

How to **Maximize** Your Results in the **QSR** Hiring Process



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Intro: It's lunch and Dan, the QuickService restaurant manager, is in the middle of a rush. The dog-eared *We're Hiring* sign is in the window, where he propped it up six months ago. It's a replacement for the original *We're Hiring* sign that lasted three years before the ink faded. Naturally, two applicants show up during the rush; one to ask for an application, one to drop one off. Dan doesn't have time to talk to them much because he's expo-ing food to replace a lunch time no-show. This, readers, is *Tuesday*. Wednesday will be much the same for Dan.

Like most QSR managers, Dan's in charge of the hiring process. He's been to restaurant school, but he's never been to HR school, so he's making this up as he goes. He has a restaurant process, but no HR process and it's slowing him down and hurting his business. **Here are the best practices in QSR hiring that Dan or any QSR manager can use to keep on top of the hiring process and paperwork so he can focus on hiring the best people and reduce turnover rates.**

Train Managers on **Your HR Process**

If you're looking for more effective ways to plan for your next hiring event, there are tons of measures you can take to improve your chances of finding and keeping the best workers. Training your hiring managers is a great way to beef up your results. This will allow you focus on day-to-day operations like schedules, inventory management and finances. It's pretty hard to do all of the interviews, manage budgets and make sure you have enough paper towels.

Other managers have most likely gone through your hiring process and probably have a good idea of what you are looking for. They'll be much more likely to understand what values matter most to you. They are also aware of the environment and temperament. QuickService manager Dan's team of assistant managers is quick to jump in and help out with hiring because they know what he's looking for.

To improve your managers' abilities to find the right candidates, create a list of criteria that describe the ideal employee for each part of your business, whether it's manufacturing, a restaurant like QuickService or a long-term care facility. It's also wise to make managers aware of criteria that take candidates out of the running. Explain, too, what kinds of applications you are not able to accept. If you are not able to hire employees who have worked for competitors, be sure to communicate these details early on.



Make a list of qualities and traits that compliment your business. If you prefer personality over massive amounts of experience at the top spots in the area, let your managers know. Show them resumes of ideal candidates that stand out during your own quick search.

Create interview questions that match up to the criteria you've selected. **For example, if you want employees to be prompt, ask "Have you been late to an activity, school or work more than twice in the past year?"** Explain why you were late. Did your lateness have an impact on others? What did you do to try to be on time in the future?" These kinds of questions make it easy for managers to select great employees. The more details that you offer, the more likely it will be for you to find the right resources with the help of your team.

Recruit New Hires Using More Than One Method

Posting a sign or advertising a position online will bring in a few candidates, but successful hiring may take a bit more effort. QuickService manager Dan does well with attracting people who may see the sign in the window, but he's always left wondering how other methods might help his business attract more and better employment candidates. Many QSR managers like Dan find good staff members using proven recruiting methods, but it's all about making solid moves that create results. After you figure out what your business needs to reach its goals, you'll need to find a way to find the right people to align with these objectives.

1

The Classic Window Ad

Times have changed, but some of the old methods still work just fine. For starters, of course a standard sign will do. **You can purchase these signs at a local hardware store or easily print one up on the computer.** Experiment with sign placement and test which window brings in the most new applicants over a week's time. Record your observations and move the sign to a different location. Try different signs: small, large, colorful, plain and branded hiring signs may work better than others. Test them one at a time, again in different locations and see which ones work best for you. However, using a more integrated approach will improve your chances of finding quality talent, so **don't limit your efforts to just a faded sign in the drive-thru window.**



2

State Job Agencies

Local job agencies often partner with the state to create workforce opportunities. Some companies may be required to help participants enrolled in certain programs beyond the normal workplace assistance. Look out for employment offices or social organizations within your local community for employment leads, too. **Submit a detailed job description, contact details and information about how to apply, and many employment agencies are glad to help.** You may even be able to support a cause by working with these services and employing people who have special needs, are trying to lift themselves out of poverty or who need a job to fulfill court case requirements. Many think these types of employees are a hassle, but many are wrong. These employees often seek a chance to succeed. Give them that chance and they can become some of your most loyal and hard-working employees. **Furthermore, these individuals qualify for WOTC, giving your company taxable deductions.**

