

## 7 tips to hire smart for your small business

### **Dell Technologies Ireland general manager Mark Hopkins offers his tips on how small Irish businesses can make a smart hire.**

Ever heard the expression “One bad apple spoils the barrel?” In business this is especially true because hiring the wrong person can negatively affect everyone working around them, as well as harm the reputation of your company.

Turnover is incredibly expensive and can have a ripple effect throughout an organisation. Hiring new employees involves the cost of advertising, possibly a recruiter, plus the time and energy spent searching, selecting, onboarding and training new hires.

For these reasons, any business in Ireland — especially a smaller one — wants to hire the right person, every time. Here are tips to help you make a smart hire.

#### **1. Use the latest technology to streamline your hiring efforts**

If you are hiring several new people, or anticipate growth in the near future, using good talent acquisition software can help you not only find the right applicants, but efficiently evaluate and track their applications throughout the entire process. At Dell Technologies, we recently implemented software called Interview Stream. This digital interviewing tool has cut the time managers and other team members have to spend interviewing candidates that are not a good job or culture fit by 50pc. Tools like Interview Stream are affordable ways you can digitally screen candidates before putting them through a live interview.

#### **2. Add artificial intelligence (AI) to your talent acquisition toolbox**

AI is quickly becoming a useful tool for talent acquisition, as it reduces unconscious bias throughout the recruiting process. AI tools can assess a large amount of data and screen candidates without the biases we tend to have. AI can also examine inherent bias in the language of job postings, plus evaluate other job postings to see what attracts more applicants.

#### **3. Include more people in the hiring process**

It is vital to gather input from your team, especially others who understand the position and how that person will work cross functionally with others. It's also useful for the applicant to meet a

number of employees with different perspectives in the business, to be sure they'll be a good fit. What one person doesn't see as a red flag may be obvious to someone else.

#### **4. Do your due diligence**

Many employers don't follow through on reference checks, which could reveal a lot about potential new hires. Call the applicant's previous supervisors, even beyond the references provided by the candidate. Ask about the applicant's strengths and weaknesses, as those answers can be critical in making your hiring decision. If the position requires particular technical skills, don't rely solely on outside certifications or credentials. Create a test to assess those skills, to ensure applicants are qualified.

#### **5. Don't rush to hire**

While the urgency to fill a position may be real, don't let that rush your decision. Take a step back and consider what they speak about during the interview. Does the applicant talk mostly in negative terms about their former position or problems in their careers? A candidate who sounds negative is likely to find problems in your company, too. Does the applicant ask intelligent questions? If your candidate did their homework, he or she should be able to engage you in a meaningful way about the position and your company. If you're unsure, invite the candidate for another interview — or keep looking.

#### **6. Consider a test run**

Does the position allow you to hire a candidate as a contractor for a short time? Could you search for candidates using a temp agency? Seeing how an applicant functions within the business or assessing their work is the best way to ensure this is a good hire. Even if the fit isn't there for a full-time position, it's useful to build a network of contractors for times of sudden growth or special projects, or if an employee needs to take a leave of absence.

#### **7. Ask for outside help**

If frequent turnover is a problem, or you're finding it difficult to staff positions, you may have other issues to resolve. There are many resources available for small businesses, so don't be afraid to get an outside perspective. Small Business advisors at Dell Technologies and across the business and technology sectors, for example, are available to answer your questions and offer you advice, no matter the size of your company.

Whether you're hiring one person or 10, you want to find valuable hires who will not only contribute to your business and be productive, but who will care about your company's future and stick around long enough to help make it more successful.

*Written by Mark Hopkins*

*Published: 1 July 2019*

*Mark Hopkins was recently appointed general manager of [Dell Technologies Ireland](#), taking over from his predecessor Aisling Keegan. A former BT and Microsoft executive, Hopkins had been Dell's public sector and Northern Ireland director for a year.*

*Pictured: Mark Hopkins, Dell Technologies Ireland. Image: Chris Bellew/Fennell Photography*