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# Recruiting for Excellence

## Best Practices to Build a Thriving Club Culture and Member Experiences

Board members of private clubs have very good reasons to pay attention to how their clubs recruit club managers and leadership team members.

At the least, a wrong hiring decision only costs time. At worst, and especially with leadership hires, poor hiring decisions can negatively impact employee engagement, team and organizational performance, as well as the club’s culture and member experience.

By adopting best practices in recruiting, onboarding, performance management and career development, club leaders can drive efficient operations, reduce staff turnover and enhance the member experience. That starts with the recruiting process.

My experience at NexusTek, a North American managed services provider where I am the director of learning and development, substantiates this. The four recruiting practices I will describe, paired with others we use throughout the employee lifecycle, have helped us reduce staff turnover by 63 percent and raise employee engagement by 88 percent against industry benchmarks. These steps can also be used when hiring for any role—not just leadership or management.

### Step one: Align stakeholders on the role’s requirements

Before posting a job or scheduling interviews, ensure key stakeholders (e.g., HR, department heads and general managers) align with what is needed. An up-to-date job description is essential.

Role responsibilities often change over time. Job descriptions, if they exist, are frequently outdated. Outline the required knowledge, skills and attitudes that the role requires, spend time creating or updating the job description and get feedback from relevant stakeholders—including your HR team.

Don’t forget compensation. Check if your compensation is competitive with similar positions at other organizations, not just private clubs. There are many sources of benchmark data. Ask your payroll provider for recommendations.

### Step two: Create a job posting

Don’t make the mistake of using your job description as your job posting. The two share common traits but have different purposes:

**CANDIDATE SCORECARD**

Candidate Name:

Position:

Interviewer:

Interview Date:

5 – Exceptional 4 – Above Average 3 – Average 2 – Below Average 1 – Unsatisfactory

Criteria	Questions	Weight	Score	Comments	
Customer/Relationship Oriented	Demonstrates understanding of customer service principles. Ability to handle difficult customers professionally. Prioritizes customer satisfaction.	Can you describe a time when you went above and beyond to help a customer? How do you handle a situation where a customer is unhappy with your service? What does excellent customer service mean to you?	20%		
Education/certifications	Undergraduate degree	When did you receive your degree from XXXX?	5%		
Cultural Fit	Aligns with club values and mission. Positive attitude and enthusiasm for the role. Fits with the team dynamic and work environment.	What do you know about our club, and why do you want to work here? How do you stay motivated during repetitive or challenging tasks? Can you describe a work environment where you thrived and one where you struggled?	20%		
Communication Skills	Clarity and professionalism in verbal communication. Active listening skills. Ability to convey information concisely and effectively.	Tell me about a time when you had to explain something complicated to a customer. How did you help them understand? How do you handle situations where a customer is upset or angry? Give an example of a time when you had to deliver bad news to a customer. How did you approach it?	15%		
Problem-Solving Ability	Demonstrates critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Provides examples of resolving customer issues effectively. Can think on their feet during hypothetical scenarios.	A member demands something from you that isn’t what you are expected to do on the job. How would you handle it? Your manager’s boss comes to you with an urgent request. You are already working on something your manager has told you is also important. What would you do?	15%		
Teamwork and Collaboration	Willingness to collaborate with team members. Describes experience working in a team environment. Demonstrates respect and support for coworkers.	Tell me about an experience working at XXX where you worked as part of a team to accomplish a difficult project?	15%		
Technical Skills	Experience using POS systems	What POS systems have you used?	10%		

1. The job description is a formal, internal document outlining the role and responsibilities. It's often lengthy and ill-suited for advertising on job boards.
2. On the other hand, a job posting is an advertisement designed to attract candidates who are a good fit. It should highlight what differentiates the position at your club and sets it apart from other organizations. It should be short and to the point, with a strong value proposition that inspires a qualified candidate to apply.

Review job postings for similar roles on sites like Indeed and LinkedIn for ideas. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot can help, but avoid sharing proprietary or confidential data, or data subject to privacy laws.

Ensure your job posting satisfies relevant legal requirements, including compensation range, and if available, ask your marketing personnel to help optimize the posting.

### **Step three: Use a scorecard**

A scorecard helps the hiring team compare and evaluate candidates by providing hard data about each candidate's qualifications.

On the opposite page is a sample scorecard. A scorecard is easy to create. List your criteria. Record your score for a candidate using a 5-point scale. Leave space for written

comments. You can then combine all candidate scores and ratings into a spreadsheet for easy comparison. Be sure you create questions that align with the scorecard so interviewers stay on track and focus on what matters. Ensure your questions don't run afoul of labor laws.

You can also search the Internet for "candidate scorecard" or "candidate evaluation form" for more examples.

### **Step four: Building or buying talent and navigating legalities**

Consider internal candidates. While this means investing in their development and attention to succession planning, benefits include faster onboarding, ramp-up and lower overall cost. Hiring from within shows that your club is committed to retaining and building talent, positively driving employee engagement.

Ensure your recruiting process complies with labor laws and regulations and avoid questions about race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Many states extend those "protected classes" to others, including age and gender identity. Additionally, in some states, it's illegal to ask candidates about their compensation expectations.

This is the first of a two-part series on hiring best practices. In Part II, we'll dive into how to onboard your top choice candidate. **BR**



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