3

Job Search Sites

Another place that many hiring managers use to look for new opportunities is online job boards. If your budget allows, these are excellent tools for recruiting employees. **Many of these services provide hiring companies with formal résumés and backgrounds on potential candidates.** Fees may apply, but it could be well worth the investment, if you are able to find quality candidates. QSR and other businesses with high turnover rates and low-skilled employees avoid these online job boards because their workforce isn't as skilled or specialized as other job positions on the site. However, for businesses that are looking for assistant managers or shift leads, these sites can be a source of qualified candidates.

When manager Dan advertises job openings on one of these platforms, the online systems allow him to view candidates' qualifications and compare skill sets before scheduling in-person interviews. Hiring managers can also request other important information like potential start dates and interview availability as a part of the application process. For Dan this is a major asset, as he can minimize all of the papers sitting on his desk and search for specific skills sets using these tools. Now, he can see his desktop and he might even have a chance to eat lunch himself.

Common online job sites include Indeed, CareerBuilder and Monster. There are tons of other job boards that cater to college students, part-time workers and workers with specialized skill sets. Employees can easily upload résumés showing their work history and credentials. Also, hiring managers can post positions for their QSR restaurants, manufacturing sites or long-term care facilities by adding details about available schedules, locations and required competencies.



4

Craigslist

Another popular online resource is Craigslist. This site is widely known and easy to navigate, which is great for hiring managers. **You can post an employment advertisement for a reasonable fee and receive responses relayed directly to your email box, without making your email public.** Job listings are categorized by title. You may post your ad under the food, beverage and hospitality section or as a part-time opportunity. Using these categories makes it easier for employees to find your company and apply to your job openings with just a few clicks. Applicants can forward job postings to their email and respond with their credentials.

Craigslist also has a section where job seekers post résumés for employers to view. This area is simply titled Résumés. You can find a wide variety of candidates here to email directly without ever taking time to place an ad or spending the money to do so. It's a great resource for managers with limited budgets and time to improve their applicant pools.

5

Social Media

With the growing popularity of social media, you can expect to use the internet for recruiting purposes as well. Millions of people on the internet each day and they're hanging out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. As an employer, you should hang out there, too, or at least post your ad for potential employees to view. These social media sites can assist you with quickly finding employees at the click of a mouse. The best part is that you'll be improving your brand awareness at the same time. **You can use Facebook ads or spread the word through Twitter or Instagram.** Create a social media account for your QSR, assisted living or manufacturing site. Post signs and get a following. Add your social media account information to all job postings and then post your job openings on your own pages and timelines. Upload photos of smiling employees, tempting food and happy customers. You'll boost



your business's social media visibility and encourage users to apply for job openings. This resource is also cost efficient and users will easily be able to find you online.

Be Ready to Serve Up Applications

Be sure that applications are easy to find for applicants who are interested in working with your company. Make them available through more than one option. Place applications on your website for easy downloads or encourage walk-ins to apply. Tell your current employees where to locate applications so candidates don't have to wait until you have a free moment to hand them the paper form. If a candidate walks in and says they're interested, **your staff should know where to find the applications and how to return it.** QuickService manager Dan has briefed his shift leads about the application process, so he avoids turning off potential employees who walk in when he's in the back working with the produce supplier.

Keep enough applications on hand so that you'll never run out. No one wants to miss out a solid long-term employee because they didn't have any more paper applications available. **Let candidates know that they can fill out their application onsite if they have the time and give them a cup of coffee or small soda while they work.** Select an area in the restaurant for these walk-ins that's stocked with everything they'll need to get started on the application. If you're anything like Dan, you'll have no time to search behind every counter in the restaurant to find a pen or even a phone book for the applicant to look up previous employers, phone numbers and addresses. It's better to have these things ready.

