

14 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE RECRUITING THE MEMBERS OF A PROJECT TEAM

by Jean-François Desroches

Putting together a productive project team is one of the vital elements in project management. There are a host of points to take into consideration when setting out to recruit team members:

1. First of all, it is imperative to define the goals and objectives of every recruitment campaign. Do you need to acquire expertise that does not exist inside the organization, or are you seeking to expand a project team to meet a temporary demand for manpower?
2. What determines the number of resources to be recruited? Resource plans for all projects in the organization's project portfolio, a particular corporate strategy, or an ad hoc need for a temporary replacement?
3. What will be the makeup of the team you are putting together? Internal or external resources, rookies or veterans, specialists or generalists? Will it be necessary to do knowledge transfer to make sure the expertise remains available over the long term?
4. Are you recruiting temporary resources so that permanent employees currently working in the company's business units can be assigned to the project? At the end of the project, will these permanent employees go back to the positions they held before they were given the project?
5. If you entrust a project to permanent employees, what will be the impact on their career path? Do the organization's human resources policies allow employees to secure promotions when they are assigned to projects?
6. Who will take care of drawing up task descriptions for each of the positions to be filled: description of role, responsibilities, qualifications and expertise required, and level of experience?
7. Are there issues of equity regarding your company's compensation plan between new recruits and existing employees? Often the market for the experts required for a project is difficult to compare with the compensation plan for permanent employees.
8. What mechanism will be used to solicit applications? Will ads be published on recruitment sites? Will social networks such as LinkedIn be used? Will a head-hunter be engaged?

9. Who will prepare the grids for interviewing and analyzing applications? Which managers are best placed to conduct interviews? Will the human resources department be involved in the process?
10. Will all the recruitment activities be managed centrally, or will each project team manage its own hirings?
11. After the interviews will come selection of candidates, validation of references and negotiation of agreements for permanent, temporary or contract positions. Will you call on your company's purchasing department to negotiate agreements with resources from consulting firms?
12. A welcome procedure for new resources will make the process of their introduction more efficient. You will also need to think about performance evaluation grids and career development plans.
13. What measures will have to be taken in order to keep talents who are in high demand on the market inside the company? How competitive is the organization regarding holding onto specialized resources?
14. What are the organization's policies regarding hiring consultants? Have consulting firms already been designated by the procurement department for each of the categories of expertise that your organization needs most frequently?

In view of all the considerations set out above, it is easy to understand why selection, recruitment and retention of the members of a team are among a project manager's chief responsibilities.

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