

**MEWAYZ**

# **Hiring Your First Employee: The Complete Checklist**

A Practical Guide to Confidently Growing Your Team

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## Introduction

Congratulations. Your business is growing, and the workload is becoming too much for one person. This is a pivotal moment, but the thought of hiring your first employee can feel overwhelming. You're not just managing tasks anymore; you're managing a person, with all the legal, financial, and interpersonal responsibilities that come with it. The fear of making a costly mistake is real. This guide is designed to eliminate that fear. We'll walk you through the entire process, step-by-step, transforming a daunting task into a manageable, strategic move for your business. By following this checklist, you'll not only find the right person; you'll build a solid foundation for sustainable growth and finally get back to focusing on the work you love.



## Chapter 1: Know Exactly Who You're Hiring For (Before You Post the Ad)

The biggest hiring mistake is not defining the role clearly. Hiring out of desperation for 'some help' leads to mismatched skills and frustration. Instead, start by documenting the exact tasks you need to offload. Track your time for a week. What repetitive tasks consume your day? What specialized skills are you lacking? This analysis forms the basis of your Job Description. Be specific. Instead of 'marketing support,' list 'creating three social media posts per week using Canva and scheduling them in Buffer.' This clarity does two things: it helps you find the right candidate and, crucially, proves that hiring is a financially sound decision. You can now attach a concrete value to this role. For example, if you're spending 10 hours a week on administrative tasks that a virtual assistant could handle for \$25/hour, you're freeing up 10 hours to focus on high-value work that generates more than \$250 in revenue.

### Action Steps:

1. **Conduct a Time Audit:** Log all your activities for one week. Categorize them (e.g., marketing, sales, admin, operations).
2. **Identify Transferable Tasks:** Which tasks are repetitive, time-consuming, or outside your core expertise? These are perfect to delegate.
3. **Draft a Detailed Job Description:** Include the job title, key responsibilities (5-7 bullet points), required skills, and preferred qualifications.
4. **Determine the Employment Structure:** Will this be a full-time, part-time, or contract role? Consider the financial and legal implications of each.

**Practical Tip:** Create a 'scorecard' for the ideal candidate. List the top 3-5 must-have outcomes for the role in the first 90 days. This becomes your objective hiring benchmark.

## Chapter 2: Get Your Legal and Financial House in Order

Before you even interview a candidate, you must set up the legal and financial infrastructure to hire legally. This is non-negotiable. First, you need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS if you don't already have one. This is like a social security number for your business and is required for tax purposes. Next, you must verify the employee's eligibility to work in the U.S. using the I-9 form. You are also responsible for reporting new hires to your state's directory. On the financial side, you need to set up a payroll system. This involves calculating and withholding federal and state income taxes, Social Security, and Medicare. You must also carry workers' compensation insurance and pay unemployment insurance taxes. The administrative burden here is significant, which is why many first-time employers use a payroll service like Gusto or QuickBooks Payroll to automate compliance and avoid costly errors.

### Action Steps:

1. **Obtain an EIN:** Apply for free on the IRS website if you don't have one.
2. **Set Up a Payroll System:** Research and choose a payroll provider to handle tax withholdings and filings.
3. **Get Insurance:** Secure workers' compensation insurance as required by your state.
4. **Prepare Employment Forms:** Have I-9 and W-4 forms ready for your new hire's first day.
5. **Understand Labor Laws:** Familiarize yourself with federal and state regulations on minimum wage, overtime, and break periods.

**Practical Example:** A small retail shop owner budgets \$20/hour for a sales associate. Using a payroll calculator, they realize the total cost is closer to \$24-\$26/hour when including employer-side taxes and insurance. This accurate budgeting prevents cash flow surprises.

## Chapter 3: Source and Select the Right Talent, Not Just a Warm Body

With the groundwork laid, it's time to find your candidate. Cast a wide net by posting your clear job description on relevant platforms like Indeed, LinkedIn, and local community boards. Don't underestimate your personal network; a referral from a trusted contact can be gold. When resumes come in, screen for the must-have skills from your scorecard. Then, conduct a structured interview process. Ask behavioral questions that reveal how a candidate handled past situations, like 'Tell me about a time you had to deal with an unhappy customer. What was the situation and what did you do?' This is more revealing than hypotheticals. Involve a second person in the process, even if it's an advisor, to reduce unconscious bias. Always conduct background and reference checks. Finally, make a competitive offer in writing. Detail the salary, benefits, start date, and any conditions of employment. A clear, professional offer sets a positive tone for the relationship.

