



Know when — and how — to hire the right staff

By Alice Waagen, PhD, founder, Workforce Learning

Alice Waagen, Ph.D. is president and founder of WORKFORCE LEARNING LLC (www.workforcelearning.com), a leadership development company that since 1997 has provided managers and C-level executives with the skills and knowledge they need to build a more productive work environment. Since earning a BS in Art Education from the New York State College at Buffalo, and MS and Ph.D. degrees in Art Education from the Pennsylvania State University, Alice has conducted hundreds of workshops and training classes at many of the country's top Fortune 500 companies, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies in the Washington, DC area. In just the last three years, more than 55 leaders from 20 regional organizations have graduated from her unique leadership development workshop series. Giving back to the community is also important to Alice, who currently serves on the District Training Committee for Boys Scouts of America and is a member of the Board of Directors for the Human Resources Leadership Forum and Habitat for Humanity, Northern VA. For more information, contact alice@workforcelearning.com



Kristina Bouweiri is a phenomenal entrepreneur. After marrying Reston Limousine owner William Bouweiri in 1991, she helped him turn a \$5000 investment into a \$15 million company that today is one of the largest private limo and shuttle services in North America.

Kristina is the first to admit she didn't do it alone.

"Finding the right people and putting them in the right jobs was something that took me years to master," explains Kristina, who was voted one of the Top 50 Most Influential and Powerful Women in Washington. "As an entrepreneur it is always tough to come up with the funds to pay the salaries required. Once you take that step, though, you find out they are worth every penny."

In my opinion, Kristina has mastered a skill that causes most business leaders sleepless nights and lost revenue. Although there is a real art to hiring well, and hiring at the right time, there's also a science to it.

Following are my "Three Steps to Hiring Success," a guide to help you determine when it's time to hire, which slots you must fill—and when, and whether to go with full-time hires or contractors. Try it, and I know you'll improve your approach to managing growth.

THREE STEPS TO HIRING SUCCESS

1. Know when it's time to hire staff

Just like a sneeze can mean the flu may be around the corner, here are some business "symptoms" that can mean it is time to grow your workforce.

- No matter how long the work day, you and your staff leave with a "to do" list mostly "not done."
- You know that your business will grow in a predictable manner, either due to market trends, seasonal issues, drop in competition, increased referral or any other reason, you are anticipating steady growth.
- You are experiencing an increased demand for your product or service.
- You need to build pipeline of talent and resources for backup.
- You are burning out your current staff (including yourself). Signs of burnout can be an increase in sick days, missed deadlines or, worst of all, customer complaints.
- An unplanned opportunity comes knocking on your door.

2. Determine what type of staff members you need

It takes a lot of talent and expertise to run a business, but I have seen businesses both large and small make the mistake of starving the infrastructure to save money. In the heyday of downsizing years ago, in fact, it was commonplace to eliminate infrastructure positions and leave business operations at full force. With the economy taking a hit again, this lopsided logic is taking root again.

Executives take note: This approach does not eliminate the need to do any of the daily functions required to run your business. It simply pushes those responsibilities on to the business development team—leaving them less time to generate revenue. Conversely, by using strategic staffing



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strategies, companies can avoid lopsided growth in an economic downturn.

A better approach is to map your business infrastructure by listing that is now covering the core business functions (see below). Then, when your plans call for business growth, determine how your infrastructure will grow with it.

These professionals should be on your team:

- Sales / business development experts, for these are the people who will bring in revenue.
- Marketing and advertising professionals to produce well written outreach pieces including ads, brochures, newsletters, and articles.
- Human resource professionals to provide expertise when it comes to compensation, benefits, hiring, contracting and other staffing tasks.
- Technology support for desktop and website development, support and maintenance, and equipment purchasing.
- Finance and accounting professionals to properly execute payroll, taxes, and other financial duties are done right and in a timely manner.
- Legal council, even if outsourced, is a critical team member at every company.

3. Decide if you need full-time employees or contractors

Full timers vs. contractors—this is a question without one right answer. But like all growth decisions, you need to examine this in the context of your business plan.

To find the approach that works best for your company ask the following:

- What skills and experience is intrinsic to your business?
- What value does this person provide to the customer?
- What type of a company are you trying to cultivate right now?
- Is your long-term strategy to grow a business for many years, or are your plans to grow for possible resale to another owner?
- What is the exit strategy for your business should you decide to sell it or close doors?

And remember this: The true currency of any business is not price—it is value. Ultimately, if the talent you need to grow your business perceives that there is more value in being employed than working on contract, this will determine your growth strategy. If, on the other hand, key team members are happier to work as contractors, don't shun them as an important resource.

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