

How to hire the right person

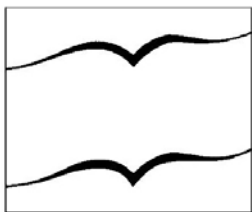
A Guide for Employers

PEI Literacy Alliance
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How to hire the right person

| Table of Contents | Page |
|--|------|
| Part 1 - Introduction | 2 |
| Part 2 - Job Description | 4 |
| Part 3 - Job Ad | 5 |
| Part 4 - Preparing for the Interview | 6 |
| Part 5 - Evaluating Interviewees and What to do During the Interview | 8 |
| Appendix A - Essential Skills Activity Sheet | 10 |
| Appendix B - Job Description Example | 12 |
| Appendix C - Job Ad Example | 13 |

We have created a 5-part video series with the same information in this guide. Visit our website www.peiliteracy.ca/hiring or YouTube PEI Literacy channel to view them.



**PEI
Literacy
Alliance**

www.peiliteracy.ca/hiring



PEI Literacy Channel

Part 1 - Introduction

Hiring the right person will help your company or organization grow. The wrong person, could cost you time and money, not to mention frustration. To hire the right person, it is important to give yourself time to plan and implement a sound approach. One of the top mistakes businesses make is not spending enough time on the hiring process.

There are two writing techniques that will help you organize your thoughts, communicate your message clearly, and engage the right applicants. They are:

1. Writing in plain language
2. Using the 9 essential skills defined by the Government of Canada

1. Writing plain language

Readers will appreciate getting the information in a fast and concise way and will clearly understand what you are looking for. This will save you time as there will be fewer misunderstandings and better communication between you and the prospective applicant. Here are the 10 principles to writing in plain language:

1. Use active voice
2. Write directly to your reader
3. Use a positive language whenever possible
4. Use common words rather than technical jargon
5. Use short words and short sentences
6. Don't change verbs into nouns
7. List important points separate from the text
8. Write instructions in the order that you want them carried out
9. List items in a parallel form
10. Test what you write

To learn more about writing in plain language, visit our website at www.peiliteracy.ca/hiring and download our free guide to writing in plain language.

2. Using the 9 Essential Skills as defined by the Government of Canada

Many workplaces are now using the 9 Essential Skills as a framework for their hiring, training and retention plans. If you go onto the Government of Canada's Job Bank site, you'll notice every job posted lists the Essential Skills needed for that job.

This list of skills will help you decide which are most important for the job and what you need to look for in a new employee.

The 9 Essential Skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Thinking Skills (job task planning, decision making, critical thinking)
- Computer Use
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

To learn more about the essential skills visit www.peiliteracy.ca/hiring

Part 2 - Job Description

The first step to getting the best employee is to write a good job description. It will help you focus on what you're looking for and it will help the right person choose you.

You will need to think about and decide what job tasks this new employee will have. To do these tasks, what skills must they have and what skills are you willing to train on the job? What experience do you hope they bring with them? What type of personal attributes are important ?

Benefits of a job description:

- clarifies what you are looking for
- gives you a basis for an effective and "thought-through" hiring process
- helps you write an effective job ad
- helps you write effective interview questions
- helps you evaluate job performance
- helps you identify skills gaps
- helps you establish pay rates between two or more positions by comparing work of the positions and their value to the organization

We have created an Essential Skills Activity Sheet to help you with this initial brainstorming (See appendix A).

It is a chart for you to fill out. It outlines the 9 Essential Skills defined by Service Canada to help you decide which skills are most important to the job. Filling out the chart will also help you organize your thoughts about what experience, education and personal attributes you are looking for.

Job Description Checklist

- Title of position
- Work conditions (hours, location, overtime, paid or unpaid lunch, noise, heavy lifting, travel, etc.)
- Key job responsibilities or duties
- Reporting relationship within company or organization
- Employment requirements (skills, education and experience)

Use the Essential Skills Activity Sheet (Appendix A) and the Job Description Checklist (above) to help you write the first draft of the job description. Remember to write in plain language.

A well-crafted job description helps you attract the candidates you want, but as importantly, helps weed out the candidates you don't want. That saves you time.

Please see our example of a job description (Appendix B).

Part 3 - Job Ad

Now that you have created your job description you are ready to create a job ad. Your job description has all the information you need.

The aim of your job ad is:

- to create interest in and desire for the job
- to set out essential qualifications and desired attributes for the job
- to encourage people to apply for the job

The job is your product. Readers of the job ad are your potential customers. The aim of the job ad is to attract interest, communicate quickly and clearly the essential points, and to provide a clear response process.

The ad should have clarity of text and layout, and convey a professional image. Branding should be present but not overbearing, and must not dominate the job ad itself. Remember to use the principles of plain language discussed in Part 1: Introduction.

If readers are clear about what you want in a successful applicant, they can screen themselves out or in. It is better to have fewer high quality applications, than many low quality or inappropriate applications.

