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## Ready to hold a behavioral health job fair? 4 things to keep in mind

The behavioral health industry is [experiencing a level of growth](#) that isn't being seen in other industries. In 2014, there were more than 14,000 addiction treatment facilities, and 2.5 million people received treatment; more need it each year, but most facilities are filled to capacity. In response, countless new facilities are opening and larger organizations are opening new locations.

To operate at peak performance, the right people need to be in place when the doors open. And those employees can range from highly skilled, credentialed individuals, like medical directors, addiction counselors, nurse practitioners and lab technicians, to cooks, dishwashers and security guards.

A job fair could be the best way to meet, interview and hire the people you need, quickly. Some may believe that with the advances in technology and social media, job fairs are obsolete. But that's far from the truth. In one afternoon (or more if you hold it over several days), hiring organizations can meet hundreds of diverse candidates, as each company representative can meet dozens of individuals.

This ability to interact with many people in a short period can be even more helpful if you're in a challenging geographic area. What if you need to staff a facility and can't relocate employees to fill positions and advertising could take a longer than you have or you're new to an area and have no existing network from which to pull from? Job fairs can kindle a large amount of interest, quickly, while getting your organization some brand awareness. You get your name out there, encourage talented job seekers to consider you (even those who may not be looking) and have a conversation with real people, rather than just waiting for resumes.

From the job seeker's perspective, job fairs are great for networking and learning about a company, including what it's like to work for them. They're also a great opportunity for them to make that face-to-face first impression that doesn't come across in a resume.

Job fairs can be the perfect way to find the volume of people you need. Here are a few things to think about before you open the doors to your first, or next, job fair.



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## Who do you need to hire?

Of course, you need bodies, and probably fast, but whom do you need? What will they be doing? What types of skills must they have to be successful? Your employees are some of your organization's most important assets; it's critical you hire the right ones at the start. Hire wrong, and you risk losing time and money and damaging your reputation.

You'll need accurate, complete job descriptions for each role you're looking to fill. The descriptions should balance between responsibilities, skills, education, credentials and those hard-to-quantify attributes that are critical for success, like getting along well with people or having the personality and physical strength to manage belligerent patients. Know whom you need, before you go looking for them.

As an aside, be sure your employees attending the job fair (more on them below), have seen the descriptions and truly understand the types of people they're looking for.

## Where will you hold it?

Are you in a facility without a room appropriate for a job fair? Or perhaps you're building a new facility and don't have your Certificate of Occupancy yet. You'll need a main space large enough to welcome everyone and hold tables where those from your organization can meet people, plus individual smaller spaces if you want to hold same time interviews with interesting candidates.

Executive suites often have the room you need, and they have locations all over the country. Hotels are also a great idea – use one of their conference rooms or even a small ballroom and book several smaller rooms for interviews.

## Who should attend?

To avoid having candidates looking lost or not getting the right information, you need to be on your game. Be sure you'll have enough staff to answer general questions and questions about specific positions and departments.

You'll want managers with decision-making abilities, like your chief medical/chief clinical officer and vice president of operations, in case one of your hiring managers finds the perfect candidate and wants to offer him or her a position on the spot.



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Some organizations also have an executive make some opening remarks at the beginning of the job fair, adding to the importance of the event and the credibility of the company.

## How will you tell people about it?

Start promoting the job fair at least 30 days before, longer if possible. What's your advertising plan for getting the word out? Maybe you could submit a press release to local media, in addition to posting the job fair in local papers and on your web site and on social media.

If this all seems a little overwhelming, or if you have many jobs to fill in a very short period, let us help. Valeo Resources can manage your hiring from start to finish, including holding a job fair that uses our on demand video interview process. In it, we record candidates as they answer questions you've chosen. This gives you another way to rate them, in addition to their resume and quick meeting. Contact us, and we'll get you the people you need.