

## Five common mistakes when hiring interim managers

Hiring an experienced professional interim manager is an excellent choice for businesses looking to quickly engage talented, experienced specialists in a flexible way.

Interim managers and independent consultants can solve a wide range of challenges in business from providing subject matter expertise and project/program management capabilities, through to help with continuity when covering a senior role.

### 1. Hiring someone who isn't a professional interim

There are people who are on the interim job market through situational circumstances rather than choice, and while it can be enticing as they are immediately available, they are there because they are entertaining interim work while ideally looking for a permanent role.

While these professionals may have the relevant skills to complete an interim role, and to an inexperienced hiring manager their CV may look less 'jumpy', the commitment to completing an interim assignment should be paramount. A commitment which is often challenging to secure if the individual's true preference is to find a permanent or long-term role.

For organisations, this can mean an increased risk when it comes to refilling part-completed assignments should the individual find that desired permanent role.

It is always advisable to engage a professional interim manager and use the professional 'tool box' that individual has for interim assignments. One key skill from the 'tool box' from experienced interim managers is quickly getting up to speed on new projects in new organisations.

### 2. Calculating interim day rates using permanent salaries

A classic error people who are not used to engaging interims effectively make is taking a permanent annual salary of an equivalent staff member in their organisational structure and dividing it by 240 to get a day rate.

What must be taken into account is the complete cost for the project or assignment and what the successful completion is worth to the business. Often more importantly, what are the risks associated with the assignment not being completed satisfactorily and on schedule.

An interim manager should be seen as a defined investment with clear outcomes to be achieved during the assignment and within clear time scales. Daily rates should be compared to the costs of similarly experienced resources from a consultancy to give a clearer indication of the value interim managers can bring.

In the words of Red Adair; 'if you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur.'

### 3. Not clearly defining what you expect the interim to achieve during assignment

A common mistake made is hiring an interim manager without firms goals or objectives in place.

While many interim roles evolve, it is important for all parties to have a clear understanding of the expected outputs. Having this outset in the beginning can also help to narrow your search when hiring an experienced interim manager.

These goals must be reviewed regularly and clearly documented. If you use a good interim service provider they should play an active role in this ongoing management of the assignment and expectations.

### 4. Going through a permanent interview process to engage an interim manager

While it may be necessary in some cases to have multiple meetings with an interim manager before hiring them for the role, this should be the exception rather than the rule.

In most cases one well-crafted meeting should give you everything you need to make a decision.

If engaging a professional from an audit firm or consultancy you wouldn't expect to read that individual's cv and interview them before they arrived on your project. Instead you would be interested to know their relevant experience and profile.

A similar mind-set should be taken with interim hires and you should have that trust in your interim services provider to put forward the right people.

A good interim service provider will add value in selecting and pre-screening the best individual/s to complete and commit to your assignment.

If you are not confident that the individual/s you are meeting with are of the right calibre and feel the need to extend the interview process, you should potentially evaluate your interim service provider partner.

### 5. Interviewing the interim manager as you would a permanent candidate

This is a common mistake which can often mean business don't end up selecting the best person to complete the interim assignment as effectively as possible.

While engaging someone who can work with the wider team is important, an interim manager is there to do a defined job as effectively as possible, and does not necessarily need to have the same level of 'team fit' that you require from a permanent hire.

When you engage an interim manager you are hiring them for their expertise and best practice experience, not if they have the propensity to develop in the future.

Here are some fundamental questions to ask yourself before making an interim hire:

- Has this person completed a very similar role in the past in a relevant environment and is there evidence to confirm it being completed well?
- Would they be able to work with the team for the purposes of the assignment?
- Are they available for the duration of the assignment and am I assured that they would commit to the assignment?
- Is this person a professional interim (ideally, not looking for a permanent role in the near future)?
- Does the daily rate demonstrate value and will the business achieve a Return on investment (ROI) if the outputs are met within the time frames agreed?

If the answers to the above questions are 'yes' then you can confidently proceed with the hire.

Again a good interim service provider should provide a framework for these meetings and help you make your decision based on the above factors.

Hiring a good interim manager effectively can supercharge your team or organisation, a bad hire can be costly and time consuming.