

Select a Good Team

YOU as a beginner have thought in terms of your own work, your ability to please your superiors, your skill in following instructions, and your judgment in getting help from the right people. Did you ever think that in your first years in business you may have the responsibility of hiring and training an assistant who will look to you as a superior?

Many young girls do have to select or have a part in selecting newer employees and in training and guiding these new workers. As a comparative shopper, you might be placed in charge of one or more girls in the same work. In secretarial work, you might be asked to help select and train a file girl, stenographer, errand girl, or stock girl to implement your effectiveness. In a research position, you might be required to train someone to run routine analyses or tests so as to relieve you of some of the mechanics of your work. In many other positions, girls with only one or two years' experience might be called on to reorient their viewpoint from that of one being led to that of one who must lead.

Whether or not you are required to assume this position of a supervisor, it may help you to understand the full scope of your present and future work if you give thought to what you would and should do if you become an employer.

Let us suppose that after two, three, or four years, your work has shown such effective results that you become an employer as well as an employee.

How good are you at judging people? One of the attributes of a woman executive is the ability to pick capable assistants who will work together as a team. When you are applying for a position, you are testing your ability to sell your qualifications as an efficient worker. When you are the employer hiring a worker, your ability to choose the right person is a greater test because your choice affects the profits of the company, the cooperative spirit of the co-workers, and your success as an executive. If you fail to choose wisely, you must assume the responsibility for your lack of judgment. A poor choice is an injustice to the applicant, an expense to the company, and trouble for yourself.

Do you need more help? Each employee must pay for herself and make a profit for the company. Her expenses include not only her salary and the use of equipment and supplies but also the cost of time spent for supervision. Therefore, you as an employer must be sure that a new worker will increase the efficiency of your department. This calls for an analysis of the job to be done and a decision as to what kind of help will be most effective in producing the desired results.

What kind of help do you need? Should you hire unskilled or skilled help? Would the best unskilled help take over troublesome details and be more useful than poor skilled help that you could hire at the same price? You may find that a skilled person dislikes to do routine work, and that details of filing, typing reports, clean-up, are neglected or cause irritation. But an unskilled person might take pride in organizing and executing these tasks. Don't fill your team with experts of the same caliber. Someone must do the pesky jobs.

How efficient are the present members of your team? Before you hire a new person, analyze your staff to be sure each one is doing the kind of work for which she is best fitted. Often you will find that someone has shown marked ability to do a kind of work outside of the assignment given her. You can take advantage of the new interests of your group by rearranging work schedules

and assignments. Is there an opportunity to begin a new activity or to enlarge an activity? Perhaps this is the time to discontinue some activity once needed but no longer effective.

One of the tests of an executive is the ability to analyze the work and workers in her department and the willingness to shift work and workers in order to make a more effective team.

Should you promote some member of your staff and fill her position or should you fill the top position? If there is an opportunity for promotion within the ranks, you will create a better spirit of cooperation by filling top positions from your present staff. Often someone who has been loyal and efficient within your department will be challenged to do a better job in that higher position than a newcomer with more experience. The loyalty of the present worker and her familiarity with company policies are telling assets. Promotions within the ranks build loyalty.

The reputation and efficiency of your department depend on your evaluation of the present operation and employees and your ability to adjust the work before deciding what new help is needed.

The following story illustrates the importance of getting the right person to assure the right results. A father, busy with his newspaper, was besieged by his small son to tell him a story. The father, wishing to finish his paper, tore a map from it and cut it into pieces. "There, son," he said, "see if you can put this map of the world together." To his surprise, the son soon showed



him the map in perfect shape. When the father asked how he had learned the map of the world, the little boy said, "Oh, I don't know the world, but I found a picture of a man on the other side. I knew if I got the man right, I'd have the world right."

Before you start to hire a new employee, write down the qualifications needed for the position.

1. Work to be done:
List major and minor work.
2. Location of position:
Travel or not.
3. Is the position permanent or temporary?
4. Is there training on the job?
5. Are there opportunities for advancement?
6. What inducements for security can you offer?
7. What prestige or professional advantage does the position offer?
8. Education: Diploma. Type of degree. General. Vocational.
9. Experience: Number of years. Kind.
10. Personality:
A productive *self-starter*, with initiative.
A leader with ambition to make a career.
Socially adjusted.
Capable of meeting people.
11. Skills:
Writing, selling, etc.
12. Salary scale:
Other monetary considerations (hours, vacations, etc.).
13. When position is open:
Other specifications.

When you have analyzed the position, you are ready to look for the right person.

