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Fleet Safety – 5 Steps To Hiring Safe Drivers

A successful businessman once told me what CEOs and companies most want. He said, "Write down these 3 words: 'Find, Get, Keep.' CEOs want to find the best people, get the best people, and keep the best people.

Here are 5 steps some transportation companies are taking to be sure they're hiring the best of their driver applicants. Their safety records have improved dramatically as a result.

Determine what behavior the job of driver requires

People who recruit and hire drivers feel they know how the job should be performed. Yet when I meet with a client, we discover that people who know the job have very different ideas about what it requires.

Three people from a company, who know the job of driver well, fill out a Work Environment questionnaire. It's a process that involves ranking statements as if the job itself were talking. The questionnaire says, "This job calls for..." followed by 14 sets of 4 statements. What they choose as the most important aspect of the job is #1; the least important aspect is #4.

You'd be amazed at how they disagree, because they each see the job as they would do it, and that can be very different. But they must all come to a consensus after some discussion. When that's done, they go online and enter that data to get the report. Now, they have a highly accurate picture of the ideal job performance.

Assess the driver's behavioral style

There's no way to determine how a driver will do the job based on a job interview. That's because applicants are on their best behavior and tell recruiters what they think they want to hear. A University of Michigan study found, "The job interview is only 14% accurate." Before hiring someone, recruiters need to know how they'll do the job and what motivates them to perform. The solution is to have driver applicants first fill out an Interviewing Insights report to determine their natural (basic) and adapted (work) behavioral styles.

Assess the driver's values/attitudes

Next, have your driver applicants complete a Workplace Motivators report, which reveals their values. These are their passions and determine their attitude toward the job. Understanding peoples' values is vital before hiring them. For example, your company would be foolish to hire a driver who is powerfully motivated to control people and situations – someone who has a "my way on the highway" attitude. Most applicants will successfully hide this tendency in the job interview.

Match the driver's behavioral style to the job profile

Compare the applicants' Interviewing Insights report to the Work Environment profile and consider only those whose natural behavioral style comes closest to matching the job profile. These people will do the job the way the company wants it done; they'll be careful and cautious because their job duties require behavior that's natural to them. They'll also be adamant about following safety rules and all regulations.

Hire those who fit both profiles

Of course, you want to hire those who best fit all the criteria for the job, including their experience, safety record, skills, history, drug tests, and the other things you look at before hiring. But your job is only half done if you fail to determine their job fit. You can guess at it and be right 14% of the time. Or you can be sure by using pre-employment behavior and attitudes assessments.

Retention

So now that you've hired the best drivers, how do you keep them? Easy. By using the information in the assessments, you'll know exactly how to communicate with them, manage them, motivate them, train them, reward them, etc. The assessments give you this information and more.

Then you'll have a people manual for each of your drivers, just like you have for your computers, procedures, and trucks.

And which of these is most important? Jim Collins says in his book *Built to Last*, "People are not your most important asset. The right people are."

Drivers who are safe and cautious by nature save your company from lawsuits, loss of life and property, and millions of dollars. These five steps can give you an ounce of prevention worth a ton of cure.

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