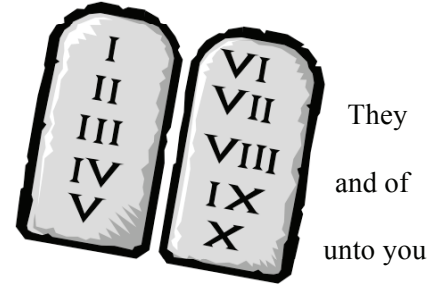


# The 10 Commandments of Hiring & RETENTION

By Mel Kleiman, CSP

Today more than ever the pool of job applicants is filled with bodies yearning for employment. They are the skilled and the unskilled. They are the talented and the less fortunate. They are the willing, able and desperate. They are male and female; young, old, and middle aged, every color under the sun. They are honest, yet reserved. They are sometimes deceitful, yet loyal. They want work now, and they look for their future lies in your hands.



I can lead you to these candidates, but you, the employer, must make the hiring decision. And decide wisely you must, for the wrong choice will condemn you to unnecessary struggles, burdens, misery, problems, lawsuits, and cost you a lot of money.

And so, I offer to you these 10 Commandments to guide you through the employment process. Heed these words carefully and hiring success shall you enjoy – now and forever more.

## **I. YOU SHALL COMMIT YOURSELF TO HIRING AND RETAINING ONLY THE BEST...**

Great companies are great employers who, in turn, hire great employees. If you are going to succeed, you cannot settle for run of the mill employees. Mediocre employees breed mediocrity, so make sure you recruit and select ONLY the best employees. If it means not hiring anyone, you are still better off than if you settle for a new employee who does not measure up to your highest standards.

## **II. YOU SHALL NOT BE UNDULY INFLUENCED BY DAZZLING ANSWERS AND FALSE APPEARANCES...**

Applicants are generally better prepared for the hiring process than most employers. They receive coaching, practice and pat answers to standard interview questions. They know how to dress to impress and will mightily try to do just that. As an employer, you must find ways to get to truly know these applicants. There are only two sources of information about every job applicant – the applicant and the people who know the applicant. Skill, aptitude and attitude testing are good measures of an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Also effective are the candidate's references. Talk to these people to find out as much as you can about the prospect.

## **III. YOU SHALL KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU ARE LOOKING FOR...**

A detailed job description is essential to the hiring process. You need to know exactly what it is you expect of a candidate. This includes the responsibilities of the position and the skills, aptitudes, and, most importantly, the attitudes needed to be successful. Use the job description as only one measuring stick for evaluating talent. Do not hire anyone who does not live up to at least your minimum expectations.

## **IV. YOU SHALL TAKE A MARKETING APPROACH TO RECRUITING...**

Recruiting is an on-going process. You should recruit new employees in the same way you recruit new customers – consistently and proactively. Be conscious of the message delivered by everything an applicant sees, including ads, application forms, and facilities. Be mindful of the tools you are using to attract new employees and seek out creative alternatives to the "Help Wanted" sign or classified ads. ("Help Wanted" is not a good reason for anyone of any caliber to want to work for you.)

## **V. RECRUIT. RETAIN. REHIRE. REFERRAL...**

Your current employees are the best source of great, new team members. First and foremost, you want to recruit the best and then retain them. Fighting turnover is a sore spot for many owners and managers. When you identify a great employee, make sure you do everything possible to retain them. Remember, it is easier to keep an employee than to replace them. If you do lose a great employee, keep in contact with them for future rehire or referral of other candidates.

## **VI. THOU SHALT NOT BE LIMITING NOR DISCRIMINATORY...**

The job market is changing and you must change your perceptions and attitudes along with it. Don't look only for the young or people who have always been in your business. The graying of the baby boomer population has resulted in more seniors staying in the job pool while rising unemployment and more trying economic times have created more highly skilled professionals seeking employment. These professionals understand the value of a job and will be more loyal, committed, focused and successful. In most cases, it pays far greater dividends to hire for who they are and not for what they know.

## **VII. THOU SHALT NEVER STOP LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT GREAT EMPLOYEE...**

Do not limit your recruiting activities to only when there is a need. You should constantly be on the lookout for your next great team member. If someone gives you good customer service, is attentive, prompt and knowledgeable, ask them if they are interested in working for you. When you stop at the bank, go to the grocery store, or pay the kid down the street to mow your lawn – ask yourself, “Could this person succeed in my company?” You’ve already witnessed their work ethic; you owe it to yourself to at least ask.

## **VIII. YOU WILL MAKE THE NEW HIRE'S FIRST DAY THE BEST DAY THEY WILL EVER HAVE...**

First impressions are lasting. The extra care and time you spend making the new hire welcome and comfortable will be richly rewarded by the hiring gods. When your new hire returns home at the end of the first workday, a friend or family member will most certainly ask: “How's the job?” The answer needs to be, “Fantastic. What a great company. I can't wait to go back tomorrow.”

## **IX. YOU WILL SET HIGH STANDARDS AND HOLD YOURSELF AND YOUR EMPLOYEES ACCOUNTABLE...**

You shall be clear from the get go about values, mission, duties, and responsibilities. Your employees will know and understand why their jobs are important and exactly what's expected of them so they can meet your standards and be stunningly successful.

## **X. HONOR YOUR EMPLOYEES AND TREAT THEM WELL...**

Though it sounds simple, too often employers forget that employees represent more than a “one-time sale.” These “chosen ones” also represent the inner sphere of influence. They can raise the perceived value of your company or they can speak negatively and undermine your reputation. They are the reason customers come back as well as why new customers come to you. They can refer future team member candidates or they can scare prospects away. Do not burn any bridges.

**If you follow these rules and remain focused, dedicated and committed to hiring the best, you will soon see that your organization is just that – THE BEST.**

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