Also, consider whether you'll require paper applications, standard résumés or both. Some candidates may stop by your location and not have the time to fill out your form. If a résumé is a substitute for the application, be sure your staff knows to accept them and record the date for résumé submissions. Note any relevant details like the applicant's availability, the job opening and the shift the person is interested in.

Be sure to log each application and put them in the same place every time. This way you'll easily be able to locate them later and avoid confusion. Some hiring managers might even use spreadsheets to keep tabs on applications and résumés. If you take this extra step, the hiring process becomes much easier. If spreadsheets aren't your thing, you



can also create a simple check list. Have applicants sign in and mark off if they've presented a résumé or an application. Note limitations, shift preferences, stand out professional skills, employee referrals and other pertinent details.

Make Personal Connections from the Start

Even though you're busy, it's important to connect with potential employees during the hiring process. On occasion, Dan will ask about the weather, traffic or offer a compliment to help candidates relax when he meets them. As you welcome the candidates, they'll be more likely to show you positive traits that will help you make an accurate decision. Even if you are preparing a massive order and searching for supplies in the middle of the lunch rush, **a quick hello will put applicants at ease and communicate that you value them as individuals.**

Say for example your next superstar waitress walks in for an interview and feels uncomfortable; she'll be less likely to reveal her stellar personality during an interview. **Sometimes an interview can go much better if a person has had a chance to take a few deep breaths.**

Making potential candidates wait isn't necessarily a bad thing. They'll have time to gather themselves. Just know that the hiring process starts from the moment that person walks in the door until she leaves. Some employers have a two-pronged interview process. An employee greets the candidate and shows her to the interview area where the manager does the formal interview. If time permits, the employee returns to give the candidate a tour and ask questions. Candidates relax more with a peer than an employer and may talk more freely with the employee than the manager.

Remember: the interview doesn't end until the candidate leaves the building. Once the employee and candidate are finished and the candidate leaves, the employee and manager can meet to discuss the candidate and whether that person might be a good fit for the business. New hires who find out about this hiring process don't find it sneaky; they like that the employer has taken the time to listen to their concerns and make sure they're a good fit for the workplace. **Thinking about these details in advance and having a plan in place will give you more chances of finding long-term employees who will not just staff the lunch shift today, tomorrow and next week, but also staff the lunch shift in the months to come.**



There are times when it just makes sense to stop what you're doing and begin the hiring process. If you are constantly looking for employees, but too busy to find out who is walking through the door, you'll eventually feel the effects of this. **People who physically visit your location are expressing a serious interest in working for you.** If you are short staffed, it might be better to ask one of your managers to take over while you receive the application.

In this case, you can meet with applicants for a few minutes and take those necessary notes. Why not walk them through the restaurant and introduce them to your current staff? **Get a feel for how they mesh with your current team.** Taking a few minutes to engage the right person can be very beneficial to hiring the right person in the long run.

Keep your schedule handy so that you can quickly schedule interviews. Have applicants fill out applications in a reserved seating area and come back and check on them. Answer quick questions and briefly tell them about your experience with the company if you have the time. And smile. Don't forget to smile.

If business just so happens to be slow or you have some availability, some candidates are often glad to interview on the spot. This is the best method to save time playing phone tag, but it might not always be practical. The benefit is that you'll avoid having to find the time to contact them later to schedule. However, if you're anything like QuickService manager Dan, you can't spare 15 minutes for this on-the-fly interview.

Select the **Best Candidates**

After you've given out applications and looked at the background of different employees interested in working at your business, it's time to make your choice. Look at your hiring goals and choose the best candidates who are a good match. Finding the right fit can seem like an endless battle, but sometimes it just takes a little time.



