7 Things to Look for When Hiring Experts

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Picture this: your company recently decided to create a new website to generate more leads, but with other projects piling up and hiring limitations related to the COVID-19 crisis, the task seems impossible with current staff. You can't do this one alone; you'll need to hire an expert. While it seems like a daunting task, hiring an expert is the perfect solution to completing projects without the long process of hiring and onboarding a full-time employee. Now, you may be wondering, *what should I look for when hiring an expert?*

While the specific traits you'll need will vary depending on your company and the type of project, there are some general tips that can guide you in selecting the right expert for the job. To help you in your new endeavor, we've compiled a list of the top traits to look for in an expert. Keep these in mind when reviewing candidates, so that when you're ready to hire an expert, you can rest assured they're the right fit.

1. Interest in the company

and industry.

When hiring an expert, it’s important to acknowledge that although they may be skilled in their field, they won’t always be well-versed in your company or industry. However, the expert should express an interest in your company regardless of whether they’ve had experience in the industry. When searching for an expert, ask them if they have previous knowledge of your company, or if they’ve done research into its mission, values, and purpose.

An interest in your company will serve your expert well by helping them feel more connected to projects. This will also lead to a better quality of work that matches more easily to other company materials, potentially saving you time in the end. Once your expert learns about who they’re working for, they can better understand how the project at hand will support these standards and the future success of the company.

2. Solid references and examples of work.

Most experts who have spent years working their field will more than likely have an impressive resume to reflect their efforts. However, before hiring them, request samples of their work and referrals from their previous clients. By acquiring these documents, you’ll get an idea of the expert’s quality of work and personal style—valuable information that can help you to better match candidates to a project.

References are the key to ensuring your expert has an excellent reputation. When requesting references from a candidate, ask that they pull them from a recent window of time (six months to a year). Doing so will help to provide you with a fresher perspective of how their other clients’

experiences with the expert, rather than risking the possibility of speaking with outdated clients from years past.

3. Collaborative skills.

When hiring an expert for your company, it’s likely they’ll be working with other staff members in some way, whether that be with a team throughout the entire process or just during the final steps. Collaboration is a vital skill to look for when hiring an expert; it shows that they understand how to deal with differing opinions and the work styles of others, while still producing a successful result.

Ask the expert if they’ve had experience working with others on projects, and listen to their perspective on collaborating. You can learn a great deal about how the expert functions within a team just from listening to their response.

4. Ability to work independently.

It might seem ironic to mention independence after discussing the importance of collaboration, but the ability to work well with others is just as vital as the ability to complete tasks individually. This isn’t to say the expert should hide away for weeks working on a project to then magically reappear when it’s finished. An expert should feel comfortable asking questions and reaching out for assistance when needed, but understand how much guidance is *too much.*

5. Able to manage time.

Every project has deadlines, and it’s important to meet them. While it may seem like a no-brainer that an expert should know how to manage their time, it’s not something to leave to chance. Some experts may be managing multiple projects simultaneously and work on each sporadically throughout the

day—which can affect your timeline. Have a conversation with the expert to understand their work schedule. For example, the times they plan to work on your project or would be available to participate in meetings, answer phone calls, etc. This will help to create an improved plan for your project and provide an understanding of their time management methods.

As important as a schedule is, it's also necessary to make sure that your expert will have the necessary time management tools to meet deadlines. Will they need to be added to a project management tool to communicate with other staff? Great- make sure they have a compatible computer and a general understanding of how the tool works. Acquiring an expert who manages their time well is just as important as ensuring they're also well equipped to do so.

6. Communication style.

Communication is likely one of the most important elements in any project and should be addressed before hiring your expert. Everyone has a different communication style, and the expert's style should be taken into account before beginning any work to ensure it matches well with your company. It's vital to the success of the project (and both parties' peace of mind) to work out a communication plan to avoid any future miscommunications or frustration, building a better working relationship, and saving precious time.

If your expert prefers to use a communication channel different from the one your company prefers, be prepared to be flexible and open to new ideas. Of course, it's important to ensure that both you and the expert feel comfortable with the chosen mode of communication, but don't feel that you need to bend over backward; compromising is almost always possible.

7. Adaptability

If there’s one guarantee in the professional world, it’s that things change quickly. Teams, deadlines, and project details are just a few variables that are subject to modification.

Before hiring your expert, be sure they are able to adapt just as quickly as things shift without taking too much time to adjust. There’s always bound to be some learning on the job for the expert, regardless of years of experience. Feel free to ask them how they would solve common issues and changes your company typically faces. Evaluate their answers and ask yourself: do their decisions fit well with the company’s style?

There are bound to be changes and obstacles in any project, but it all comes down to whether or not you’re confident in the expert’s ability to handle them. If the answer is yes, congratulations! You’re one step closer to successfully finishing that project list and taking on the world with confidence; all thanks to your expert.

Hiring an expert can seem like an intimidating task, but it doesn’t have to be that way. Although your project may require specific task-related skills, use these guidelines in your search to ensure your chosen expert will be the right fit.https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351230