

# Hiring Process and Problems in a State System

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# State System

- Good
  - Job security
  - Often decent benefits package
  - Can be lower stress
  - Contingent upon state employer to provide resources
  - Potentially greater resource access – to university, other specialists, libraries, classes/training, IT resources, etc.
- Bad
  - Lower relative wages, especially for starting positions
  - Limited rewards or incentives
  - Can be hard to keep good employees
  - Can be difficult to get rid of marginal employees
  - Large/complex systems that can be slow to change

# Hiring Process

- Generally pretty slow
- Rarely any overlap
  - *Someone retires/leaves, someone is hired to fill position*
- Passive
  - Mostly people visiting website, providing information/resumes, but not actively targeting or recruiting employees
- Some directly apply for position while others are found through query (*i.e. provide search criteria*)
  - Education, years or type of experience, other defined search criteria
- Large pool - can be many (*or no*) candidates that meet the defined criteria
- Will pull everyone meeting criteria, so can have PhD candidates for a “glassware washing” position

# Some Obstacles

- Probably not enough pay/resources to attract a well-qualified candidate
- If anything, state may serve as a training ground for other departments or companies that offer better pay
- Best way to advance is to move around, so retaining an exceptional employee can be a challenging
- “Well-defined” position descriptions (PD), so requiring someone to do something outside their PD can be a challenge
- Limited in-depth cross-training due to “fixed” positions

# Theories

1. Documented and updated/current SOP's are of vital importance
2. Demonstration of proficiency is also important
3. Common problem with just SOP approach
  - Works fine to train new or different employee **IF EVERYTHING IS WORKING PROPERLY**
  - Generally very weak on trouble shooting or problem solving, especially for complex operations
4. SOP's are helpful and important, but alone do not guarantee an employee's or companies success

# Some Current Challenges?

- Lots of retirements of long-term employees
- Narrow pool of qualified candidates, with most having limited or no direct experience
- Question - is this something new or have expectations changed?
  - *Were you asked to be an expert right away, or did you grow into your position?*
  - *e.g. - How long does it take to get to know a LECO combustion unit?*
- Mentoring is becoming less commonplace
- Few good sources of training
  - Vendor training is great, but often generalized

# Continued

- Some educational programs/institutions are focusing more on academic learning and less on “hands-on”
  - Producing smart chemists, with little or no instrument training
- Lab managers and staff are being pulled into more paperwork and/or administrative functions
  - Documentation for QA, certification programs and audits
- Can be a cultural shift between senior managers and new employees
  - Many distractions (phones, texting, emails, etc.)
  - Time and/or interest in thinking carefully, focusing intently, and reflecting quietly is rapidly declining

Solutions?

Comments?

Questions?

Other Experiences?