Job Ad checklist

- Company name or logo - branding
- Headline - job title
- Summary of Job description
- What is unique or interesting or challenging about this job?
- Employment Requirements
- Conditions of employment - it is a good idea not to say too much about this except for particular things, like if the job involves shift work
- Link to the job description on your website
- How people can apply and the deadline for applications. Be specific. This will give you some insight. You will know who read and followed the instructions - an important quality for many jobs.

Please view our Job Ad example (Appendix C)

Part 4 - Preparing for the Interview

Good job interview methods will increase the chances of a good hire. Poor job interview methods result in a poor selection, which will end up wasting management time, increasing staff turnover and costing you money. The best interviews are well prepared and based on sound job descriptions and job ads.

Here are some interview planning tips:

- **Decide who you will interview.** Follow the listing of qualifications and attributes set out in the job ad as a check list when reviewing each resume and cover letter. For essential qualifications, i.e., those a candidate must have, there can be only two possible results, yes or no. If the application is unclear about whether the candidate has the qualification (eg., 5 years experience), set the application aside and come back to it later if you are otherwise satisfied the application meets the other requirements.

For desired (but not essential) qualifications you listed, rate the qualification explained in the cover letter or resume. You could use a simple 1-3 scale (1-poor, 2-average, 3-high) and rate how well each candidate explained his or her qualifications for the job

- **Plan your questions.** It is important to plan your interview questions ahead of time. Use your job description and think about what questions you can ask to find out if the interviewee has the skills, attributes, and experience necessary to do the job. Ask open ended questions, like "How" and "What" and "Describe".
- **Focus on 'good' interview questions** rather than 'tough' ones. Interviews should not place unnecessary pressure on interviewees, because people tend to withdraw and become defensive under pressure. We learn more about people when they relax. Good interview questions encourage interviewees to think about themselves and to give the interviewer clear and revealing information. High pressure causes people to clam up and rarely exposes hidden issues. Calm, relaxed, gentle, and clever questions are far more revealing.
- **Decide on how you will evaluate each interviewee in a systematic way.** You could use a simple 1-3 scale (1-poor, 2-average, 3-high) and rate how each candidate answers each question and then compare. You may also want to consider applying varying weightings to different questions depending on how important each is to success in the position.
- **Create an interview process** Decide how you will start and end the interview, when you'll explain the details of your organization and the job, and in what order you will ask the interview questions. Follow your planned interview process as closely as you can for each interview.
- **Plan the environment.** A relaxed, private place with no interruptions is the best environment for an interview. Ensure the candidate is looked after while they wait. Arrange the seating in an informal relaxed way. Don't sit behind a

desk directly facing the interviewee. Instead, sit around a coffee table or meeting room table. Make sure the room is tidy and well organized. This shows that you respect the situation and interviewee.

- **Review each candidate's resume.** Before each interview, give yourself 5 minutes to review the candidate's resume and cover letter. This shows the candidate that you are well prepared and organized and helps you identify any areas you may want more information on during the interview. An in-depth review of the resume and cover letter should have been done during the selection process.

Summary of Interview Planning Tips:

- Decide who you will interview
- Plan your questions
- *Focus* on 'good' interview questions
- Decide on how you will evaluate each interviewee in a systematic way
- Create an interview process
- Plan the environment
- Review each candidate's resume

Part 5 - Evaluating the Interviewee and What to do During the Interview

Here are some tips:

- **Put the candidate at ease.** It is stressful for them, so try to ease the tension and break the ice. Tell each candidate that you are glad to meet them and express your appreciation that they have come in for an interview. Use this time to explain the interview procedure – and then follow that format as closely as you can.
- **Follow the interview process** that you have thought out and planned ahead of time.
- **Make sure the interviewee does 90% of the talking.** Ask prompt questions or reword questions when needed.
- **Give interviewees opportunities to ask their own questions.** Questions interviewees ask are often revealing. They also help good candidates to demonstrate their worth, especially if they did not have the chance to show their real capability and potential during the interview.
- **Listen to your instincts.** Some candidates seem too good to be true, while others seem to lack the skills you need. As you assess the interview, be honest about your interviewing performance as well as the candidate's performance. It may be that you need to pose more pointed questions or ask about different experiences. However, that said, a person's ability to do a job will not change, no matter what questions you ask.
- **Manage your time.** Do your best to stick with the schedule set aside for the meeting. However, you should be prepared to jump straight to the conclusion questions if the candidate is not qualified. There is no point wasting time if the candidate is not a good match for the job.
- **Write it down.** No matter what you think, you will not remember everything that is said during an interview. Take notes so that your memory will be triggered when it's time to review the meeting. The more people you interview for the position, the more important note-taking becomes.

Notes, as well as the job description and job ad, become essential should an unsuccessful candidate decide to file a human rights complaint of discrimination.

- **Use your rating system** that you developed when planning your questions. See part 4 of *How to Hire the Right Person*.
- **Don't forget that you are being interviewed as well.** You must be aware of the impression you are making on the candidate. You are trying to sell yourself, the company, and the job to the candidates just as they are selling themselves to you. Be ready to talk about the company and the position. The more you know, the better, since the candidates will depend on you to educate them.

