

GOOGLE'S HIRING TECHNIQUES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THEM?



As of 2010, Google had over 24,000 employees worldwide. We know that they've only grown in the three years since, but how and where does Google find all their employees? What makes someone Google-worthy material? *Fortune* named Google the "Best Company to Work For" in 2012, a year in which they made a record 8,067 hires. How do they do it?

Google relies on recruiters to find most of their talent. They haven't released any official numbers on how many active recruiters they have since 2009, when they had around 400. Some estimates put Google at close to 1,000 recruiters, with around 300 being full-time employees and another 600 as contractors. More conservative guesses posit that Google has around 500 recruiters. Google's philosophy is that they want to attract the "best of the best," which means that they need lots of motivated, enthusiastic people to go out and find people like them. This logic is predicated on the assumption that a really great engineer (or, insert discipline here) is worth many times more than the average one, so expending lots of effort on finding those perfectly talented individuals pays off in a big way over time.

According to Google's hiring website, they look for people who are "good at lots of things," who can keep up with a work environment moving "at Internet speed" (we're assuming Google threw out their dial up modem before declaring that), and that have a nimble mind. They aim to hire people who are going to be good in the long-term, not just on immediate projects. This means that Google wants to hire people who are smart and who both desire and already possess the ability to learn new skills as needs arise. Since the tech industry is in a permanent state of change, anyone hired to be a long-term investment necessarily has to be able to roll with the punches and keep their skills sharp and current.

The first step in the actual hiring process is the application. Google suggests that prospective employees include accurate and relevant information about their educational background and work experience. Applicants should explain how their experience fits with the position in question. If Google likes what they receive, the potential employee is then contacted by a recruiter to arrange an interview. Google's interview process includes a manager and a peer interview and they consider feedback from both groups when making a hiring decision. They do this because they want to ensure that new employees will get along well in Google's team-centric environment. They also have at least one person from another department entirely review everything before hiring someone to make sure that the potential employee is a good fit for Google overall.

In the interview process, Google looks for leadership, subject knowledge, how people think, and "Googlyness." This means that they think about how potential employees have worked in different situations, if they really know what they say they know (Google is not afraid to ask some tough tech questions in interviews. As they say, "be prepared to substantiate anything you put on a resume", demonstrate that you're good at using your brain to solve problems, and show that you will really fit in at Google.

For other groups looking to emulate Google's hiring model, there are a few lessons. Although you might not have the budget (or the interest) in having hundreds of recruiters at your beck and call, you can still work to find top talent. You might hire a dedicated recruiter or contract a recruitment agency who fully understands your institutional goals. When considering resumes and applicants, look for people with diverse skillsets because that indicates a willingness to learn and a certain enthusiasm that you can likely leverage to the benefit of your business. Think about how a new person will fit into the office culture and if he or she will be a personality that meshes well with the ones you already have. Finally, don't be afraid to ask people tough questions in an interview to make sure they actually know what they say they know. Recruiting boldly and engaging thoroughly and honestly with all your candidates, you too can find top talent for your company.

Angie Picardo is a writer for NerdWallet, a financial literacy website where you can find information on topics from how to better leverage your company's finances and better set your personal financial goals.

Do you want to work for Google? [Click here](#) to see their current openings.