There are tons of things to consider. One of Dan's evaluation methods is to select résumés that are at the top of the stack. **As employees submit their résumés, he places his top choices at the top of the stack.** This way he is easily able to locate those who stood out or expressed sincere interest. If they are easily accessible it will be much faster to begin the process and receive good results early on in the game.

QuickService's Dan, like many overwhelmed managers, just puts the new applications that come in on the top of the heap. He takes the top one, scans it for a phone number and sets up an interview with that person. After all, Dan thinks, one applicant is much like the others. If that person doesn't work out, there's always the next application in the stack. However, if Dan takes the time to consider other factors, he might not be part of this endless hiring cycle. **If he scans for contact information, skills, previous job history and notes he can make more educated hiring decisions.** Managers can also consider applicants' availability and whether or not they would be full-time or part-time workers. There's little reason to contact part time employees if you are looking for full time help. You can make the most of your time by being strategic during the selection process.

Other things to consider include distance, time constraints and other conflicts. A candidate who included three current jobs on her résumé may not be able to handle the workload that you are looking for. If the candidate lives far away, transportation, absenteeism and tardiness might be issues. **Think about whether your candidate is suited for a high-pressured environment and able to handle varying temperaments.** Was he patient while you served other guests or did he interrupt and ask when you'll be able to meet him while he waited to receive an application? Did he seem friendly and cordial? Can he be coached?

Review your notes for other important details. Remember it's more than just what's on paper. **Try to remember personalities and persistence.** A candidate who stopped by and patiently waited for 20 minutes for someone to greet them may show promising patience when dealing with your customers.



Another thing that should cross your mind is Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) eligibility. Candidates who receive government assistance, who live in certain areas, who have recent unemployment or who have served in the military might fall under the WOTC program. This program offers tax benefits to businesses who hire these workers and who encourage them to remain employed long-term. You'll want to consult your state's workforce agency or your tax advisor for details on the WOTC eligibility requirements.

It's a lot of information to sort through, so this is where entering hiring data into a spreadsheet can make managing these candidates easier. Staying organized and minimizing your application stacks helps to reduce your stress and hire the best employees.

You can rely on the feedback of other managers and employees to help you make the best hiring choices. You can review checklists that you've created early on in the hiring process, or you can look at previous job history to find the skills you need on hand. **High turnover can be costly and time consuming. Surely, you're not looking to go through this process every few weeks.** Make every effort to look at the résumé and find fitting candidates the first time around. Next, you'll be ready to schedule formal interviews and move along the hiring process.

Some notes that you might include are when they dropped off the application, how far they live from the restaurant and their availability restrictions. You can use this list to guide you throughout the process, documenting hired status, call backs, interviews completed and those not completed. There's no harm in writing notes on the impression that they gave you and any feedback from your staff. Once the interview has been completed, add your final notes and get ready to hire!

Schedule **Solid Interviews**

Scheduling interviews can get be a headache. Sometimes you can quickly reach people who have applied to your positions and other times it can be like finding a needle in a haystack. QuickService manager Dan calls the first applicant in the stack, never leaves a voice mail and tosses any applications from unanswered phone numbers into the recycle bin. You know how Dan feels. You sift through countless telephone numbers just to get one *hello*. You schedule interviews and the applicant doesn't show up. **It's time consuming and frustrating, especially when you need someone for tomorrow's lunch rush or to meet production deadlines.**



To make your interview scheduling less painful, you can ask applicants about their availability upfront. When they turn in their application, ask them how soon they would like to get started or add this to a field on the application. If there is no place for this on the document, ask them to write it down at the top of the form.

Ask if they have any schedule concerns, like other jobs, school or volunteer work. **If your next cashier selects Tuesdays and Thursdays as her open days, then try reaching her on these days.** You can make better use of your time by getting these details upfront.

If you haven't had a chance to get this information, there are still many effective ways to get them in the door for an interview. If you're like Dan you usually call until someone picks up the phone to schedule your interview. You only hope that the candidate answers, shows up on time, and completes a successful interview. It can become an arduous, time consuming process.