Remember to:

- hire people for their capabilities and not their credentials—just because someone has a piece of paper doesn't mean they have the skills needed to succeed
- hire people who have the ability to learn and adapt—as your business changes it is important to have staff who can adapt and learn new skills as needed
- hire people who have great character and motivation—they will attract more of the same people

Appendix A: Essential Skills Activity Sheet

Directions

1. List all the job tasks you see this new employee doing in the Job Tasks Column
2. In the *Skills Column*, list the Essential Skill(s) needed for each Job Task you listed. Use the Essential Skills definitions below to choose the right skill.
3. In the *Level Column*, try to rate the level of skills needed. We use a one to three scale, one being basic skill, two being average skill, and three being high skill. This will help you determine which skills are most important to this job.
4. Looking at each skill, think about what experience, education or personality someone would have that would show they have these skills. Mark an X under *Experience, Education or Personal Attributes*.

| Job Tasks | Skills | Level | Experience | Education | Personal Attributes |
|--|---|-------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Example Giving presentations | Oral communication skills & Thinking Skills | 3 | √ | | √ |
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The 9 Essential Skills as defined by the Government of Canada

Reading

- forms and labels if they contain at least one paragraph
- print and non-print media (for example, text on computer screens)
- paragraph-length text in charts, tables and graphs

Writing

- writing texts and writing in documents (for example, filling in forms)
- non-paper-based writing (for example, typing on a computer)

Document Use

- print and non-print media (for example, computer screens, equipment gauges, clocks and flags)
- reading, interpreting, writing, completing, and producing of documents. (e.g., completing a form, checking off items on a list of tasks, plotting information on a graph, and entering information on an activity schedule)

Numeracy (math)

- use of numbers and thinking in quantitative terms

Thinking Skills

- problem solving
- decision making
- critical thinking
- job task planning and organizing
- significant use of memory
- finding information

Computer Use

- send emails, use software programs, search for information online and evaluate that information

Oral communication

- the use of speech to give and exchange thoughts and information

Working with Others

- work with others to carry out their tasks

Continuous Learning

- training in job-related health and safety
- obtaining and updating credentials
- learning about new equipment, procedures, products and services

Appendix B - Job Description Example

Summer Tutor

Duration: 10 full-time weeks beginning June 17th, 2001

Location: Various libraries across PEI

Employer: PEI Literacy Alliance

Reports to: Program Coordinator

Deadline to apply: May 1st, 2001

Summer Tutor Job Description:

As a tutor, you will tutor about 30 students one-on-one each week. For the most part you will be working independently in a library setting. You will have a tutor tool kit with all the supplies you will need for the summer. You will also have a referral sheet for each student that will tell you what each student needs to work on and other important information. You will be working in two to three libraries and therefore are required to travel.

You will be responsible to:

- attend all orientation and training days
- organize your own schedule and coordinating it with the libraries' and parents' schedules
- meet with resource teachers from each of the schools your students attend
- develop unique lesson plans for each student
- report to your supervisor regularly
- maintain a good relationship with the library staff
- maintain good communication with parents about what you are working on with their children and how their child is doing
- write final reports for each child at the end of the summer
- submit timesheets and mileage sheets bi-weekly to your supervisor

Requirements:

- You are willing to travel and have access to a vehicle

Qualifications:

- Experience working with children ages 5 to 12
- Excellent organizational skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent problem solving skills
- Strong ability to work independently
- Strong ability to be creative and innovative

Assets:

- Ability to tutor French students in grades 1 to 6 would be an asset
- Knowledge of effective literacy teaching strategies would be an asset
- Experience working with children with learning disabilities would be an asset

How to apply:

Submit a **cover letter**, **resume** and **two written reference letters**. Put these items into one envelope and mail to PEI Literacy Alliance, PO Box 20107, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 9E3. For more information call (902) 368-1810.

Are you looking for a job where you can make a difference?

We are hiring a Program Coordinator.

Here is your opportunity to join our small but dynamic team. Our vision is that all Islanders are able to participate fully in their family, work and community. Our work focuses on promoting literacy across PEI.

You will be responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing programs and projects.

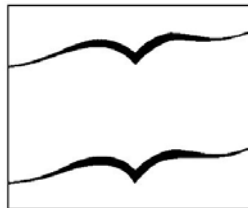
As the ideal candidate, you will have excellent reading and writing skills, document skills, thinking skills, oral communication skills, and computer use skills. You are a fast learner and are adaptable. You have a strong work ethic and are able work independently as well as collaboratively.

This position is full-time for one year starting February 26, 2007. Our office hours are Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. We offer a competitive salary and benefits.

For a full job description, please visit our website at www.peiliteracy.ca

Please apply by 4pm on February 10, 2007, by mailing a cover letter and resume to:

Attn: Hiring Committee
PEI Literacy Alliance
PO Box 20107
Charlottetown PE
C1A 9E3



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