

Karen Donaway, Director of Marketing sits down with the partners of SKC to discuss the importance of attracting top talent in a growing organization, the impact of a company's culture, the significance of innovation, and much more!

Q *SKC strives to be a high-performing firm, and as such, you are consistently building a high-performing team. How do you ensure that the candidates you hire have the right skills, experience, and cultural fit to foster a high-performing team environment?*



SK: Resumes notoriously do not represent the skills, experience, and cultural fit the candidate may have. In many cases, we ask for a cover letter in our job postings. It serves two purposes: First, it eliminates individuals who don't submit one when it's clearly asked for in the job post. Second, it allows you to get a sense of the personality and writing style of the candidate, it serves as another point of contact with the candidate to give the hiring manager more insight.

When it comes to the interview process, it is all about asking the right questions. The first is to determine what your minimum requirements are to have a seat at the table. These tend to mirror your company's values. At SKC, we focus on ensuring the candidates are self-starters, motivated by serving others, and driven by team support and collaboration, just to name a few. Then, you need to craft questions that will show real world examples from the candidate's background that provide evidence of the values you are seeking.

We work to peel back the onion to learn the personality of the candidate, questions such as, "Share a favorite client experience," "What was your most difficult client experience, and why," "Provide us with three adjectives, one your boss would use to describe you, one your peers would use to describe you, and one a direct report would use to describe you." It's important that you listen to the responses to these questions and look for nuggets to see below the surface into who the candidate really is. Asking follow-up questions that dig deeper helps as well.

Q *As a small business scales for sustainable growth, the team composition changes. As SKC has increased its operational complexity, how has the significance of a strong recruitment strategy changed?*



AD: The significance hasn't changed, but the strategy has certainly changed. We've started using our data to predict the level of folks we need to hire to service the complexity of the businesses we serve. We also offer a multitude of different work arrangements to ensure we can recruit top talent. Twenty five hours per week of a rockstar is better than zero hours. We also expanded our search to include the California office which increases the talent pool to choose from and varies the expertise in the firm.

Q *A fundamental part of recruitment is being able to articulate your company's core values and culture. When interviewing candidates, how do you illustrate SKC's values, culture and approach to work-life balance?*



CS: When interviewing candidates, it is important to share the company's vision statement and give examples of how you are continually working towards achieving those goals. If your company's social media highlights firm events and collaboration, share that as well because it can give a better sense of the firm's culture. As part of SKC's onboarding process, our managing partner discusses the firm's core values and how we put them into place in our practice. The more transparent you can be in the recruiting process, the more comfortable the candidates will be when they join your firm!

In terms of work-life balance, actions speak louder than words. We offer a hybrid schedule to our team members. They can essentially choose the hours that work best for them so they can have balance in both their personal and work lives... this is especially important for working parents. SKC truly cares about staff and clients and does so much to make their experience with SKC the best. We illustrate this with small, thoughtful perks or random surprises so that it keeps it interesting and exciting to be part of SKC.

Q *A quote from SKC's mission statement is: "Stay on the cutting edge of knowledge in our field via continuing education and continuous innovation." How does technology and innovation factor into attracting tech-savvy candidates for an organization?*



AD: It's no secret that SKC has a young leadership team compared to our competitors and what has proven to be very beneficial is our technological advances as a firm. We're not scared of change, of innovating, of trying something new. We embrace technology and learn how to use it internally to be more efficient and better serve our clients. The next generation of candidates want to work for a firm that is forward-thinking, willing to improve and grow with the times, and take risks to be the best all while having work-life harmony.

Q *Mentorship and leadership development have become continually more important to job candidates. As a small business owner, what are some things you can do to ensure you have a program in place to support the growth and advancement of your staff?*



SK: Growth and development is a pillar of SKC's vision and our internal mentoring program is continually added to and refined. The important part of a mentoring program is to realize it is customized to the participant. While having a curriculum as a foundation is critical, it is even more crucial that there is flexibility built into the program to allow for individual issues and topics to be addressed and covered. As a leader, it is your responsibility to make the creation of a mentoring program a priority. If you don't have the time to develop it yourself, seek the help of an outside consultant, put together an internal team to build the program, or start small, with just shadowing experiences. In the knowledge economy, our team members are our greatest assets and the cost of not developing them will be far higher than replacing them. Rising tides raise all ships and at SKC we believe in a culture that demands and supports our team to get incrementally better each and every day.



Although many professional service firms have moved to a hybrid work environment, it is still essential to have a sense of community and camaraderie with team members. In terms of recruiting top talent, what is the ideal balance of strong team relationships while also allowing a level of flexibility?



CS: I believe that strong teams are flexible teams – and you need the right balance of shared vision and trust along with resiliency. In a hybrid work environment, it's important to encourage teamwork, and through teamwork you get to know and trust your colleagues.

At SKC, we prioritize our staff's scheduling needs. We want them to be present in their personal lives no matter what stage of life they are in (such as parenthood). We encourage collaboration among our team members, and we find they challenge each other to become the best they can be. This creates a sense of community which, in turn, creates strength and resilience.



If you are a small business owner scaling your business for growth – let's discuss strategy!

*Reach out to our leadership team for more information:
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