How Do You Contact Applicants?

College and university placement services are most effective in contacting new graduates. Unfortunately, these services do not always have records of former graduates with experience who might be qualified for your position. It is well to have a personal contact with the college placement personnel so that they are acquainted with you and your requirements. Be sure to send to them your specific requirement for the position. Perhaps, in

a telephone call to the college, you can give added emphasis to your needs.

When the college sends the qualifications of an applicant to you, be sure to evaluate the facts in terms of your needs. A persistent mention, in the records, of a weakness or a strength in an applicant is indicative of a fact. If only one faculty member mentions a characteristic of the applicant, this may be due to the type of the course or to the degree of compatibility of the faculty member and the student.

If you are not interested in the applications sent to you, return them to the college at once. Give your specific reasons for not wishing to consider these applicants.

When the position is filled, be sure to notify the colleges you contacted. As an added measure to establish good understanding between the colleges and your work, you should take time to write the colleges about their graduates who have succeeded in your department.

Commercial personnel and *employment services* often specialize in applicants for certain types of work. *High school principals* and commercial teachers also may be able to suggest applicants. Be sure to give a complete description of the position and the requirements. You will find it pays to take time to know counselors in one or two employment agencies so that they do not bother you with applicants not qualified for the position. Emphasize essential requirements as compared to variables which you would consider. An overzealous employment agency can cause you wasted time and embarrassment in refusing applicants. A good employment agency often can get you in touch with a very desirable applicant who might not be willing to confide to anyone else the desire for a new position. Establish with the employment service the question of who pays the fees. Usually the applicant pays the fees. Sometimes, the company pays or divides the fees when the applicant is hired.

Professional associations may operate a placement service or may list notices of positions in publications. For positions requiring specific professional skills, contacts with the special professional association may be very satisfactory.

Your staff members, others who work with you, and friends may be effective in contacting applicants. There is always danger, however, either of causing resentment if you fail to hire the person recommended or of building a nucleus of trouble by having two close friends in one department.

The company personnel service may hire all employees, may screen them for your final decision, or may delegate to you the hiring of persons for your department. A good way for you to learn the techniques of interviewing is to work with those who are trained in the personnel management. Whether this department selects your employees or not, you can get help from them if they understand your work and your requirements.

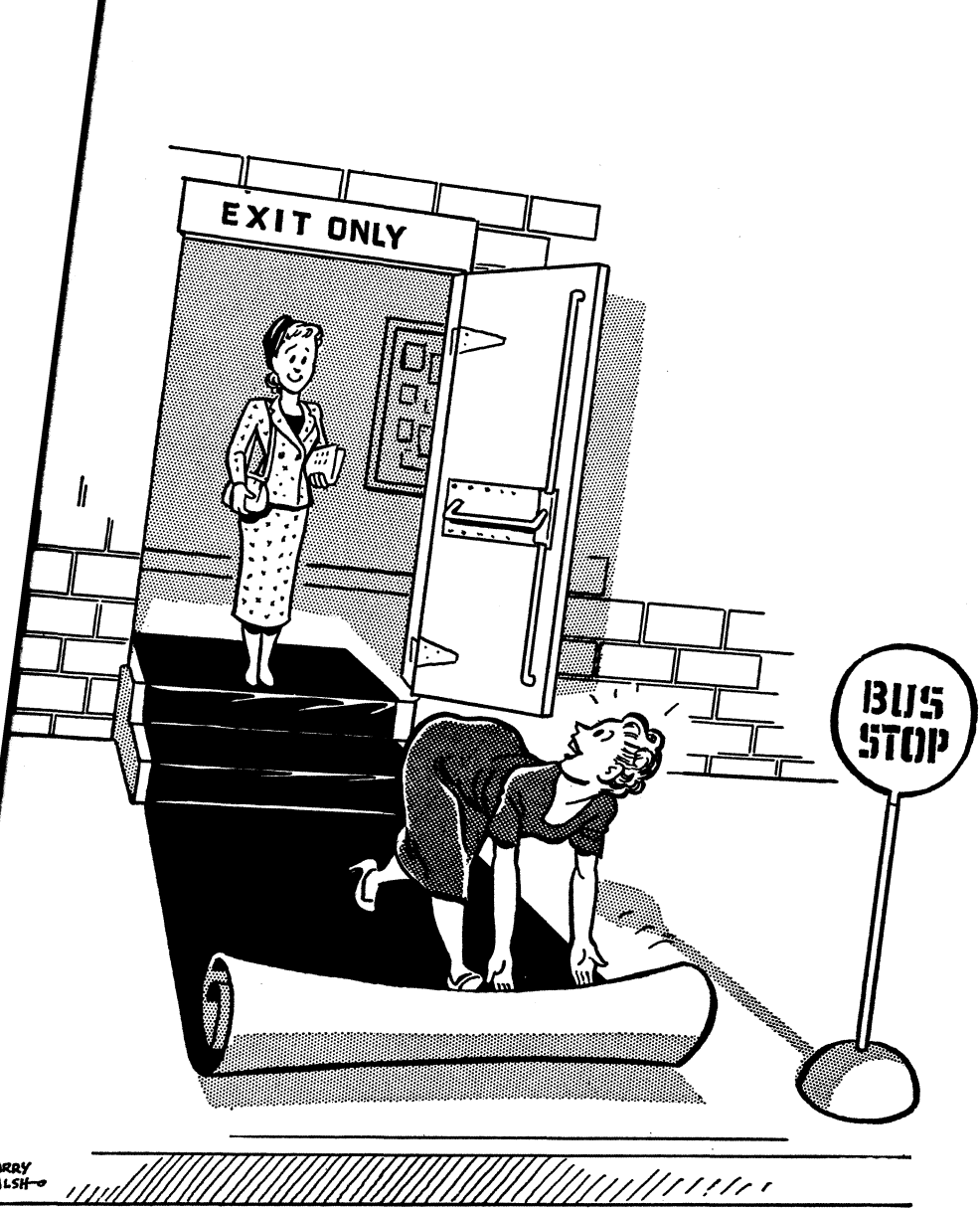
A newspaper advertisement may be effective in reaching a person for a specialized position. Take time to write a specific description of the work and the qualifications. It usually is best to have applicants send their letters to a post office box number or to a code number at the newspaper. This allows you to screen the applications. Then you can send impersonal notices of disinterest or make inquiries before you ask an applicant to come for an interview.

