

Recruiting Key Management Personnel

Excerpt reprinted with permission from the International City/County Management Association. To obtain a copy of the entire report, visit <http://bookstore.icma.org> and search by keyword "Recruiting Key Management Personnel".

*Written by Heather Renschler
President/CEO of Ralph Andersen & Associates*

Overview of the Publication

A successful recruitment and selection process need not be complex and difficult. It is a straightforward process whether done internally or by an executive search firm. The steps described below provide an overview of the recruitment process for a key management position.

- Develop a specific process: Specifically designate the individual that will have responsibility for all aspects of the recruitment. That person should then develop a specific recruitment process and be held accountable for its success.
- Define the position: Make sure you know what you are looking for. Consider the job description, the organization structure and reporting relationships, and the specific challenges facing the unit that will be headed by the manager selected.
- Formalize the outreach strategy: Decide how the availability of the position will be made known. Consider advertising in the print media, professional publications and associations, and Internet resources including job postings, as well as direct candidate outreach.
- Communicate effectively with candidates: Courtesy is impressive to candidates because it is uncommon. Acknowledge resumes as they are received. Make sure the acknowledgement indicates timing for the balance of the search process and specifically identifies an individual to contact for more information.
- Screen candidates: Read all resumes carefully with regard to the position requirements. An initial screening of candidates should narrow the field to those candidates who most closely meet those requirements.
- Select a focus group of candidates: Identify those candidates (from five to ten) who most closely meet the position requirements. Careful review of the qualifications of these candidates should include thorough reference checks.
- Select finalists: Identify as finalists the apparent best of the focus group of candidates and include them in the selection process. Provide them with background information and resources about the agency before the interviews.
- Make the hiring decision: Spell out a specific process leading to the hiring decision when developing the recruitment process. This process could include the use of panel interviews, assessment centers, or a series of one-on-one interviews. The result of the selection process should be a timely job offer.
- Negotiate compensation: Follow up the hiring decision with an informal discussion of compensation with the candidate. After reaching an informal agreement, put the offer into writing for formal acceptance by the candidate.

- Ensure a successful transition: Begin the transition process before the candidate arrives for work. Provide information such as budgets, organization charts, staffing schedules, goals, objectives, and major projects and initiatives. Make sure that new manager is introduced to key staff and officials, community groups, and others as appropriate.

The successful recruitment and selection of managers is highly dependent upon having a plan and carrying it out. For those most directly involved in the recruitment, including the person making the hiring decision, make sure to

- Know what you are looking for: If you do not have a clear understanding of what you want in the new manager, your chances of making the wrong decision are increased.
- Recognize that recruiting is a two-way street: The person you want to hire is already successful in his or her current position. You need to present an attractive alternative and can help to do so by being responsive and interested.
- Organize the process: The recruitment process needs to be clear and coordinated by a single individual.
- Maintain control: Do not give up control of the recruitment process or the hiring decision unless you really want to relinquish control.

Because the recruitment and selection process takes several months, it is easy to put in the background. Don't do it. Remember the decision you make as a result of the process is critical to your own and your organization's success. Keep the key points identified above in mind throughout the process.



Other areas covered in the full report include:

Resources Available
Interim Management
The Recruitment
Conclusion
Appendix: Principal Resource Groups

IQ Report Volume 33/Number 3, March 2001

Published by International City/County Management Association (www.icma.org)