

Reduce Turnover With Standardized Employee Hiring

Books-A-Million improved its turnover and reduced newspaper ad costs with a hiring solution integrated with its Web site.

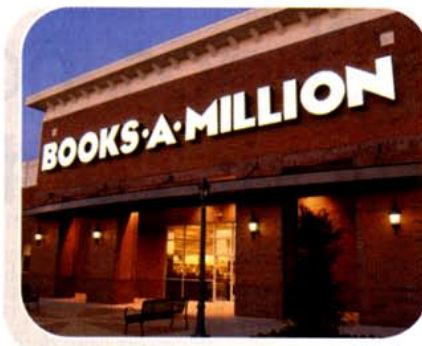
by Laurie Pasquerell

Keeping turnover low is especially tricky at large retailers, such as Books-A-Million, Inc., which has more than 200 retail stores. Additionally, it sells through its Web site and two wholesale distribution companies. It employs more than 4,000 people at any one time, so hiring part- and full-time employees that uphold the company standards and remain employed with the company for a fair duration is challenging.

"We were spending a lot of money on newspaper ads, which were time-consuming to publish," says Dennis Lyons, senior VP of operations at Books-A-Million. "Besides, these ads did not attract the highest quality bookstore candidates. This led to higher turnover than we consider acceptable. Additionally, to avoid penalties during HR audits, we wanted to improve compliance in the completion of government forms when new employees were hired. This was difficult to control due to the number of locations handling the paperwork and transferring documents to our corporate office."

Lyons formed a cross-functional team including employees from the store operations, HR, IT, and loss prevention departments. The team implemented the Taleo Enterprise Edition, a talent management system, which allows candidates to complete the necessary paperwork to apply for a job online. The Taleo solution also enables

Books-A-Million to assess, acquire, and develop salaried professionals, hourly employees, and contingent workers with the store's specific retail environment. The software includes a compliance module designed to



Books-A-Million improves turnover with a talent management system identifying quality candidates.

address affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, Sarbanes-Oxley, and other regulatory requirements.

Gain Access To The Best Retail Candidates

"The Taleo solution provides us with a competitive advantage, not only against our competitors, but versus other forms of big-box retailers battling over the same group of applicants," says Lyons. "The key business issue for us is to source the best retail candidates in a competitive, high-turnover environment. We solve this by gaining access to the best retail candidates using Taleo, then narrowing the field to those

best suited for the bookstore environment. It's important for Books-A-Million's associates to love books, so they can truly connect with our customers and their reading interests. Additionally, the little advertising we do is done through online sites that integrate with the Taleo system."

The Taleo solution finds those best suited to work at a bookstore by using the Web interface to track applicant data, as well as using the candidate assessment tool, specifically designed for Books-A-Million, that identifies applicants that are passionate about books and reading. This is accomplished by requiring applicants to answer a series of pointed questions.

"The Taleo solution has reduced turnover and improved our employee hiring paperwork compliance," says Lyons. "We are seeing more technically-savvy, educated associates who enjoy working in a bookstore over other types of retail stores." Furthermore, Books-A-Million recently integrated the Taleo system with an automated background check system from Accurate Background, Inc. It also intends to enable a paperless collection of HR forms, specifically the I-9, collected immediately after hiring. □

For More Information On Taleo
Go To www.taleo.com