Making countless outbound calls is okay, but other methods permit managers to keep a record of activities throughout the hiring process. Emails allow you to track your interactions. You can easily create a folder to corral conversations and responses. You can even create multiple folders within your email client, one for each phase of the hiring process. Use your email client's calendar to set reminders to return calls and place reminder calls to ensure applicants' availability. If you keep good records from beginning to end, you'll achieve much better results.

Text (SMS) messaging systems are becoming more popular and some companies are using this to send easy reminders during the hiring process. You can track the application process this way as well. Ask applicants if it's OK to send them text messages to set up interviews. **You can confirm interviews to avoid making time for no shows, and maintain a texting database that you can send mass text messages about ongoing hiring events.** Some email providers offer this service for free or a minimal charge, but be aware that these services might deny use of their applications for business purposes or for sending mass texts. If you've already considered this sort of system, this the perfect time to select one for your SMS/texting provider.



Conduct Interviews **with Ease**

Dan is pressed for time because scheduling, hiring and training takes up so much time and effort. Like most managers, he's too rushed to conduct a good interview because he spends 20 percent of his time on hiring issues. Why? Part of Dan's problem is that QuickService, like most restaurants in the QSR industry, has a high turnover rate. It's the nature of the QSR industry and, indeed, many businesses who hire entry-level workers. **These workers often hop from job to job until they find a good fit or until they amass the skills and experience to find higher paid work.** Good organization makes a world of a difference. Be sure to stagger your interviews, so you'll have enough time to get to everyone.

Candidates always interview better when they have a minimal wait time and feel welcomed. If Suzie waits for 30 minutes during a lunch rush, she'll likely be hungry during her interview. This might prevent her from showing you exactly how hireable she is. If a candidate is waiting, offer her a coffee or a small drink and maybe a cookie while she waits. Make sure you tell her that you appreciate that she arrived early for her interview and that she's willing to wait. **Communicate to the applicants that you believe their time is valuable and they will look at your time that way, too.**

Try to consider methods to bring out the best in your candidates. Make your introduction pleasant by organizing your time wisely and giving potential employees the time they need to sell themselves. Every once in a while, you'll really click with someone and may run over in time. Be mindful of this. Don't book your interviews so close that you're rushing from one person to the next. Take some time to make notes and highlight strong points to help you with making your final decision. **Don't feel like you can't ask the candidate to wait while you write something important in your notes.**

Tell the candidate that you think what he said was noteworthy and that you want to make sure you remember it later. **Listen more than you talk and don't feel a need to fill up silent times.** Ask a question and give your candidate time to think and time to answer without feeling rushed. Focus on the interview and let your employees know that they shouldn't interrupt you or the candidate during this time. Communicate with your staff that you want your candidates to show themselves at



their best and that interruptions might make them nervous. You all want to find the best employees and teammates so coming to work is a pleasure, not a chore, and the business stays profitable.

File and Save Applications to Stay Organized

Develop a system for filing and saving applications. Be aware of local privacy laws and regulations. Don't just recycle discarded applications; personal information may be included on these applications, so shred and dispose of them in a way that protects applicants' privacy. You'll also want to store applicant data properly and be able to easily find that information later. Think about how you plan to organize this information and how you'll protect it before opening a spreadsheet and creating your column headers.

If you're like every other busy QSR manager, you'll regret finding a strong candidate, having them complete an application and then not being able to find it. Who knows where that app went? It could be in the stack of papers on the left of the desk, on the right or dead center. By the time you've sorted through the mess, the applicant will have started work at your competitor's business across the street. You probably don't have time to sift through the applications repeatedly in the hope that you'll remember the person's name or scheduled interview time. Organize this information from the start, date the applications and make sure you can find them quickly as you move through the process.

