



**HIRE**

**POWER**

**Your Staff is the Face  
of Your Company... So  
Don't Just Hire Anybody.**

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*by* JOHN M. GREENE

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**I**t's been a common occurrence whenever you start looking to hire chauffeurs or internal staff, especially in a post-2008 economically-depressed world, that when you place an ad in a newspaper, cover letters start pouring in like a tsunami. Unfortunately, here's what many of them say (*and what they actually mean*):

Dear HR Person,

I am responding to your ad for a chauffeur as I feel I am the perfect candidate for the job (*Which any dummy can do*).

My current position involves working extensively with the public and I am not averse to working odd hours (*We're open 24 hours*). I have great attention to detail (*I have never spilled a drop while filling a Big Gulp*), worked with all makes and models of automobiles (*Will that be Regular or Hi-Test?*) and also have a familiarity with insurance procedures (*We were robbed three times last week*).

In my previous job I was able to interact and communicate extensively with people of diverse cultures and nationalities (*Hello. Welcome to Wal-Mart*). But most importantly, I feel I fit the position of chauffeur because I have successfully passed all state mandated training in order to successfully accumulate the skills needed to enable me to perform for you at the highest level of satisfaction. (*I didn't flunk my driving test and they gave me a license*).

I hope to hear from you soon.

This is pretty much what we find in our inbox these days, and will continue to find as long as there is a perception out there that chauffeuring is an unskilled position—that all you have to do to fit the position is possess a driver's license and you automatically possess the skills necessary to navigate a Cadillac XTS through busy city streets, in a snowstorm, and get a high-level CEO to the airport without missing his 7am flight. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Just because I have the ability to turn on the faucet in my bathroom doesn't mean I have the skills needed to become a plumber. But before we change the public's perception, we need to change our own by realizing that our chauffeurs are the face of our company, and in hiring drivers we need to take that high-standard into careful consideration.

Most managers know that finding great candidates, ones who possess the skills, know-how, and the attitude to get the job done, is vital to moving forward with their business goals. Hiring, assimilating, and ultimately firing an unsatisfactory employee is expensive, exhausting, and detrimental to your business. Getting it right is absolutely necessary.

So how do you equip yourself with the knowledge necessary to discern between a "hit" and a "miss" when it comes to hiring? Here are a few ways to increase your chances of hiring a winner:

First, don't place too much emphasis on the resume. It happens all the time: you put out an ad for a position (whether a chauffeur or in-office support staff) and get flooded with tons of interested applicants. You bring in the person who submitted the most impressive resume, with the flashiest alma mater or the most jaw-dropping array of skills. You hire them instantly, perhaps in desperation to fill a much needed position. Fast forward a few months or a year and you find yourself with an employee who looked perfect on paper, but is creating friction within the office and refuses to work as part of a team. Perhaps they simply cannot adjust to the demands of the actual job and you have no choice but to let them go and restart the hiring process.



### Step 1: The Application

Finding employees who have personalities and attitudes that are compatible with your work environment begins with the application process. An effective way to weed through the hundreds of applicants is a company like Hireology, which will actually rate the candidates based on your criteria and only funnel the worthy ones your way. It saves time and energy, but ultimately the decision on who to hire is still yours. And that's when the application/interview process comes into play.

The majority of the trips our chauffeurs take center around the Boston area. So instead of the traditional interview questions, we have each candidate answer a series of questions pertinent to our region, many of which can be restructured for your location, such as:

- Leaving Logan Airport, which is the most efficient way to get to Framingham, MA?
- How would you leave our facility to get to Cambridge, MA?
- Where is the Four Seasons Hotel located in Boston? And how would you get there from the airport?
- If you were at Boston Common and needed to get to Harvard Business School, which route would you take? In case of an accident, what is the best alternate route?
- A train leaves Buffalo heading west carrying 500 lbs of bananas, while a train leaves Denver heading east carrying the entire Denver Broncos offensive line. If each train is traveling 200 miles per hour....?

Okay, maybe you don't need the last question. Still, you see what we are doing here, which is not only to make sure the prospects are familiar with the area, but that they also don't rely solely on their GPS.

We also include a series of Yes and No questions, such as:

- Is it OK to ask the client what route they want to take?
- Is it OK to have the car stereo on if using only front speakers?
- Is it OK if you carry a client's luggage into their home?
- Is it OK to discuss your personal life with a client?
- Is it OK to use your cell phone while driving with a client?

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**Step 2: Test Drive**

Once a candidate is chosen they spend at least two days in a car with an experienced chauffeur, who is also available as a mentor should they have any questions. We also look at physical appearance, communication skills, ability to speak multiple languages, and their ability to adapt to a flexible schedule and other changes. And don't overlook or downplay the importance of personality and attitude. There are a variety of attitudes and personalities which simply do not fit in a teamwork-based business model, both for chauffeurs and support staff. This non-productive attitude will cause a number of problems for your company and will ultimately cost you money. This is why it's important to pay attention to a potential employee's history, ask pointed questions about how they deal with inner-office strife or conflict, and communicate clearly about expectations when it comes to inner-office attitude and collaboration.



**Step 3: Contractor or Employee?**

Once a candidate is chosen, the oft-discussed question arises of contractors vs. employees. We hire our chauffeurs as employees so they feel like they are part of the company and not just hired hands. We do this by offering a competitive salary, full health benefits including vision and dental, Disability Insurance, Life Insurance, Accident Insurance, Critical Illness Insurance, and FSA (Health Savings Account). This has helped us retain our chauffeurs longer, and they do a better job because it creates a sense of pride and keeps their heads more in the game. We don't hire drivers—Uber hires drivers—we hire chauffeurs.

That's the mindset we need as we realize we are competing for quality help with a large number of other ground transportation companies in our very backyard. There are over 780 licensed chauffeur companies at Boston's Logan Airport alone, just 18 miles from our facility. Unless your facility is located in a Nebraska wheat field, you are likely facing the same stiff competition for competent chauffeurs and office staff.

Finding the right candidate for the position you're advertising for is often drawn-out and expensive. But the money you'll save by putting forth a well thought out and slightly out-of-the-box strategy as you search for those qualified candidates will be well worth the energy, and will likely save you money in the long-run. **ID**



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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