

EBOOK

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IT Staffing Made MSPeasy

Find Quality Employees to Grow Your Business



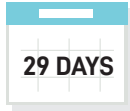


Hiring qualified employees is crucial for all businesses, which is why those that can afford to do so, invest heavily in recruiting. However, smaller businesses, like MSPs, don't typically have the resources to dedicate to such efforts as do larger companies. As a result, many MSPs struggle with bringing in the talent they need to grow their business.

Additionally, many MSPs have a hard time finding employees that are a good fit for their business model. For example, they often find many engineers are used to delivering reactive “break-fix” services and struggle with the managed services business, which requires a proactive monitoring of clients' IT environments.

If any of this rings true, you are not alone—THE STRUGGLE IS REAL! Good news is that we've done our research and found the most effective hiring practices from successful MSPs. In this eBook, you'll learn tips for hiring, including where to look for talent and how to identify (and interview!) good candidates. We'll also look at interviewing best practices and what you need to learn about candidates to make informed hiring decisions.

Finding a Candidate



to hire a referred candidate

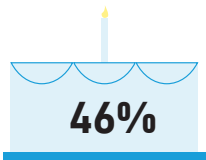


to hire a candidate through a job posting

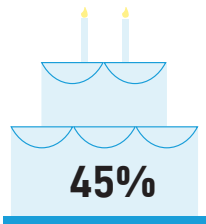


to hire a candidate through a career site

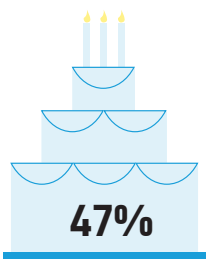
Referral Hires Stay Longer



stay for more than 1 year



stay for more than 2 years



stay for more than 3 years

FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

"Right now, finding good tech people is hard. Period," said Jeff Cohn, Principle of ADNET Technologies, a New York-based Managed Services Provider. Candidates need to have the skills to perform the job, but technical acumen is only part of the equation. "You are looking for people that have accountability, drive, and confidence, but without cockiness," said Cohn. "Communication is also huge."

"People skills are the most important thing," said Jordi Tejero, owner of CRS Technology Consultants. "Your engineers must be client-facing. They need to develop relationships with clients and collaborate. Having the right attitude is everything."

Sitima Fowler, CEO of Capstone IT, a New York-based MSP, said training is essential. "Customer service can be taught," she said. "But, it can be harder when bad habits are already in place." However, training only goes so far, certain personalities just can't cut it in the MSP world. "Technology can be learned, the right personality can't be," said Tejero.

Referrals and Networking

Referrals can be a highly effective way to find the right candidate, which might come from current employees, clients, or other trusted acquaintances. According to a recent [study by recruiting software vendor JobVite](#), on average, it takes 29 days to hire a referred candidate, 39 days to hire a candidate through a job posting and 55 days to hire a candidate through a career site. Another interesting finding: referral hires stay longer at companies. In fact, 46% of referral hires stay for more than 1 year, 45% for over 2 years, and 47% for over 3 years. This is why referrals are the most preferred type of candidate and why MSPs should consider starting an employee referral program internally. Referral incentives are typically monetary, but as an alternative some companies offer additional vacation time or other perks.

Tech meetups can be particularly effective in finding potential employees because they are highly focused. If there are none in your area, start your own!



Networking is also vital in the search for qualified candidates, including in-person networking at industry events and career fairs and networking via social media networks to identify potential talent through your contacts. Tech meetup groups can be particularly effective in finding potential employees because they are highly focused. Pro tip: If there are no meetups in your area, start your own! These events are non-threatening, relaxed, and more conversational, so you may get a more accurate indication of a candidate's personality. Networking should be an ongoing effort, not limited to when you have an open position.

"The majority of our employees come from relationships we have in the community," said Tejero. "We've built a good reputation over time, so people are talking about us—that attracts candidates." The MSP has also taken additional steps to attract good candidates. "We market our corporate culture with a brand book that showcases who we are," he said. "We shifted our marketing efforts to attract employees rather than clients." And, it's working. "The last four people we hired are absolute rock stars," he said.

Traditional recruiting avenues, such as job listing sites, are useful but tend to cast a very wide net. Finding the right people this way begins with crafting a very detailed job description. Make sure to provide potential employees with as much information about the role as possible, especially around required skills and experience. This will help you reach the right candidates and avoid wasting time. The platform through which you use to publicize the position is also important to consider. For example, in large cities, you may want to focus on job listing sites such as Indeed or Glassdoor. For smaller communities, your best bet might be Craigslist or even a local paper. Keeping track of successful postings over time can help you find what works best for recruiting within your area so you can refocus efforts.

