

Refine your Internal Selection Processes

Internal selection

Don't short-cut your process

Many companies invest considerably in enhancing and structuring external recruitment and selection activities. They utilise placement firms, purchase résumé tracking software, administer psychometric assessments, conduct structured behavioural interviewing and employ a third party to do background and reference checks.

Yet, when it comes to internal selection, they take a more casual approach, often short-cutting the process, despite the fact that the risk and rewards can be higher. The right person in the job can send a positive message to those high potentials who are waiting in the wings; a wrong placement will poorly impact morale and the credibility of the management team.

Outlined below are five tips to help you reinforce your internal selection process.

Structure the selection interview: In situations where the interviewer knows the candidate, the internal interview can become an informal chat. This not only decreases the interviewer's objectivity, but it may also give the candidate the impression that the decision is already "in the bag", which can cause disappointment later on. The interviewer should have a list of job-related questions written and stick to an agenda.

Employ testing: With internal candidates, there is an assumption that since we already know the person, we can skip the process of using standardised tests to assess personality factors or hard skills. This can often lead to sudden surprises once the employee starts the new role. Model employees, when faced with new challenges and pressures, will often display a side of themselves that lay dormant in their prior role.

No water-cooler references: While a key advantage to internal hiring is the ease with which detailed and comprehensive references can be obtained, there is also the habit of relying on the candidate's reputation or hearsay. Conduct formal reference checks and, since in most cases, you will have access to performance data, make the most of it.

Provide feedback immediately: A candidate who is unsuccessful in his or her bid for a job should never hear about it from someone else. Contact unsuccessful candidates the moment a decision is made.

Have a formal feedback interview for unsuccessful candidates: With external candidates, less information is always better when providing reasons for rejection. The opposite is true for internal candidates. Companies that want to retain and develop their best people need a structured approach. Unsuccessful candidates, especially high potentials, should be given feedback on why they were not the best candidate and "gaps" should be linked to a developmental plan. This is a critical part of the succession management process and should be mandatory - not optional - for the candidate and hiring manager.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

An internal selection process that is viewed as fair and development-oriented will lead to greater retention and give you the upper hand in the upcoming war for talent.

Time and money spent on fortifying your internal selection process will be returned many times by decreasing costs in the more expensive and high-risk arena of external recruitment.