

Housecalls at Work

Answers from Dr. Insite

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Dr. Insite is an ongoing column to address people-related issues in nonprofit organizations. For answers to your workplace issues, please e-mail your questions to DrInsite@coreinsites.com. All responses will be handled confidentially.

DEAR DR. INSITE:

We seem to be going through a great deal of staff turnover lately. The cost and strain of the constant change is affecting everyone's attitude. Working in an association environment is obviously not for everyone, so how do we find people who actually fit in our organization?

DEAR WEARY OF TURNOVER:

When you interview people for your association, be sure to use a systematic process to determine if they are a good match. To begin with, clearly define both the job and key aspects of the organization. Then, develop targeted questions that yield accurate and useful information for making your hiring decision.

- First, what are the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for someone in that position? Be clear on the essential requirements for the job and those capabilities that can be acquired through training and development. Ask for examples of the candidate's education and experience. Use testing to evaluate knowledge, skills or personality traits.
- Second, what is the nature of the group in which the candidate will be working? Will

the person have a good chemistry with the valued members of the group and most importantly with the supervisor? All too often, people leave a job because they cannot work well with their boss. Assessing this fit is essential.

- Third, what is the culture of the organization and will the individual be a natural fit for it? Screening for culture is typically neglected in the interview process. Define the Purpose, distinctive Philosophy and Priorities of your organization to determine if the candidate is passionate about the work and aligned with the organization's values. Ask questions like: Why is the work of this association important to you? Ask probing questions to determine if the key values of the organization are shared by the applicant and expect to hear examples of how the person has demonstrated those values in previous work experience. Every organization has its own unique personality and that character must be consistent with the interests and values of the employees.
- Finally, what are the vision and strategic goals for the organization and what role could the individual play in achieving

them? Invite the applicant to share ideas about what the association could accomplish. List some of the strategic goals of the organization and ask how the candidate could contribute to accomplishing those goals.

Your interview process is a methodical assessment of whether or not the person is a good fit for the job, for the workgroup and for the organization. Preventing turnover and ensuring a good employee fit begins with vigilance and due diligence in the interview process. ●

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