



# A 6-step recruitment process to help ensure your next hire is a great decision!

By Julie Parker

**F**inding and hiring great people is a challenge that every dental practice faces. Some face it every few months and some, every few years. But, everyone is looking for that next perfect hire routinely over the life of their practice.

Hire slow and fire fast is sound advice that, in reality, is often reversed. An easy trap to fall into is to hire quickly to fill a gap in your team. The equally easy trap to fall into is to fire slow, dragging out the process, hoping the team member will eventually work out.

The more time you take to fire a team member who is not a good fit, the longer that person has a detrimental impact on your team and business.

Designing and crafting your recruitment process to filter out those who are not suited to your practice and to help you more clearly identify the perfect candidate is a prudent and valuable system to implement.

Each step in your recruitment process is an additional step in discovering more about each candidate. If your current process involves assessment of resumes, interviews, then making your selection, you are simply not giving yourself adequate opportunities to gather the evidence you need to select an appropriate candidate.

The following is a 6-Step Recruitment Process that you will find useful the next time you have an important hiring decision to make.

This 6-Step Recruitment Process is designed to progressively discover real evidence that applicants possess the skills and characteristics that your practice has determined to be important for the position you are looking to fill.

As your practice moves through the funnel, less-than-ideal candidates are filtered out so that by the time you reach the end of the process, you are left with someone whom you can have great confidence will be the best person for the job.

## 1. Resume

**A**lthough resumes can be biased and **A**shed only a positive light on the candidate, they do essentially provide effective, basic information.

Look for the obvious - years of experience in their field in the industry, loyalty at previous workplaces and skills they have developed.

In addition to this basic information, look for evidence of any charity work. It is a positive character trait to spend time working for a benefit other than money.

Being involved in a sporting or recreational club is a good indicator that this person is happy being part of a team. If they have taken a leadership role in any group or organisation, this is also a positive. If their prime hobbies are reading and bushwalking, you should be wary!

An important inclusion in candidates' resumes is the availability to access references. These will be useful later on in your recruitment process.

Candidates who pass through this first filter then progress to a telephone interview.

## 2. Telephone interview

**Y**ou can get a strong feel as to whether a candidate is favourable or not during a simple telephone conversation. Ask the candidate to tell you about their career so far. Tell them a short history of your practice. This discussion will reveal

evidence as to whether this candidate can build rapport, have a friendly nature, is well-spoken and a good listener: a person's communication style will reveal the level of self-confidence and ability to explain details and be understood.

Another key element that I advise you raise at this point in your recruitment process is money. Finding out early whether both sides are in the same arena financially is appropriate. At this early stage, you will not know what you are prepared to pay the person who fills the position because it will depend upon the degree to which the new employee possesses all the attributes you are seeking. Ask yourself the question, "*What is the least you would like to pay and the most you are willing to pay, for the right person?*" Ask your candidates, "*In terms of a wage, what is the least you are willing to accept and what is the most you are hoping to achieve?*" You will then be able to determine whether there is a cross-over in ranges.

Explain your hiring process to candidates so they understand and have clarity. Let them know that you will be moving through a series of steps over the coming days gathering evidence as to what degrees candidates possess the skills and attributes required for the role. With this evidence, you will be in a position to determine the right wages and conditions to offer to a candidate. This will be in the form of a formal letter-of-offer at the completion of the process to the successful candidate.

This telephone call is a highly effective filter in your recruitment process. You can identify those who are not a good fit at this early stage and helps you avoid time-wasting (for them and for you) with an in-person interview. Those who pass through this filter move on to the next step.

### 3. Personality profile

Personality profiles are becoming more common in many industries. Once you have identified the characteristics ideal for the role you are filling - for example, thoughtful, patient and supportive are a few of the traits desirable for a dental assistant role - you can ask applicants to complete an online personality profile to help you seek further evidence of this candidate's suitability.

