for you?*

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Interviewing candidates may seem like a laborious task but appointing the right candidate is crucial, especially in a small business. Having faced significant changes over the last 10-15 years within our legal system with regard to employment laws, it is imperative that we get our recruitment process right. We have to juggle what can be considered to be discrimination, be aware of the boundaries of invading privacy, while also finding a candidate that is the right fit for your practice. With an increasingly diverse workforce, flexibility is key when making recruitment decisions.

There are number of factors outside a candidates skill set which make someone suitable for your business. Many of these factors business owners feel cautious discussing due to laws surrounding employment. People connect on a number of levels for different reasons, and it is not uncommon for our clients to hire a candidate who is the right fit for the practice, rather than the right fit for the job, depending on the requirement of the practice and the role.

You need to make sure that no seemingly innocent, but damaging statements are printed in an ad or questions of a similar nature are asked during the interview. There are laws in place to protect individuals during the recruitment process, and there are many no go areas such as sex, age, race and religion, that in most cases, should not be discussed. At the end of the day, the important thing is to hire staff that can assimilate to a similar way of thinking and perform tasks essential to the day to day operation of your business in a team environment. This person may look or sound completely different to what you have in mind as the 'right fit' for your practice or organisation.

Here are some things you should keep in mind with your recruiting process:

Make sure the role is represented correctly. Write a detailed position description and be upfront with the candidate about where the role fits into the practice. If there is progression with the role, know how and when that will happen. It is not uncommon for an employee to contact us within the first 6 months of starting a job stating discrepancies in responsibilities, hours, remuneration, or after 12 months waiting for a promotion that was promised at the initial interview.

Now that online advertising is the norm, you're no longer restricted to small newspaper advertisements. While there are no hard and fast rules about writing an ad, there are few things to keep in mind. Depict the role accurately and while you may have a whole page available to you, keep it relevant and to the point.

Refer to your job description and add details that sell your practice.

Read the resume thoroughly before you conduct the interview. You can try bluffing, but the candidate will know immediately as you stumble your way through the interview. Preparation is the key for a successful interview and will allow you to better understand the skill set of the candidate and what they have to offer you.

Act and look professional. You are not the only one doing the judging.

Avoid multiple interview panels if possible – if more than one or two people will be present, let the candidate know. While panel interviews are common place in large companies, this is not the case in small business. It can be intimidating and off putting for the candidate.

Have your interview questions prepared. This will assist you with keeping on track and making sure that you collect all the relevant information you require to make your decision.

Avoid questions or discussions involving a candidate's personal life. While it's good to make a candidate feel at ease, it is not appropriate to ask questions surrounding personal circumstances. General discussion which does not form part of the interview structure should therefore be kept to a minimum to avoid falling foul of discrimination laws.

Do your background checks. While adhering to privacy laws, check references and site original documents when checking certificates, diplomas and degrees.

As a long standing recruitment company, we are presented with requests from clients and candidates about the types of positions and employees they feel are the right fit for them, and yes, these could be considered discriminatory in nature. At times, there is merit, and sometimes not. You need to keep an open mind when making an employment decision as many missed opportunities occur from preconceived ideas about people and business.

Most importantly, by adhering to established recruitment processes, you can give yourself the best possible chance of making the right hiring decision. ♦

Pam McKean is one of the Directors of AB Dental Employment Agency, which has been in operation for over 15 years. Over the last 10 years AB Dental has grown into one of the country's leading recruitment agencies for the dental industry, servicing all sectors from government, corporate and private practice. Currently, AB Dental services over 1200 business with recruiting services including supply of temporary, contract and permanent employees. As professional recruiters, AB Dental can manage as much as little of the recruitment process as required, even if only providing advice.

