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## Taking longer to find staff?

*The skills shortage is costing small business and most of this cost is due to the extra time and effort now required to find the right person for the job, rather than better pay and conditions.*

More than half of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) now report that the talent shortage is limiting their ability to recruit suitable staff and the time taken to recruit a new employee has increased to six weeks.

The interview process is now a two-way street and savvy SMEs are using the interview process as an opportunity to make a positive impression on candidates.

“The recruitment process is very important in shaping a candidate’s view of the business”, said Craig McFadden, Managing Director of Savvy Human Resources. “As a SME, if your recruitment process is not effective you risk losing good candidates to an alternate company or competitor”, Mr McFadden said. “Future employees are critical to the business so you must be honest and do the best to impress and treat every candidate as a potential customer”.

SMEs can reduce angst by using recruitment techniques such as behavioural-based interviewing, which help to pinpoint a candidate’s ability based on past experiences and determine whether they have the right “fit”. This approach is becoming widespread, but is not fully understood as the value is in the recruiter’s ability to ask deep and probing follow-up questions to elicit the details interviewers need to choose the best candidate.

McFadden says it is critical to ask detailed questions of referees about the candidate’s technical skills, their ability to maintain positive relationships with other employees and about their last performance review. Also, it is important to review the job description before starting to recruit as expectations of what the person will bring to the position may

have changed over time. Further, when a particular role has a high turnover you may need to introduce job rotation or redesign the role so that there is more variety to help retain staff.

Referrals from existing employees are often a primary source of job candidates and word-of-mouth can be a huge benefit in attracting quality candidates, but it can also be very detrimental if employers fail to follow through on promises or are not delivering a positive working environment. “If your current employees feel valued and happy, then they will be the businesses best advocates”, says McFadden.

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