



IS HIRING OVERQUALIFIED CANDIDATES A BOON TO ORGANIZATIONS OR NOT?

Management

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on analyzing the situation of overqualified candidates who are often the case of rejection due to number of qualifications they have. This paper analyzes whether they are boon or curse for the organizations through various statements of recruitment experts, through merits and demerits for hiring the overqualified candidates and so on.

KEYWORDS

overqualified candidates, hiring manager, recruitment, selection.

INTRODUCTION:

So far as the hiring manager is concerned in the HR department, this incident will definitely occur in the form of an overqualified candidate. A person who has acclaimed most relevant degrees from the valuable universities, has got over successfully on the same role in the previous organization, is looking for is always give immense pleasure to a hiring manager....! But the question arise here is that such a candidate is really necessarily the right choice for the said post or not?

As we all know that recruitment and selection is a costly affair to deal with, the decision here a candidate should be given the serious care specifically when you are hiring an overqualified candidate. The assessment of sustainability should be done by a hiring manager that whether such an overqualified candidate's current suitability and long-term sustainability for the said job is gauging or not....!

The tendency is there to shy away from an overqualified candidate, but too much experience or numbers of degrees aren't good reasons for disqualifying a candidate from the talent search pool.

Whom to call an overqualified candidate?

Before we proceed for examining the pros and cons of hiring an overqualified candidate, we first need to understand the criteria for a candidate to be called as overqualified for the said post. It is inclusive, but not limited to particular elements like candidate's qualifications of academic or the number of years of working experience.

Candidates with the below given characteristics will stand out from the rest:

- Candidates with a broader and deep knowledge of the subject than their counterparts.
- Candidates who have a very broad perspective may be due to moving cities frequently.
- Candidates with highly mastered their skill set may be more than what is required for the job position.
- Candidates who have worked for the client of the organisation as they will know the best way for approaching in the deliverables.

What to do when you came across an overqualified candidate according to experts from the Forbes Coaches Council?

1. Examine Your Biases

When you think a candidate is overqualified, start by examining your own feelings about why the candidate is overqualified and what you fear from hiring an overqualified candidate. There are age-old biases, like an overqualified candidate will quit when a better job comes along. In an age when people stay in jobs one, two or three years, does that really matter? Then, talk with the candidate to address your concerns. You may find there is nothing to worry about. - Larry Boyer, Success Rockets LLC.

2. Define 'Overqualified'

Hiring leaders miss great talent that comes in different forms. Let's start with the age issue. Many overqualified candidates are older, and the assumption is that they'll want more money. But so many older, qualified and overqualified candidates want the mission, not just the money. So, don't miss out on older, wiser and more than qualified talent because of this thought process. - John M. O'Connor, Career Pro Inc.

3. Think about culture fit

Usually, overqualified only means the candidate has more years of experience than needed. However, to be qualified, the candidate needs to work well with other team members and have the desire to be there. If you perceive a candidate to be a great fit within the culture, and they have a plan to be there long-term, having more years of experience than necessary is not an issue. - Donald Hatter, Donald Hatter Inc.

4. Leverage their strengths

Overqualified candidates' surface because of weak local economic market conditions (i.e., recession) or because the individual is the midst of a career change/re-entry into the workforce or is seeking more income. Be willing to customize the role to keep them engaged. They can help accelerate activities, transform processes and become another leader in your organization. Look for other ways to allow them to grow. - Christie Lindor, The MECE Muse

5. Place a premium on urgency

An overqualified employee can be a great benefit for small businesses. Companies should place a high premium on a sense of urgency to receive as much wisdom as possible from the candidate in a short period of time. Most overqualified people only stay for a short time. However, that amount of time might just be enough to help the company to develop a new process or achieve a needed breakthrough. - Ken Gosnell, CEO Experience

6. Define a unique progression plan

If you hire top talent for a specific role, give them room to thrive. Consider identifying areas where the individual can lead in team initiatives immediately. Give this A-player the opportunity to shine through tactical stretch goals and make them a wildcard candidate for future promotions within the organization. Create a development plan for the team member to successfully navigate in their first year, and reward them through key milestone achievements. - Rachel Lourdes Mestre, Marketing Muses

7. Look for the right fit

Finding an overqualified candidate can seem like a boon at first, but hiring someone overqualified can be just as bad as hiring an underqualified candidate. An overqualified candidate can become easily bored and frustrated and, eventually, become an emotional drain on your team. Try not to compromise on fit. With the right fit, your team will have a better chance of connecting and growing. - Cheryl Amyx, 4CEO, Inc.