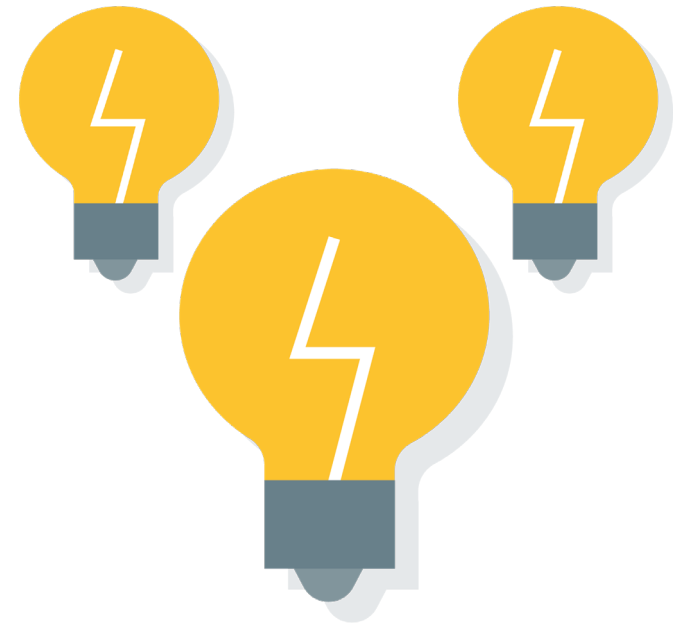
EXPERIENCE VS. CLEAN SLATE

Every business needs a balance of experienced and novice staffers. Out-of-the-gate, the experienced employees will be independent and have the technical skills necessary to perform their role. However, their salary will reflect all of this. Also, depending on their background, they may have ingrained habits that don't mesh with the way you run your business. "Employees who come from the break-fix world can have an 'every man for himself mentality.' That has to be transformed and it can take time," said Tejero. "Finding a senior-level engineer with the right attitude is obviously ideal, but it's not common. It's like finding a unicorn."

The greener employees, on the other hand, demand lower salaries, but require more guidance. While this can be time consuming at first, it can pay dividends in the long run. "Hiring entry-level staffers allows us to train employees from within," he said. "When you train employees up they don't have bad habits that need to be broken. You can mold the employee that you want." Some of his best employees came to the company with limited technology experience but the right attitude. "We've hired a 19 year old, a 30 year old and a 60 year old that were green from a technology standpoint but had the right personality. And, they continue to win for us."

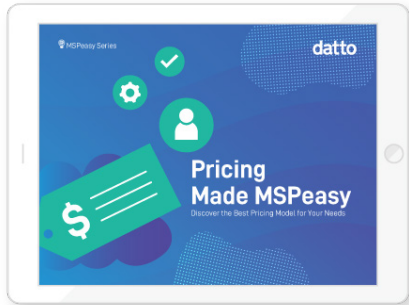
Fowler said that Capstone IT has an extensive onboarding process for all new hires lasting six months to one year. Beyond that, they offer ongoing training opportunities to grow and engage staff. Tejero said his company takes a similar approach. "Our onboarding process lasts 120 days and we have it mapped out in detail," he said. "We are adamant that all new hires complete our onboarding process regardless of previous experience."

"Bottom line—we all have our own baggage," Cohn said. "Experienced or entry-level, it's about the person."



For recruiting within a large city, post jobs on Indeed or Glassdoor sites. For smaller cities, try Craigslist or even a local paper.

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ALL ABOUT THE INTERVIEW

The interview is your chance to fully vet a candidate. You need to find out if they are able to do the job, how interested and passionate they are about the the company, and whether they are a culture fit. You can find out a lot about a candidate by asking a series of basic questions and seeing how they respond. For example:

- What do you enjoy doing the most?
- When you don't know the answer to something, what is the first thing you do?
- What's your process for getting work done.
- What interests you in particular about *this* company?
- Where are you in your career path and where would you like to be in the future?

If a candidate is passionate about the work, your company, and learning new skills, it will come through in the way they respond. "It's about qualities. You hire based on core values," said Cohn. "You need to find out how well a candidate matches the core values and culture of your business."

There are also some red flags to watch out for. "If a candidate doesn't open up at all, that concerns me," Tejero said. "I want to know what they enjoy doing, what drives them. I'm not looking to hire IT automatons." Also important: try to gauge their knowledge and interest in your company. "If they haven't bothered to check out our website and demonstrate some knowledge of the company, they're done," Tejero said. "That's just a basic indicator of respect and interest."

"If they haven't read up on your business, there's probably something wrong," agreed Cohn. "Also, the questions they ask, or don't ask, are important to consider. When candidates don't ask you questions, it signals a lack of preparation or interest."

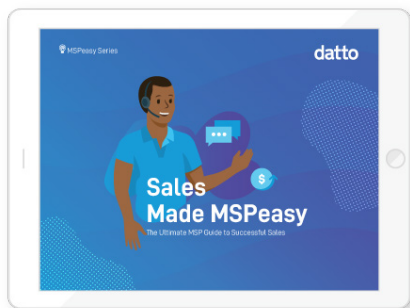
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Lastly, don't neglect your current team in the decision-making process, especially those with whom this new hire will work directly. Team members should be involved in all aspects of the hiring process, spreading word of the open position, screening candidates, conducting interviews and the post-interview conversations. It is important to hear each employee's feedback, as they are likely to ask different questions and come away with different impressions of each candidate. "We always have multiple people involved in the interview, and regroup afterward to discuss," said Tejero. "It makes it easier to be objective."

There are multitudes of sample interview questions online, a simple Google search will yield hundreds of options, so there is no need to list them here. However, Forbes recently published an article outlining [15 questions to ask IT job candidates](#) that is worth a read.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the more you know about a candidate, the better chance you'll have of making a good hire. Referrals from trusted sources are the best candidates to try to recruit. Research shows that referred employees are more likely to be a good fit with your company culture and become loyal employees. However, referrals are hardly the only way to find good employees. Other methods can yield great results as well—especially if you conduct interviews that give you all of the information you need to make a good hire. You need to get beyond verifying that candidates have the required skill set, and focus more on if they are a good fit for your company, your culture and the role you are trying to fill.

Finally, remember that not every hire is going to work out. If you find yourself in this situation, it's best to address the situation quickly and directly. "You know that expression 'hire slow, fire fast?'" said Cohn. "That's good advice. I can't tell you how many times I've waited too long to fire employees that didn't work out. That can cause a lot of problems."