

Hiring

Word of Mouth Aids Cash-Poor Employers with Hiring

Employers with tight recruiting budgets can still hire excellent employees through word of mouth and other inexpensive methods, consultants say.

“Encourage your employees to refer their peers and acquaintances within your industry,” Emily Elder, practice development manager at San Jose, Calif.-based outplacement services company RiseSmart, told Bloomberg BNA in a May 17 email. “Offer a reasonable gift to employees whose referral is hired. Inexpensive examples include offering an extra day of PTO or a gift card.”

Likewise, Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer for Chicago-based jobs website CareerBuilder, suggested that employers “harness the power of word of mouth—ask your employees to share the open position(s) with their own networks.”

But first, do the ground work, she told Bloomberg BNA in a May 18 email. “Put together a plan,” Haefner said. “Figure out what areas of the business are the highest priority to hire for, and determine the core skill set these candidates need.”

“Write a detailed job description that paints an accurate and complete picture of the position—this will help you attract the right candidate right away,” Haefner said. “Determine what budget you have for paid ads, and try to make them as targeted as possible.” Looking for internal candidates and taking advantage of the organization’s existing career site and social media presence also can help, she said.

Vendors and salespeople can further help spread the word that you’re looking for help, since they “are probably visiting other companies in your same industry,” Elder noted. She also suggested posting ads, possibly

for free, in the bulletins or newsletters of the local trade associations, as well as through the career centers of local colleges, community colleges, business colleges and specialty schools.

Unemployment offices, Craigslist and other local bulletin boards also have cheap or free posting services, Elder said.

Don’t Cut Vital Corners Two corners that should not be cut in the name of saving money, according to Elder, are necessary employment screening tests and thorough interviewing.

Salary, benefits and hiring bonuses have to be “commensurate with the industry standard,” she said, “or you risk losing qualified employees at the negotiation stage, forcing you to start the process again and spend more money.”

If a candidate you are interested in asks for much more money than you expected, ask how he or she arrived at that number, Arron Daniels, senior recruiting sourcer at H-E-B, a San Antonio, Texas-based operator of grocery stores, said. He recalled one such instance where it turned out what the candidate really had in mind was relocation assistance.

Otherwise, if you are “under market” in terms of compensation, stress your “employer value proposition,” Daniels said during a May 18 webinar sponsored by Cornerstone.

“Add the personal human touch,” Haefner suggested. “When candidates apply, respond in a timely fashion,” keep them updated throughout the process, and make sure your interviewers are well prepared, he said.

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