There are many personality profiles available to choose from, each one offering slightly different insights into a person's personality. Many have free online tests that take only a few minutes to complete. For a higher-level hire, you can engage an external expert, who will not be costly.

Candidates who indicate they fulfill many of the qualities you are seeking are then moved through to the next step.

### 4. In-person interview

The in-person interview is your first opportunity to see how well a candidate presents themselves.

You are looking for someone who dresses professionally and is well-groomed. The candidate should exhibit self-confidence, positivity and effectively build rapport.

Ask the candidate questions that you can later cross-check with supplied references, such as, "How punctual were you at your last workplace? How often did you run late for work?" and "Tell me about a time when someone criticised your work. What was your response and assessment of the situation?" Cross-checking this information will provide an indication as to the candidate's honesty in answering direct questions.

The following is a series of questions that are designed to reveal specific characteristics of candidates that will definitely assist you in determining whether they filter through to the next stage of the 6-Step Recruitment Process.

- Why does this position appeal to you?
- What was the reason you left your last workplace?
- What additional skills did you learn at your last workplace?
- What do you like most about your role?
- What do you like least about your role?

*Thinking about your previous workplaces, which was the best in terms of team harmony? What worked well?*

*Thinking about your previous workplaces, think of one that had a problem with team harmony. What didn't work well?*

*How do you think a conflict could be resolved between two team members?*

*If you were to tell a trainee DA that she is leaving debris behind on instruments and needs to improve in this area, how would you go about it?*

*If a patient complained about the service, how would you manage it?*

*Describe any career goals that you have for your future.*

*What benefits are you hoping to enjoy with this new role?*

*What drawbacks would you like to avoid by leaving your last practice?*

Candidates whose responses are aligned with the character of someone that would fit in well with your team and culture move onto the next step in the process.

### 5. Reference checks

It's not unusual for a reference-check telephone call to last just a few short minutes. However, speaking with people who have actually worked with a candidate is a unique opportunity to gather a lot of valuable information.

Check the details of their employment for accuracy, for example, their longevity in the position and their responsibilities. This can be an indicator of honesty in the candidate's resume.

Ask the cross-check questions of:

*How punctual was this candidate? How often did they arrive late to work?*

*How did the candidate respond to feedback about performance?*

Here are some more excellent questions to gather as much useful data as possible:

*What was it like to work with this candidate?*

*Did the candidate get along well with team members?*

*Was the candidate an effective communicator and relationship-builder with patients?*

*Could you delegate tasks and have them completed successfully?*

*Were they open to learning new things? Were they a slow or quick learner?"*

*Were they caring and empathic with patients and co-workers?*

*If you had a position open, would you hire this person again?*

After moving through the previous five steps of the 6-Step Recruitment Process, you will likely have a clear idea of which candidate you have selected. As a final check, move this candidate through to the final stage.

### 6. Final interview

This final interview does not need to be lengthy. Just 10 to 30 minutes. However, the goal is clear: to check for consistency of character. I have often found a positive applicant to appear quite differently at a subsequent interview. Use this meeting to also clarify the expectations of the practice and answer any questions the candidate has considered.

If you and any colleagues who are involved with the final interview are happy with this candidate and agree to offer the position, craft and send your letter of offer. This letter can include, or be the Employment Agreement or Contract. It will include the wage you are offering, whether or not this is starting at a base rate that will then increase based on performance in the role and the specific hours and days of work.

Finding and hiring the right person is just the beginning. The next step is to onboard your new team member in a manner that gives every chance to deliver best performance and success.

The hiring process and the onboarding of new staff are both topics that have been discussed at length on the JPPS Lunch 'n Learn's - episodes 61 and 62, part of *The Club* membership. These episodes also include the JPPS Staff Hire Guide and our Onboarding Process downloads that you will find most helpful. Go to the following link and discover how this great Club can assist your practice in so many ways: [julieparkerpracticesuccess.com/the-club](http://julieparkerpracticesuccess.com/the-club)

### About the author

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