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Stop Aggressive Driving Before it Starts

These five steps guarantee a transportation company can improve its hiring and managing practices to recruit and retain the safest, most reliable drivers.

Larry Bossidy, Chairman and CEO of Honeywell International, Inc. says, "I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day you bet on people, not on strategies."

In the transportation industry, nothing can be more important than hiring safe, reliable drivers. Here are five steps your transportation company can take to be sure you will hire the best of your driver applicants and increase the ability to retain them.

Step 1. Gather your team for a Job Benchmarking session to determine the Key Accountabilities required of each driver.

With the help of an unbiased, expert facilitator, three to seven of your best drivers and their manager (your subject matter experts) meet to first determine the job's Key Accountabilities. These are what each driver must commit to doing on a daily or regular basis for superior performance - and even for the job to exist.

Step 2. Assess the job's ideal behaviors and attitudes required for superior performance.

Next the group will complete two online Job Benchmarking assessments. The process involves ranking statements as if the job itself were talking. Here's an example. One questionnaire asks, "The (job's) need for high quality controls is..." and the subject matter experts rank this statement from one to six, one being "Extensive" and six being "Very Limited."

Sometimes the group will disagree, because they each see the job as they would do it (or are doing it), and their perceptions can be different. But, after some discussion they come to a consensus.

When the two job assessments are completed, you'll have a highly accurate picture of the ideal behaviors and values required for superior driver performance.

Step 3. Assess your current drivers' behavioral styles and values and match them to your job benchmarking assessments.

Following the job benchmarking session, have your current team of drivers individually complete two assessments, which reveal each one's personal behavioral styles and values/attitudes. Compare their assessments to your ideal driver job benchmarking assessments. You can be sure those who most closely match the job profiles are your best drivers. And the assessments provide detailed information on how to manage, motivate, and coach those drivers who don't fit the job profile(s) to improve performance.

Step 4. Assess your driver applicants' behavioral styles and values and match them to your job benchmarking assessments.

This is the key to hiring the best drivers. It's difficult to determine with certainty how a driver will do the job based on a job interview. That's because applicants are on their best behavior and tell recruiters what they think they want to hear, which may or may not be true. A University of Michigan study found, "The job interview is (only) 14% accurate." Before hiring drivers, recruiters need to know for sure how they'll do the job and what motivates them to perform well.

Understanding peoples' values is crucial if you want to hire the best drivers. For example, your company would be foolish to hire a driver high in the Individualistic Value. These drivers are powerfully motivated to control people and situations and tend to be impatient. Most applicants will successfully hide this tendency in the job interview.

Step 5. Hire only those who closely match both of your job benchmarking profiles.

You want to hire drivers who best fit all the criteria for the job, including their experience, safety record, CDL requirements, skills, history, drug tests, and the other things you look at before hiring. But your job is only half done if you fail to determine their job fit. You can guess at it and be right 14% of the time. Or you can be sure by using attitude and behavior assessments.

Driver Retention

So now that you've hired the best drivers, how do you keep them? By using the information in the assessments, you'll know exactly how to communicate with them, manage them, motivate them, train them, reward them, etc. Then you'll have a "people manual" for each of your drivers, just like you have for your computers, procedures, and vehicles.

Drivers who are safe and cautious by nature (behavioral style) and motivated by service to others (values) save your company from lawsuits, loss of life and property, and millions of dollars.

These five steps can give you an ounce of prevention worth a ton of cure.

The next step is to benchmark the job of dispatcher.

If your compliance management and training programs include these types of assessments and job benchmarking, your accident prevention incentive programs will be more effective. Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst and behavior safety specialist. Subscribe to her free safety newsletter at <http://www.hiresafedrivers.com> and order her ebook **Safety RULES!** at <http://www.hiresafedrivers.com/safetyrules.htm>