Policies and Practices

Never underestimate the importance of good public relations when you interview an applicant for a position. Whether you hire her or not, you can make a friend for the company.

If you wish to hire someone who is employed, how can you proceed ethically? Should you contact her employer or ask the applicant to notify her employer of the proposed change? This depends on company policy and how well you know the applicant's employer. Some companies have mutual arrangements not to pirate or raid the other companies without discussing the offer with the department head under whom the person works. No one likes to lose a good employee, but a good executive will not stand in the way of a real opportunity for one of her helpers. Perhaps you will have such an experience yourself. Then you will know that if you cannot offer one of your girls a chance to advance, you will win a friend by giving your blessing and good wishes for success, even though it is with another company.

If you find the applicant's employer is not willing to release



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her, you will have to decide which is more important, the good will of the other company or the desired employee.

It is good public relations to be ethical in hiring personnel away from another company, just as it is good public relations to be ethical in all transactions with all applicants.

The Golden Rule of Interviewing

If you conduct every interview as if you were the applicant, whether you have asked the applicant to come for an interview or she comes without an appointment, you are being tested even more than the applicant. You represent your company as well as yourself.

Put the applicant at ease. Be sympathetic and try to help her get into the right job. Be friendly. Give your entire attention to the interview. Start the conversation with a general subject such as her home town, her school, or mutual acquaintances.

Avoid trick questions or statements that will antagonize or discomfort the applicant. Don't try to test her skill.

If the applicant's data sheet or application letter shows she is not qualified for the position, explain why you cannot hire her. If possible, suggest how she should contact employers who might be interested in her qualifications. Be sympathetic and helpful. Make a friend.

If the applicant's data sheet indicates good qualifications, you should proceed to find out as much as possible about her personality and ability. This is a test of your judgment.

The cooperative spirit of your staff may be upset by adding the wrong person. Personalities play such an important role in teamwork that no skill or ability is so important as to be worth jeopardizing the *working-togetherness* of your team.

An application letter or data sheet will show the applicant's education, training, and experience. The real test of your ability to interview wisely comes in evaluating her personality in relation to the personalities in your group.

Take time to visit with the applicant. Gain her respect and confidence. Do not take notes during the interview. Later, you may wish to rate her or write comments on her data sheet.

The Importance of Personality

In the informal interview you should be able to judge whether or not the applicant has good *horse sense* and can meet easily people of her own age and older. Is she emotionally stable or does she show nervous strain?

Her personal appearance should tell you a great deal about how she will fit into your team. However, be careful to consider the financial status of the girl and to recognize that her present surroundings may not require the type of clothes she will need in the new work.

