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How to lose half your hires within a year

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American managers may complain bitterly that they just can't find or keep the talent they need, but a short-sighted attitude to new recruits and a distinct lack of effort in helping them feel part of the team is in no small part to blame.

A study by consultancy Novations has found a third of employers report that a quarter of their new hires leave within the first year, while more than a fifth carelessly lose nearly half of their recruits within the same timeframe.

The research, reported by SHRM Online, the website for the Society for Human Resource Management, found fewer than half of employers have a structured programme to help new recruits settle in, or "onboarding" as it is called.

Under a third of employers train their hiring managers in onboarding techniques, with 15 per cent even leaving it up to their hiring managers to sort out all the paperwork.

Similarly, fewer than half give candidates a realistic job preview or provide interviewers with tools to help them evaluate a candidate's skills.

While six out of 10 do follow a structured selection process, just 46 per cent establish objective hiring criteria for all open positions.

Tim Vigue, executive consultant for Novations, told the website: "For some organizations, they just don't have the coordination in terms of an infrastructure.

"Either they don't have some structured recruiting team that can be the go-between to provide those tools, or they're working in an organisation where the culture is such they're very much hands-off," he added.

"On one hand, most companies seem to recognize the importance of objective hiring and selection as well as supporting new hires," he explained.

"But it also appears that a large minority of employers are pretty much winging it" in the selection process and onboarding," he continued.

Even just small things, such as ensuring new hires had a desk to sit, could make an enormous difference, he stressed.

This bewildering lack of interest by employers in their recruits was echoed by a study of more than 2,400 U.S workers carried out by talent management firm Taleo Research in August.

It found more than half of those polled had never had a performance review or, if they had, they had found it either neutral or useless.

More than three quarters had never received career mentoring and just 12 per cent had been offered a career path plan.

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