



Recession ROI

By Charlie Wonderlic

Test,
test,
test.

These days, it doesn't matter if you're hiring, training new employees, re-training existing employees, or a combination of the above, it's all about one thing: ROI. That's return on investment. Whatever the expense you incur, be it minimal or large; whatever the amount effort you expend, be it hours, days, weeks, or months of time and energy, it must be justified by how much return it brings into the company in the end. And more often than not, it means getting the most return for the least investment. This is true now, in this recovering economy, more than ever before.

Hiring

It's crucial to find the best fit for the job quickly and efficiently. To do that:

- Evaluate whether or not you really need to fill the open position—or if you need more than one person to fill it. Just because your company has always had seven marketing professionals on staff doesn't mean that number is cast in stone. Take a careful look at the department's overall goals and how many people it takes to deliver them. It could be you don't need to replace your exiting employee, or it might mean you need two people to do the job.
- Consider part-time, at-home, or flex-time workers. All of the above can save the company money in terms of benefits, salary, and even taxes. But it's crucial to test these employees for the character traits necessary to work autonomously.

- Streamline processes and procedures. Automate what you can. Don't wade through the mountain of resumes by hand—let an online system do it for you in order to weed out unqualified candidates before the interview process begins.
- **Test, test, test.** If they meet your minimum qualifications, test them right away for the aptitude, intelligence, and personality traits necessary to do the job. You want to fill those open positions with the best possible candidates the first time around in order to avoid the catastrophe of expense, time, and wasted productivity that comes with a bad hire.

Training

As crucial as it is to get the right people in the right jobs, it's just as crucial to train them well, efficiently, and sufficiently.

- Take a hard look at your current training programs. Can any of your programs or courses be improved, streamlined, or combined? Are you getting the most bang for your training buck? Are there online courses that might supplement or replace classroom-based courses, thus saving time and travel expenses for trainees?
- Do you have concrete, measurable objectives for each course? If not, how can you justify the expense? A training course, whether it's a 15-minute online tutorial or a weeklong class, must ultimately mean something to your company. If you don't have measurable

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objectives, start by working with end goals. What is this particular course supposed to accomplish? How can you tell it has accomplished those goals? Are you looking for fewer mistakes by the sales staff? Increased performance by marketing? When you realize exactly what you're trying to achieve with each course, it's a shortcut toward coming up with clear-cut, measurable objectives that prove the return on investment for each course.

- Refresh. One key to successful training is the refreshment of the learned skills. Give employees an opportunity to brush up on what they've learned, even if it's just with a short email reminder outlining the major lessons of the course sent periodically after the training has concluded.