### Action Steps:

1. **Post the Job Strategically:** Choose 2-3 platforms that fit your budget and target candidate.
2. **Phone Screen First:** A 15-minute call can quickly filter out mismatched candidates.
3. **Prepare a Core Set of Interview Questions:** Focus on past behavior, skills, and cultural fit.
4. **Check References:** Ask previous employers about the candidate's reliability, strengths, and areas for development.
5. **Make a Formal Offer:** Send a written offer letter that the candidate can sign electronically.

**Practical Tip:** Give a small, paid test project. If you're hiring a graphic designer, pay them for one logo concept. This shows their skills and work ethic better than any interview.

## Chapter 4: Master Their First Day and the Critical First 90 Days

Onboarding is not just paperwork; it's the process of integrating a new hire into your company's culture and systems. A chaotic first day creates anxiety, while a structured one builds confidence and productivity. Before they start, prepare their workspace, technology, and login credentials. Their first day should be a warm welcome, not a scramble. Schedule time to review the company's mission, values, and expectations. Introduce them to key contacts (even if it's just you and another vendor). Most importantly, create a 30-60-90 day plan with clear goals. What should they learn in the first 30 days? What should they be independently executing by day 60? What key project should they own by day 90? This provides a roadmap for success and makes feedback conversations objective. Schedule weekly check-ins for the first month to answer questions and provide guidance.

### Action Steps:

1. **Create an Onboarding Checklist:** List everything from setting up email to reviewing the employee handbook.
2. **Prepare the Workspace:** Have their desk, computer, and necessary supplies ready.
3. **Schedule a Welcome Meeting:** Discuss their role, your expectations, and the company's big-picture goals.
4. **Develop a 30-60-90 Day Plan:** Outline specific, measurable goals for each milestone.
5. **Institute Regular Check-ins:** Provide a safe space for questions and constructive feedback.

Practical Example: For a new customer service hire, the 30-day goal might be 'Learn our three main products and handle 10 customer inquiries per day under supervision.' The 90-day goal would be 'Independently handle 30 inquiries per day with a customer satisfaction score above 90%.'

## Chapter 5: Build a Foundation for Long-Term Success and Retention

Hiring is an investment, and you want a return on that investment. Retaining a great employee is far cheaper and easier than hiring a replacement. Retention starts with clear communication and fair management. Provide regular, constructive feedback—both praise for what's going well and guidance on areas for improvement. Even if you can't offer large raises immediately, discuss a clear path for growth. Could they take on more responsibility in six months? Could they learn a new skill? Creating a positive culture is your secret weapon. Show appreciation, be flexible when possible, and treat your employee with respect. Finally, document your processes. As your team grows, having clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for key tasks will make training future hires infinitely easier and ensure consistency in your business operations.

### Action Steps:

1. **Schedule Quarterly Performance Reviews:** Make feedback formal, two-way, and focused on growth.
2. **Discuss Career Paths:** Talk about their goals and how they can grow with the company.
3. **Foster a Positive Culture:** Recognize achievements, celebrate milestones, and encourage work-life balance.
4. **Start Documenting Processes:** Create simple SOPs for the core tasks this employee handles.
5. **Solicit Feedback:** Ask your employee what's working and what could be improved in their role or the business.

**Practical Tip:** Implement a simple 'kudos' system. It could be a shared channel in Slack where you publicly thank the employee for a job well done. Public recognition costs nothing but is highly valued.

## Conclusion

You've now navigated the entire journey from contemplating hiring to building a solid foundation for your first employee's success. This is a huge accomplishment that sets your business on a new trajectory of growth. Remember, the goal isn't just to hire someone; it's to build a team that allows you to scale your impact. As you look ahead, managing this new relationship and the increased administrative workload can be simplified with the right tools. This is where Mewayz can help. Designed for small businesses like yours, Mewayz streamlines scheduling, task management, and client communication—freeing you up to be the leader your new team needs. You've taken the first big step. Now, let technology help you manage it all effortlessly. Ready to simplify your growing business? Sign up for a free account today at <https://app.mewayz.com>.

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