

4 Strategies for Finding the Best Warehouse Employees

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Recently, supply chain logistic companies have gone through a hiring surge. The Wall Street Journal reported U.S. warehouse businesses added 5,100 jobs in October, 2015. The industry has added more than 46,000 positions since the same time the previous fall. Experts accredit the growth to numerous factors, including the popularity of e-commerce.

As the distribution industry grows, companies need to ensure their expanded workforce has the skills necessary to keep supply chain and inventory management procedures speedy and accurate. Here are five best practices for warehouse staff hiring:

1. Audit Current System

Before a company takes on additional employees, it needs to make sure the extra staff is essential. Growth usually calls for additional resources, but that doesn't always mean the need for more hands on deck. If a company hires more

employees only to discover redundant procedures or inefficient operations, it may need to let people go as soon as it brings them onboard.

If a company uses a warehouse management solution like mobile automated data collection, it gains complete insight into how the facility currently functions. Inbound Logistics suggested businesses that handle distribution need to consistently monitor productivity by keeping a close eye on daily numbers. This is especially important when planning future investments.

A complete accounting of daily procedures helps managers spot successful trends and holes in operations. A company can see where new staff is necessary and if operations would profit from mass hiring. Auditing can also help companies save money by indicating when technology or new management strategies could solve issues without additional workers.

2. Set Employee Standards Based on Hard Data

When employees use data-centric solutions, they report their own activities. This means managers can see how they actually perform their tasks. Workers employing mobile automated data collection devices, like tablets and voice picking, have a convenient way to demonstrate what new employees have to do.

Hiring managers can look over data records to find very productive employees and see if recruiters can find candidates with similar qualities. Besides daily metrics, company leaders should interview their best workers to see what qualities they think new hires should possess. Companies should collect as much information as possible about what positions actually entail.

It may be a good idea to have current employees meet with applicants before the company hires them. Managers can give potential workers tours of facilities, show who they'll work with and determine if they fit the culture.

3. Qualities of a Strong Candidate

Every company is different, but most warehouse workers should have certain qualities. Reliance Staffing said employees in the distribution industry need technical know-how and the ability to work in a physical environment.

Warehouse workers often work with heavy equipment. Distribution facilities can be dangerous places and employees have to focus on their tasks. During the hiring process, managers should ask about the individual's experience with the equipment they'll use every day. Companies should also establish standards for testing applicants' ability to learn and adapt new strategies.

It's a great idea to bring some on-the-job testing to the recruitment process. If a warehouse uses automated data collection solutions, managers should put the tablet or barcode scanner in a potential employee's hands and see how he or she responds to it. When employees prefer a certain piece of equipment and find it convenient, new hires should show the same comfort to a certain degree.

4. Establish Good Habits Early

Companies should have warehouse management systems that make training procedures simple. Automated data collection devices designed for employee utilization should encourage consistent procedures that eliminate the common causes of confusion. Training should also be hands on, so managers gain visibility of how new hires acclimate.

Watching for early problems helps warehouses stop bad habits before new workers start to depend on them. Managers could take a hands-on approach if they have the resources or they can check data records to spot issues. When employees communicate excellent performance, accurate information allows supervisors to deliver accurate praise and encourage specific behaviors.

Outside of job performance, managers should also look for how the employee's attitude gels with the warehouse climate. Inc. magazine advised companies to look out for workers who perform their tasks adequately, but spread gossip or negative comments. New employees should demonstrate they can perform their duties and that they invest in the success of total operations.