Create a filing system so you'll be able to locate each form. Although it may be tempting to toss applications that don't seem to meet your business needs, you never know what skills you may need in the future. Secure applications in a file cabinet or drawer for easy access and to create an applicant pool. **Some of the applicants from earlier in the year may have been employed, but are looking for a change or need a new job. Let the applicants tell you they're no longer interested.**



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Simplify the Hiring Process with the Efficient Business Solutions' Applicant Tracking System from HigherMe

The hiring process for businesses with entry-level workers can be easier than ever with Efficient Business Solutions (EBS) applicant tracking system (ATS) from HigherMe. The old-school paper-and-pen method is overwhelming, especially for busy manager who probably has plenty of other tasks to do every day.

Hiring is the most important function of any business, but it isn't the *only* function. **Going through the hiring process 5-10 times a month to keep your business up and running is a constant effort.** The traditional hiring process with stacks of paper applications, an iffy filing system, no online database and countless hours spent playing phone tag makes it a chore that managers detest rather than an opportunity to hire the best. Let's flip the script on this, save time and higher great employees.

When you implement EBS's ATS from HigherMe, that's what happens. Using EBS's ATS from HigherMe, hiring managers can streamline the hiring process and have more time to tend to the business of making and selling QuickService's food products. Picture manager Dan during his lunch rush. **Since he's used the ATS, he's hired the best people for his crew and absenteeism has decreased.** Instead of focusing on the never-ending need for new employees, Dan can incentivize his great hires to remain with QuickService.

Imagine how Dan's desk looks now that he's not shuffling applications from pile to pile. **Think about how Dan can sit for 15 minutes to eat his lunch after the lunch rush because he's not frantically calling people to cover shifts or reschedule interviews.** He's no longer worried about mishandling sensitive personal information or overlooking a terrific candidate in favor of someone whose application has floated to the top of the heap. His worry lines are gone and he smiles more. **His crew is happier, too, because they are working with great people who work as a team.**



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Using EBS's ATS from HigherMe also streamlines the new employee onboarding process and ongoing employee management. Once a hiring manager selects an applicant to start, there's a mountain of paperwork just to bring the employee up to speed and the W2 form is just the beginning. The new hire onboarding process can have 20 – 100 forms to fill out and take up to half a day to complete. **EBS's ATS from HigherMe integrates seamlessly into the EBS onboarding solution and the stack of forms auto-populate with each new hire's information.** Instead of filling out confusing tax and reporting forms, managers spend their time training and putting their new employees to work.

The system tracks employees and ensures that the business never misses out on valuable WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credits) benefits or any other hiring incentives. Since manager Dan uses EBS's integrated hiring and employee onboarding solution, he has turned the four-hour onboarding paperwork nightmare into a quick sign-here, sign-here process. **He's no longer nervous about explaining the difficult tax documents and can instead do what he does best: run a great QuickService restaurant and team.**

As part of the EBS administrative services, manager Dan receives manager training and advice every step of the hiring and onboarding process. He's saved at least 5-15 hours each month by eliminating the pen-and-paper applicant hiring process and even more hours than that with the efficient onboarding process and employee management system. This is time that may be used manage, train and incentivize existing employees, plan new promotions and grow the business.

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Efficient Business Solutions' applicant tracking system from HigherMe allows managers and human resource professionals to track applicants in one business location or across all a business's locations. Managers can reduce interview no-shows and reach them in the most effective way that many applicants communicate - using text messaging. Win the phone tag game and use the ATS, to arrange interviews on the fly and send automated interview reminders. You can send previous applicants mass texts and emails to promote new hiring opportunities.



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You can effectively reduce turnovers by selecting the best people to hire beyond those at the top of the stack. Now that QuickService's manager Dan uses the Efficient Business Solutions applicant tracking system (ATS) from HigherMe, along with the employee management system and onboarding process, his restaurant is more profitable, easier to manage and a great place to work and have lunch.

That lunch rush? It's under control. All of Dan's employees showed up for work, so instead of expo-ing orders, Dan is in the house, smiling, greeting guests and ensuring their satisfaction.