

This year, I have had the opportunity to meet with a lot of new graduates as they search for their first position in a recovering market. New grads can present both benefit and challenges to new employers as they enter the workforce. Companies large and small can benefit from the development of their own “new grad profile” in order to ensure they are acquiring the new grads that will work for their industry and their environment.



Even in 2010, many companies struggle with the prospect of hiring new graduates. On one hand, they are young, full of energy and passion and once engaged into a company can bring a lot to the table. On the other hand, due to the solitary nature of study habits, they may be inexperienced in team situations, and may lack the customer service skills that they will need to engage with valued clients. Last, but probably most importantly, there seem to be discrepancies in what new graduates are looking for in a job and what employers are looking for in a new graduate.

Large or small, the best way for companies to approach their new graduate hiring is with a needs-specific strategy. There are many things to consider, but the following basic components can provide a sound strategic start:

#### **Personality Fit:**

Define the personality type that will work for the positions that you are trying to fill. Look at the people in each role who have been successful and try to narrow in on what has made them so.

Each company and each department has a sense of what kind of people work for their team. For instance, I work in a recruiting environment. A shy personality would not survive here for long. We know that there are key personality factors that will succeed in our environment, and we look for those things in an interview.

#### **Skill Match:**

This seems simple, but it isn't always cut and dry. There are some skills that can be learned quickly, like a CMS or a new email program, but you should have a list of core competencies that are a definite must for each position.

#### **Cultural Fit:**

Again, define what kind of person tends to succeed in your company's culture? Who will fit your company's atmosphere, dress codes, and standards of operation? You already know who thrives in your environment and who doesn't. Begin to look at candidates from those lenses, and you could save yourself a lot of heart-ache in the future.

#### **Your Investment/Your Return:**

What are you willing to invest in your new grads? Are you willing to make sure that they have the tools that they need to make up for a lack of experience? Do you have any mentoring programs in place that could make their transitions smoother? Most of the time, if you have done your personality/culture fit work at the front end of your hiring process, mentoring your candidate will be a matter of filling in knowledge gaps due to a lack of experience rather than coaching for conflict or professionalism. Finally, what kind of career path will you put in place to retain these graduates? Offering them a future could mean increased retention of new graduates.

Jobs in Dallas are on the increase and new graduates are as well. Companies can glean a lot from the new generation of workers coming into the workforce each year. Setting the appropriate criteria and matching guidelines at the front of your hiring process can help your company navigate the numerous new graduate resumes coming into your office and allow you to avoid some of the attrition that a lot of companies experience with new graduates.

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