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Hiring a World Class Compliance Professional

You're in a bind and need to hire a compliance professional ASAP. You must make sure this professional is top in their industry, has a true understanding of the compliance process, has the capability to gather support throughout the organization, and has the ability to manage multiple complex programs with little budget. No problem, right?

Mission of the Day:

Hire a Corporate Import/Export Trade Compliance Manager ASAP!

Step 1 – 08:00. Job Description Needed.

First order: get a job description. This might be difficult if this is a new position since the world of compliance has a language you may not fully understand. Sure, you can copy another company's version, but make sure you really need the skill set for which you advertise—some are basic and universal, others are not. Use the template below—we recommend it to companies that don't use a recruiter.

Trade Compliance Guru

Overpaying best-in-class firm offers once in a lifetime job opportunity with short hours!

- Need young, single, good-looking import/export compliance geek with no family life.

- Requires lots of experience, but no one too old.
- Must have fancy, late-model sports car—or we can give you one.
- Licensed Customs Broker with CCS Certification and law degree with big ego.
- Ability to make trade compliance sound interesting to all department heads and worker bees.
- Ability to keep government at bay at no cost or inconvenience to operations.
- Must speak English, French, Spanish, Mandarin and government speak.
- Passion for Blackberry and weekend and late night calls with Asia and Europe preferred.
- Ability to work without management support or staffing of any sort.
- Salary below market levels.

All kidding aside, a great job description can make or break the search. Make sure the person to whom this position will be reporting is heavily involved in the process—get their input up front.

Step 2 – 09:00. You Can't Find Good Help These Days.

The search is on! Look for internal candidates by searching your employee database—no one even remotely close? No problem, just move on to Step 3.

Step 3 – 10:00. Advertise and They Will Come.

Put the ad online, hit the send button, and you're done. Sit back, relax, get some coffee, find that iPod and wait for the resumes to roll on in—and they will roll in. You'll get bus drivers and barbers and offshore-based customer service reps and even some compliance folks.

Step 4 – 11:00 through 14:00.

Really need that long lunch today—worked hard. Thank goodness I'm not in trade compliance!

Step 5 – 14:00. IT called—Inbox Overload.

Wow—no, make that yikes! You received 4,297 resumes in your inbox. You actually managed to identify 16 solid trade compliance resumes. How can you tell if they are any good? They all look like they can do the job, but you need the best. Time to fill the calendar with interviews!

Step 6 – 15:00. The Hunt Is On.

How can you really tell if that import/export compliance candidate is right for your position? A resume can have all the nicknames (ACE), acronyms (FAST, CSA, ISA), math problems (10+2) and pet names (CCAT, PIP), but how can you tell if the candidate is really a fit for the thankless long nights and weekends you offer? It's simple: see our checklist following.

- Are they passionate about trade compliance? Don't worry, you will know if this is true or not—we have never met a good one that wasn't! Just ask them why they like compliance. Within minutes of hearing lingo that could put you to sleep, you'll know if you have "the one." They may not have all the skills you are looking for, but it is likely that no one will—remember, there is room for growth!
- Does their resume show multiple responsibilities outside compliance? Don't discount them because they are multi-dimensional.
- If you need a leader, are they really the No. 1 compliance pro for their current organization, or is there a Mr. Big at the parent entity he/she secretly reports to, either directly or indirectly?
- The Fit Factor—only the hiring manager will know for sure. It is crucial for Human Resources and the hiring manager to closely partner throughout this process.
- Consider the questions the candidate asks you as well. A good compliance person will start with: What department will I be reporting to? This is not a selfish question, but a litmus test. They are looking for real signs of management support since every company gives it lip service and many candidates have been burned before. In fact, the top reason compliance candidates leave a position is lack of management support. So, where should they report? To the general counsel in the legal department. Why, you ask? If they report to logistics/operations, there's always that chance or perception of a conflict of interest—the old "Do we really have to do it this way? Production is down,

we've got to ship it out!" Today's reality is that most trade compliance professionals do report through logistics/operations, but this is changing and the trend is to legal.

- The degree and the license or certifications are good screening tools, but are not always the best indicators. Don't discount candidates without these credentials, because hands-on, day-to-day, subject matter expertise is the best prerequisite.
- Are you concerned with the number of resumes you received from what seem like good candidates? If they were that good, why aren't they working? It's the economy. There are good candidates who have lost their jobs due to hard times and through no fault of their own, so considering the unemployed may not be something you are used to, but might be worth a chance today.

Step 7 – 16:00. Pass the Buck.

Make it easy on yourself—have candidates fill out a compliance profile to aid in the screening process. We've given you our profile to help define the candidate:

Compliance Profile Questions:

- What is your experience with high tech (or whatever industry you are in)?
- Where do you fit in the compliance/corporate organization chart?
- Are you the top person in charge of compliance in your organization?
- What do you require for relocation assistance?
- If not currently employed, what were the circumstances surrounding your departure?

- Why are you a good fit for this position?
- Are you a licensed customs broker?
- What was your involvement in your C-TPAT/PIP certification?
- What is your experience in imports/exports?

Step 8 – 16:59:59.

Mission Accomplished.

Candidate hired. Not too bad—it only took one day to hire an experienced candidate. Time for a reality check! It typically takes a bit of time to search for, attract and hire the right trade compliance candidate—one who not only has the experience on paper, but is the right fit for your company.

Linda Lexo and Rick Miller are licensed customs brokers and executive recruiters at Tyler Search Consultants.

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