8. Watch out for Ageism

Most overqualified applicants are overlooked due to perceived ageism biases, such as the ideas that they want too much money or they will leave if they get a better opportunity. Today, 50 is the new 30, as people are living and working longer. These candidates may be very happy with your pay scale. When in doubt, ask the hard questions. Employers can pick up real assets with these very experienced people. - Tammy Homegardner, Social Media Marketing Exposed

9. Laser in on skillset and humility

Be aware of the fact that a person's attitude can be contagious. Look for signs of positive character traits, like humility and a willingness to mentor, and avoid hiring a "know-it-all" type. Research shows that social contagion is a real phenomenon that influences overall well-

being and productivity. Seek people who have both the personality and the hard and soft skills that align with your needs and values. An employee who's dissatisfied or arrogant may spread discontent to others and sour the positive culture you've worked hard to create. - Beth Kuhel, GetHired, LLC

10. Consider Future Needs

A candidate who may be overqualified for an available position today may have the skillset you need for future plans. When hiring for any position, consider not only the short-term needs but also how hiring this person fits into your overall strategic goals. - Vivian Hairston Blade, Experts in Growth Leadership Consulting, LLC.

11. Engage and motivate through career development

It is essential to have ongoing career development conversations when you hire an overqualified employee. Be transparent about their advanced skillset and explain that you want to ensure they have opportunities to grow and remain engaged. Ask for and support their ideas for growth through stretch projects, training, external networking opportunities and access to senior leaders. Create a career action plan to keep them on track and chart their SMART goals. - Loren Margolis, Training & Leadership Success LLC.

Pros And Cons Of Hiring Overqualified Candidates

Hiring an overqualified candidate for the role is beneficial for some organizations based on its objectives and preferences as well as job responsibilities. Here are some pros and cons of hiring an overqualified candidate:

Pros

Some common benefits of hiring overqualified candidate for a role include:

Advantage of a higher quality candidate: Hiring an overqualified candidate provides the advantage to the organization as he/she has more industry experience.

The ability to move upward quickly: Overqualified candidates typically have an advanced set of skill and role's knowledge before even starting with your company. This means they have the opportunity to advance more quickly to senior or managerial positions.

Increase in productivity as well as level of performance: Overqualified candidates have most of the experience working in identical roles, so they can match up to speed rapidly, with an immediate impact on the productivity. This is particularly beneficial if an organization needs to fill a position with certain roles and responsibilities based on a given deadline.

Reduction in time and cost of training: Overqualified candidates have already broad level of knowledge for the particular and specific job position as well as software used to perform the job effectively and efficiently in the position. This simply means that your team will be spending less time and resources training them on basic job duties.

Giving valuable inputs and ideas: Since overqualified candidates have worked in roles similar one or more advanced than the previous one, they may provide valuable ideas and inputs for contribution that they have gained and developed through their previous positions. These ideas and inputs may help in increasing efficiencies or boosting levels of productivity.

Enhancing the level of skill and abilities of rest of the team members: Overqualified candidates may have such wide sets of skill and experience levels that they have rich knowledge to share with their team members. They can teach those members new skills and abilities that result in increasing performance metrics in their own department or we can say throughout the entire organization.

Cons

Some common disadvantages of hiring overqualified candidates can include:

It increases turnover risk: Some candidates start positions as an experiment as they know they are overqualified for the post but decide to try out anyway to see if they may be a good fit or not. This experiment of them may result in job churn when the candidate decides to quit the position as it isn't a good fit after all.

Makes workforce feel less challenged: If overqualified candidates are working in the said roles, they feel they are overqualified, they may feel that the roles are not challenging, inspiring or motivating them enough which leads to a decrease in productivity.

Causes candidates to challenge training or guidance given by their supervisors: Some of the overqualified candidates may challenge or they are disagreeing with the guidance or instructions of provided by their supervisors, as they feel that their upper hand experience means they don't have to follow organizational hierarchy. There is a probability that will lead to a negative relationship between the employee and manager, which may impact performance and quality of work.

Creates negative atmosphere: Overqualified candidates who feel uninspired, unmotivated or unchallenged in their roles and may be less motivated to complete given tasks, which may lead to spread to rest of the team members. This can create a negative work atmosphere.

Requires higher pay scale: Since overqualified candidate's skill sets and experience levels are more advanced than that of required for the roles, candidates may ask for higher pay scales to properly compensate them for their levels of knowledge and qualifications, which may not be fit within your budget.

