

10 Questions to Ask Before Making Your First Hire

By Alina Dizik

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You've launched your business, and it's beginning to expand. Now, you're ready to make your first hire--but don't be too hasty.

"It is easy to just want to fill that first slot and get things rolling," says Barbara Tallent, a serial entrepreneur and an advisor to Astia, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that runs programs for female entrepreneurs. "The wrong employee can become a huge burden for you and drag subsequent employees down as well."

Not sure where to start? Here are 10 questions to ask before deciding to hire your first employee:

Do you need to delegate some of your tasks?

To keep your eye on strategic matters, you can't be weighed down by too many mundane tasks. Ask yourself if you've reached that point with your startup and need to start delegating some of the work. The right hire can assume responsibility for everything from cleaning to shipping to dealing with social media, says Gregory Bier, director of the University of Missouri's Entrepreneurship Alliance, which tries to foster entrepreneurship at the school.

Do you have a defined role to fill?

Don't advertise a vague job title. Instead, take time to come up with a job description that spells out the specific responsibilities of the new employee. That will help ensure that you pick a truly qualified candidate. Also, the more detailed the job description, the easier it will be for you to set benchmarks to measure the new hire's performance.

Could an independent contractor be just as effective?

Rather than committing to a full-time hire--with a regular salary and benefits--some businesses are better off retaining someone on a freelance or contract basis, says George Deeb, managing partner at Red Rocket Ventures, a consultancy that advises startups in Chicago. If an executive assistant can easily handle the tasks you need help with, such as scheduling or bookkeeping, then a contract worker may be a good call.

Can your network help you find your employee?

Hiring an employee recommended by someone you trust in your network can take away much of the uncertainty and increase the chances for a successful fit, Tallent says. So, check to see if you have connections on social media sites, including Facebook and LinkedIn, who could recommend a candidate--or even who could be your first hire.

Read the full article: www.entrepreneur.com

Alina Dizik is a freelance journalist and writer based in New York City. Her work has been published in The Wall Street Journal, iVillage, More magazine, The Knot, BusinessWeek and the Financial Times.