Note the tone of voice, diction, choice of words, and general use of English. What of her eyesight, hearing, her posture, skin, weight, and other signs of good or ill health?

Judge her loyalty to her school and to her former employers. *Loyalty* and *enthusiasm* are good traits for any employee. Bitterness, disillusionment, discontent, and suspicion expressed in the interview should be weighed to determine how much this reflects a defect of character.

"What do you like to do?" This question should lead to a discussion which will indicate whether the girl likes to be with people or prefers to work alone. Take time to ask about her experiences with organizations, her hobbies, and her outside interests. Has she traveled? Can she type? Has she had experience in sales work? Does she enjoy writing? Can she drive a car? Select your questions so that the answers will indicate the abilities for your special need.

By gentle questioning, you can get the applicant to talk about herself and to express phases of her personality that are not shown on her application sheet.

"What are your ambitions for a career?" "What are your plans for the future?" These or similar questions must be asked in order to lead into the next discussion. In hiring women, one of your responsibilities is to determine the marital status of the applicant. If a girl is engaged or married, you have a right to discuss how this will affect her work. Does she have dependents who will restrict her work or prevent freedom to travel or do night work?

Has she religious scruples against a type of work? These questions require tact and a frank attitude so that the applicant understands the reasons for your questions.

If possible, have members of your staff or someone who works with you meet the applicant and have an informal chat when you are not present. Perhaps they can show the girl something of their work and give her a chance to ask questions about the work and the company. This often gives you an opportunity to observe how the new girl would fit into your team. It also gives your co-workers a sense of responsibility in selecting some new person with whom they will work.

If the applicant must work with both men and women, plan to have her meet and chat with a man in the organization. Notice how she meets and talks with this man. Is she shy? coy? bold? or natural and at ease? Later ask the man his impression of the applicant. Very often you will find that this masculine viewpoint is a valuable check on your own estimate.

If the applicant looks promising, you may wish to ask her to have luncheon with you and one of your co-workers. This is an excellent occasion to judge social adjustment and general culture.

Supplementary Information

Usually you will be required to have one of your superiors interview the applicant before a final decision is made. Do put the applicant at ease by praising this company officer and his or her interest in the welfare of your department.

References from applicants may be investigated before or after the interview. Sometimes, there are company policies about contacting references before hiring an employee. Generally, a letter is written similar to this form.

Miss _____ has applied for a position in the _____ department of this company and has given your name as a reference.

The position includes (state type of work).

We should appreciate any information you can give us relative to your opinion of the ability of the applicant to fill this position.

We assure you that any information you can give us will be strictly confidential.

The Offer of the Position

If you wish to offer the applicant the position, explain to her the general policies of the company and determine whether she seems willing to accept these policies. In other words, will she be a loyal employee and will she be proud to work for the company?

Explain the hours of work, vacations, increases in pay, opportunities for advancement, and other factors not related to the work itself. It is wise to see if the applicant will need help in finding a place to live. And surely she will wish you to explain the expenses incurred in the work and the allowances made for these expenses.

Some employers ask the applicant what salary she expects. Other employers state the range of salary allowed for the position. It is seldom wise to have an applicant accept a salary very much lower than she expects or is receiving because this may prove a point of dissatisfaction later. If you have set a fair salary for the position, it is poor policy to take advantage of an applicant by making a low offer. A scale of salaries based on skills, experience, responsibilities, and performance, without special exceptions, is of paramount importance for a good team. Therefore, the new employee must be offered a salary suitable for the position and in balance with salaries paid for a similar kind of work in the company.

The position may be offered at the time of the interview or an indication given that the position will be offered within a certain time, as a week or two weeks.

Many employers confirm the offer in writing and ask to have a written acceptance. Very few business positions require a formal contract.

Of course, if there is a delay in making a definite offer, notify the applicant at the specified time and give the reason for the delay. It is not fair to keep an applicant in suspense and possibly cause her to miss a chance to secure another position.

Be sure to set a definite date for beginning work and state what expenses will be paid. Usually, expenses incurred in moving to a city are not paid by the company. For some positions an allowance is made for basic expenses, if an employee must live in a hotel while looking for permanent quarters.

Set the stage for a successful start in your department by making

the new employee feel she is welcome. Let her know that you and all the other members of the group are looking forward to having her on your winning team.

You, the beginner of today, may be the employer of a not-too-distant tomorrow. As an employer or as a trainer and leader of other people you will find that all the advice and guidance which you have received will take on new meaning. You will be on your way up the ladder to a position as the young woman executive in business.