May expect faster promotion: Some employers typically hire the candidates for work in roles in which they are overqualified with the intention of eventually promoting them. Overqualified candidates may realize this and feel that they are entitled for the promotion without giving much efforts into earning it.

How will you decide whether hire or not to hire an overqualified candidate?

There are certain measures for a recruitment manager who needs to decide whether to hire or not to hire an overqualified candidate.

1. One has to communicate frankly

First of all, the recruitment manager has to lay down the requirements, expectations, deliverables, scope and nature of the job role, responsibilities and opportunities clearly.

For that one has to be open about any of the above-mentioned specific attributes of the job role and answer questions with absolute honesty and not for the sake of enticing the candidate to join your reputed organisation.

Moreover, hiring manager has to allow the candidate a fair amount of time to process, to analyse and to decide whether he/she wants to opt in for the said role or not.

2. Know the reason for the application of the candidate

If a candidate is applying for a role which is far lower than his/her qualifications, then there might be some underhand motive behind it.

Doing a background check is a viable option to rule out the possibility of emit from organisations or misconduct's incidents. Hiring manager has to try to find out if there is an expectation of some kind which the candidate is sheltering.

3. Suitability of culture

The main question is whether or not candidates will fit into the team or group and organisation is very crucial for the recruitment decision regardless of how good a person is at the job role.

The candidate's values should be in the alignment with that of the values of the organisations, otherwise it will result in conflict and frustration on each side. Assessment of blending of candidates into the culture is as equivalent as to assess the skill set.

Ways To Manage Overqualified Employees

Given below are the ways to the organizations for consideration to keep the overqualified candidates motivated and outperform:

1. Provide them more flexibility

The performance on the job of overqualified candidates may be enhanced by giving them higher flexibility in their respective job (Wu *et al.* 2015). With greater autonomy in their functions of job, they feel that they can positively influence their working environment. This will make them feel more valued in the organizations and likely to

contribute with their best positively as well as actively.

2. To place them together in teams or groups consisting of similar overqualified candidates.

Being in a same group of highly qualified candidates makes the overqualified employees interact and work more with others people at their level, and they will not find themselves out of the place. Peer group pressure also works on positive notes, reports Alfes (2013). In turn, this team can be given more challenging tasks.

3. Making the task more exciting by allotting assignments with more complexities

By allotting more advanced assignments within the job role, level of job satisfaction of overqualified candidates may be enhanced which may lead in higher performance, reports Maynard and Parfyonova (2013).

4. Vast Involvement in Process of Decision Making

Involvement of overqualified candidates in process of decision making and more consultation by their boss rather than just instructions about what to do gives them much more sense of having ownership which may bring positively in engaging them in the given task.

5. Giving Appreciation

The appreciation and recognition are the prime motivators for the extra efforts they put in the tasks for any employee more so for an overqualified employee. Most employees who get appreciation will go overboard beyond their roles and responsibilities of the job role.

6. Acceleration Of Their Career Before Stagnation

Though the overqualified candidates would have joined the organisations at lower-level job at initial stage because of various reasons, the organization must try to find out the jobs and opportunities that may have been created or to be opened in the near future within the organization for these overqualified candidates which may match their qualifications.

Final Thoughts

It seems childish and incompatible to me that hiring managers who are continuously complaining about the high volume of unqualified candidates are ready to weaken more their candidate pool by rejecting overqualified candidates. To reject someone because they have so much of what you desperately need seems at best irrational. However, I am not at all surprised at this kind of irrational behaviour because I came to know with the shared experiences of my as well as my friends in recruitment process that most of the hiring managers and some of the recruiters make decisions based on gut feelings and completely assumptions which are unproven and stereotypes nature.

If recruitment managers want to prove or disprove the value of recruiting the overqualified, just calculate the statistical correlation between excess qualifications and high turnover and weak performance. Otherwise, one can do as an alternative simply occasionally recruit a few overqualified candidates and directly track them whether they can perform above or below what is we can say average for new hires. To question this factor of rejection has become even more relevant as of lately because research done at organizations like Google have already demonstrated that other mostly relied on factors of recruitment say test scores, grades, brainteasers, and unstructured interviews in simply way have little predictive value when it literally comes to identify great recruitments. During a time where the underqualified candidates are a huge problem, it makes not at all economic sense to avoid those candidates whose only fault is that they are having "too many" qualifications!

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