



Teaching Nomad

HIRING GREAT STAFF SERIES

PART 1: PLANNING IN ADVANCE

Schools have teachers, great schools have great teachers. Today we'll discuss four benefits of planning your hiring in advance and an easy to use plan of action you can begin today to get better results and hire great teachers.

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PART 1: PLANNING IN ADVANCE

“There is nothing more important than your staff”

For a moment, forget about marketing your school or improving the facilities. Just think about the impact that an individual teacher has on their students every day. That teacher’s devotion to their job is what is going to make a difference for the students. Not just in their learning but it also affects how their parents speak about your school to their friends. Statistics show that an unhappy parent will tell ten people, while a happy one will tell just one. With that in mind, how important is it that your school has great staff and how important is it to invest in great hiring practices?

I would venture to say that allowing adequate time for hiring is one of the things that the best schools do properly. I think every hiring manager already knows the importance of this but some do not make it a priority or do not have the adequate man power to make it happen. Just a few of the advantages of hiring early:

1. Larger, more qualified candidate pool
2. Candidates more committed to their contracts
3. Less risk of starting school short staffed
4. Time to process visas and employment paperwork

1. Larger, more qualified candidate pool

Classroom teachers often begin their job search in October or November for fall of the following year and the candidate pool often reaches its peak by March of the hiring year. This means that your most effective time frame for hiring is November through April. By the time April comes around, your candidate

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pool is shrinking and many of the best teachers have already been hired by a better prepared school.



This begins a cycle of either being ahead of your hiring needs or behind it. This cycle can affect every aspect of your school because your staff is your direct connection to the students and regardless of how much you try, the staff will determine your schools' reputation. This includes your reputation as an employer, as well as your reputation as a school.

2. Candidates more committed to their contracts

In the recruiting business, our least favorite candidate is the person that calls us urgently looking for an open position. You might think that is strange considering we are in the business of placing teachers, but the reality is that the teacher who is hired in a rush, will be the first one to not finish his contract. Often times, these rush candidates are short on money & references with little to no preference for what they want to teach. They just want the highest paying job we can find them. Does this sound like the candidate you want to hire?

3. Less risk of starting school short staffed

We discussed that the candidate pool peaks around March, meaning that every week after that you have fewer candidates to choose from. By the time you get to August, there are very few left and schools are in a free for all trying to hire up all remaining staff. Finally, September arrives and school starts but hundreds of positions have still gone unfilled. Many of these schools have already taken enrollment fees from students that are expecting foreign teachers and if the school doesn't deliver, they will not be happy.

On the other side, the schools that hired early brought in all their staff three weeks before school started to help them get settled into their new life abroad and prepare both mentally and physically for the new school year. They conduct training and make sure all the staff is on the same page for the New Year. Can you see how the cycle will perpetuate itself?

4. Time to process visas and employment paperwork

With the changes made to the visa application process in 2013, the application time has been extended significantly. If hiring from overseas, you must expect at least 4 – 6 weeks to get the visa paperwork to the candidate, but probably more! In addition, visa regulations no longer allow schools to change a Tourist visa to a Work visa in the country. This means you must pay for a trip to HK, accommodations, visa fees, etc. if you try to short cut the system by bringing them here on a tourist visa.

As said in the beginning, every hiring manager already understands the potential positive and negative effects of their hiring. *The question now is how to make sure you are creating that positive cycle.*



Here are some steps you can take:

1. Plan for your needs early. By November, start asking teachers to see who already knows if they plan to renew their contract for the following year. Set a deadline in March for all renewals. This will still give you time to adjust if a couple change their minds last minute.
2. Decide if you're going to do all your recruitment in house or outsource some or all of it to a recruitment company.
 - a. Doing all your recruiting in house can be costly and unless you have professional education recruiters, it is often not as effective as it could be. However, it does allow for easy communication between your HR staff.
 - b. Outsourcing all or part of your recruitment needs can often save time and money while utilizing the services of a professional can help you to yield better hiring results.
3. Have a recruitment flow set in place between all the decision makers in your school. Every new candidate should go through the same process and it should be done in a timely manner. Individuals should be required to complete their part of the process within a pre-determined amount of time.

Written By: Brett Isis, Founder & President of Teaching Nomad

<http://cn.linkedin.com/in/brettisis/>

www.teachingnomad.com

Keep an eye out for the next part in our series: Staff retention

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