

How I Find and Hire the World's Best Employees

By Joe Reynolds

A five-piece mariachi band, a cake with a hidden message, and more food than you'd believe, were all delivered to our office—resume in tow—in an attempt to help an applicant stand out from the other 2,000 monthly hopefuls who apply for a job here. People do crazy things like this because they, with all their hearts, want to work at Red Frog Events.

It's no secret that great people build great companies, so it's baffling to me that more companies don't treat recruitment as the single most important department. Red Frog has treated it this way from day one with spectacular results: We currently hire just one out of every 750 applicants.

How to attract great applicants:

1. Positive work culture. It's flat-out fun working at Red Frog. I work with 130 of the nicest, smartest, and most fun people I've ever met. The pure fun and excitement of an ordinary Red Frog day never gets old. New recruits notice.
2. Incredible benefits. Our benefits package includes unlimited vacation days (see [Give Your Employees Unlimited Vacation Days](#)), a sabbatical every five years, a 10 percent 401k match with no vesting schedule and many more great perks.
3. Office environment. We have an award-winning camp-themed office environment that includes a tree house (see [Your Employees Need a Treehouse](#)), zip-line and rock-climbing wall, among many other fun surprises. It makes coming to work exciting.
4. Heavy recruitment. We could simply let the applicants come to us, but we don't. Long lines and raw excitement to meet the Red Frog crew at nearly every job fair within six hours of Chicago is the norm.

How to interview them:

1. Resumes are mostly garbage. This completely deviates from status quo, but it works for us. We look for nice-to-the-core, passionate people and a resume simply doesn't communicate that. We just make sure the basics are in place and move on.
2. Cover letters. The cover letter is where passion shines. Our hires submitted passionately written cover letters.
3. Passion wins. The best employees, assuming some vitals are in place, are the most passionate ones.

4. Untraditional interviews. It kills me that businesses still ask standard interview questions. "What's your biggest weakness?" surely won't get you an answer of value when the answer has already been rehearsed. Get creative.

How to refine your process:

After the interview is over, don't stop interviewing. We hire people to a four-month contract position to evaluate how they perform in real situations, assess their cultural fit and see if they have a hint of jerk in them. After four months, we've historically hired around 20 percent of those put on contract.

It works. We don't miss. Using these hiring practices, we've yet to have someone leave.

After 6,000 cover letters and four months, Alexa, Caitlyn, Emma, Liz, Makenzie, Matt, Megan, and Terry were hired last month. I already know they're some of the most passionate and talented people in the world.

Welcome to the family.