90 Days to a Profitable and Productive Team
Module 3 Transcript

Hey everyone! Deanna Maio here from DelegatedToDone.com and welcome to Module 3 in your 90 Days to a Profitable and Productive Team Program. This is Module 3 "Hiring the Best Talent" and I'm super excited to be with you here today. This is one of my favorite modules because it can make such a tremendous difference in your ability to be successful in your business when you know how to screen, interview, and check references for candidates for your positions correctly. That's exactly the three step process for hiring the best talent. We're going to be talking about screening candidates, interviewing, and checking references.

So the first thing you want to do now that your position is out there and people are applying is you want to start shortlisting applicants. And you want to do that by means of sorting them into 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe' buckets. So first of all, did they respond with what you asked for? If not they're a 'no'- not a 'maybe', a 'no'. See the thing is, when someone's applying for a position with your company they need to be on their best behavior. If their best behavior means that they can't follow directions, they're certainly not likely to follow directions when they work for you. How quickly did they apply? Did they apply right away or did they not? If they didn't that might mean something, it's not necessarily a bad thing but it is something to keep in mind.

Did they write out a custom response in the message they sent you or did they use a template response? You can usually tell. And this is common when you post positions on sites like oDesk or Elance- you often get a template cover letter. Keep in mind that's not someone that you want to really take much further in your process. I would put them in the 'maybe' bucket. Do they seem to demonstrate the skills, training, or experience in their resume or portfolio? Did they take any kind of extra initiative? For additional tips on how to shortlist applicants make sure you check out the "How to Shortlist" handout in your tool kit for this module.

Now before you schedule interviews I highly recommend you narrow the list further. Ask some interview questions via email and use the same questions for each candidate. This will give you more information about them so you don't end up spending a ton of your time on the phone with candidates who really are not going to be a good fit for you. Ask for examples from their portfolio and you might even request that they complete a sample task. For the sample task, you might want to make sure that you set a one to two hour time limit and make sure to make an offer to pay them for that time.

Here are some sample test tasks that I like to use depending on the position I'm hiring for. You see for me, any position that I hire for involves being able to communicate effectively via email. So writing a blog post or writing and editing some copy can be a very effective way for me to see if I'm going to be able to communicate well with this person. In addition, I might have them rewrite some Private Label Rights content that's sitting on my hard drive, maybe research some airfares or flights times if this person is going to be doing some personal or executive assisting, research the best prices on a particular item, or even recommending a plugin to solve a problem on your website. Keep in mind none of these test tasks require that you give them access to any of your systems or your passwords so this is why these are good test tasks to use. And of course, you can come up with your own also, but here are some examples for you.

A few other things you want to consider- first, check out their website or their social media profiles or both. What do they seem to specialize in? What are their rates, if that's applicable? Does their website look professional? Is this someone you would want representing your business? And do they have their own products to sell? These can give you some useful information about the person that you might be bringing on to your team. At the very least, their web presence should be reflective of the presence you would want them to help you to create. It doesn't have to be up to the same caliber but if you're looking for someone who is very detail-oriented and their website or their social media profiles has errors, this may not be the right person for your team. Keep in mind that experience isn't everything- sometimes hiring someone who doesn't have a lot of experience can be a huge benefit. You see, they're really excited and hungry for the work, they don't bring bad habits with them so you can actually train them to do things the way you like, and they're often able to “learn on the fly” or have resources to be able to learn the things they don't know, like a community of peers. So even though they may just be out of their training program or just be new to their business, don't discount that they might be a great fit for your team. In some cases they might be willing to take less payment on the hour in exchange for learning a system that you need them to know, which they might also need to know for future clients. So that's something you can negotiate.

Once you've got it narrowed down to your top two, three, or four best candidates- five at the max I would say, unless you're interviewing for more than one position- it's time to interview. Don't say "yes" to the first person no matter how great their interview might be. Make sure they're asking you questions as well as you asking them questions. I do recommend that you schedule for 30 minutes and have a plan or an agenda. Take notes and then ask them to submit a quote or proposal, if that's appropriate. You might even want to schedule other members of your team to interview this person also.

A few other things about interviewing. Make sure that your objective during the interview process is to really listen to what they have to say. You might even choose to record your interviews so you can go back and listen. You want to see that this is someone who can listen carefully and demonstrate expertise. So if they're just listening and not sharing how they can help you solve these problems, they're probably going to be someone who acts more like an employee and waits to be told what to do. You want to be working with someone who acts more like an entrepreneur or a consultant who comes in and says "This is how I can help you". So they should equally balance out their expertise along with listening to you for information that they're going to need to be able to help you be successful. Do you feel comfortable with this person? Is this someone that you would like to get to know more about? If the answer is no, they're definitely not a fit for your team. Does the skill set they bring to the table fill in some of the weaknesses on the team? Is it really what you need?

Now that you've learned some information about interviewing make sure you check out the “Interview Outline” and our “Interview Questions by Competency Booklet” in your toolkit. This is going to help you to plan your interview and to ask great questions so you get the information you really need. Now once you've done some interviews, you're going to just check-in around making your selection and ask yourself, "how did it go?" Did the conversation go well? Did they follow up with you afterwards? Do a gut check and also make sure to check-in with the other team members, if you had them interviewed by other members of the team.

No matter what you do, no matter how the data comes out or how your gut feels, do not stop and move forward without checking references. We've got the "Reference Checking Questions" worksheet in your toolkit. So we've done the hard work for you- all you have to do is call those references. If you do it the way that we teach in the hand-out, you're going to get some really useful information from those people. Not just “is this person a good fit for me” but “if I do select them how can I best help them to be successful?”

You want to weigh the logical with your emotional or intuitive piece and with this it's important that you are paying attention to the information, but also paying attention to how you feel or your gut- both are equally valuable. And you can check out the “Making your Selection Checklist” in your toolkit to help you with taking the top two, three, four, or five candidates and really seeing if they have what you need and making the right selection.

We've got some tools for you in Module 3, here's a quick summary:

- How to Shortlist Handout
- Interview Outline
- Interview Questions by Competency Booklet
- Reference Check Questions
- Making your Selection Checklist

And that's it for Module 3! You've got some recommended actions along the way and if you have any questions don't forget you can always reach out to us at the Delegated to Done Leaders Community on Facebook. Until the next time, this is Deanna Maio with 90 days to Profitable and Productive team, and this is Module 3 “Hiring the Best Talent”. Talk to you next time everyone. Make it a great day! Bye, bye.