

ASSESSING YOUR NEEDS

For the hiring process to be effective in the long-term, you must lay the groundwork before you place your first job posting. Unfortunately, as work piles up, it's tempting to put the planning process aside in favor of quickly filling the position. Avoid this temptation because you could end up with the wrong IT specialist if you haven't specifically defined the combination of technical skills, hands-on experience and industry knowledge you need. Remember, you're not just trying to fill a job; you're looking for someone who can add value, enhance your bottom line and advance the objectives of the organization.

We've put together the guidelines below to help you effectively assess your needs before you begin the hiring process.

FORECAST YOUR WORKLOAD

Forecasting is the cornerstone of a strategic approach to staffing. Based on current activity levels and foreseeable business in the future, you must anticipate what your firm or department's workload will be. This step will help you decide which type of technology employee is required – a full-time, part-time or temporary employee. After you complete your forecasting, you may even realize you don't need a new hire at all.

EVALUATE CURRENT PERSONNEL RESOURCES

Figure out which key technical skills you have on staff now and which are you lacking. Are your employees' talents being fully utilized, or is there room to promote from within?

CREATE A JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a brief but important document that provides a snapshot of the job and will serve as a basis for your hiring criteria. A well-written job description should include all of the following:

- **Title** - Explains the type of professional you're hiring (e.g., 'senior manager', 'help desk technician' or 'programmer').
- **Primary Responsibilities** - Outlines the main duties of the position.
- **Secondary Responsibilities** - Describes periodic, rather than daily, duties (e.g., 'train new staff members').
- **Core Competencies** - Highlights the skills and attributes required to perform the job.
- **Experience Required** - Specifies type and amount of experience. For example, does the candidate need to be familiar with a particular technology (e.g. does the new hire need to have an MSCE certification or have a minimum number of years' experience in the field)?
- **Compensation** - Includes starting salary and basic benefits such as health or life insurance, 401(k) plans, paid vacation, life insurance, etc. Also, determines if the package you're offering is competitive.
- **Preferred Educational Background** - Refers to degrees, certifications and other credentials. Be careful not to turn this item into a "deal-breaker" later in the hiring process. Degrees and certifications can be a useful screening device, but their absence should not prevent you from hiring an otherwise qualified, experienced prospect.

By ensuring you're on the right track in terms of the skills you're seeking before beginning the hiring process, you strengthen your chances of finding the best IT talent.

For more information about how you can effectively assess your needs, please contact Prism Group today.