



Hiring the Right Person: A Guide to Search & Recruitment

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Overview

For most companies, hiring is an interesting process, and not always one that people look forward to. It could mean growth and expansion, or it could mean that something's not right and people are leaving critical positions. But no matter the reason companies hire new employees, you need to have a way of making sure you're finding the right person for the job.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPANY CULTURE

Who is the right person? Unfortunately, there's no laundry list of skills and qualities that make a great employee. Even your best worker will fail if placed in an environment where they can't do their best work; they're successful because their skill set and personality is perfectly matched with your company's needs -- and culture.

Company culture is best summarized as your company's personality. It is made up of different aspects of your business model, employee behavior, and company policies: think dress code, schedule flexibility, size, management style, and more. People who fit well within an established company culture tend to be happier. They work for the right reasons, they collaborate well, and as a result, they get good work done faster.

There's a danger, then, of disrupting that culture with a new hire. Even a likeable, qualified new employee may not work well in a given team or environment, and when the average cost-per-hire is \$4,219, it's important to get it right.¹





Finding the Best Fit

Finding the right person for the job is essential to making sure your hiring decisions help the business succeed. Ideally, search and recruitment should be coordinated by either an HR team or a search management service, but more often than not, the person doing the entire process is an owner, manager, or HR professional who has to manage hiring on top of their usual responsibilities. Whether you're part of a hiring team of ten or one, start by breaking the process down into these six stages.

PLANNING

The first step to finding your next employee is getting everyone on the search committee or team on the same page. Start by laying out expectations: who is involved? By when does the position need to be filled? How much time should different team members devote to each part of the process?

Once each key member understands what is expected of the internal team during search and recruitment, you then have to understand the position you're looking to fill. Create an internal job description, including detailed and accurate job responsibilities, by asking people who work closely with the position in question, or even the person leaving the position if they're available and willing to help. The job posting should reflect not just the key duties, but also a bit about your company, the best parts about this job, and what makes this the perfect job for even passive candidates.





WHERE TO LOOK

To find the best candidates, you need to know where to look. According to a report by Deloitte, the perfect employee could be closer to home than you think -- 51% of surveyed organizations cited employee referrals as one of their top performing channels for finding talent, followed by professional networking sites at 42%, and internal candidates at 40%.² But the job market is not always on the employer's side, and for niche industries, positions, and leadership roles, finding applicants can be frustrating.

For hard-to-fill positions, your ideal next employee may not be actively searching for work. In one LinkedIn survey of over 18,000 fully-employed professionals, 25% were actively searching for a new job, compared to 45% who were not actively searching, but were open to talking to a recruiter.³ So while getting your job posting in front of qualified active searchers is important, it may not be the best avenue to find your ideal candidate.

HOW TO SCREEN A CANDIDATE

Once you start receiving applications, you need to have a process to screen candidates. This allows you to prioritize candidates you actually want to talk to during the interview process, and cuts down on the time you spend on no-fit applicants.

Look for the glaring red flags in resumes:

- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Unexplained gaps in employment
- Irrelevant work experience
- Vague or impossible to verify statements

Then, comb through for information that may indicate a good or poor fit for your company, such as amount of industry experience, relevant skills, and related achievements. Remember, just because a candidate is qualified doesn't mean they'll be a good fit and vice versa.





HOW TO SCREEN A CANDIDATE CONT.

Another tool you can use in your applicant screening arsenal is hiring assessments. Used as part of your search and recruitment process, hiring assessments can help you weed out applicants that don't make sense, and understand more about those who do. One 2015 survey reported that businesses that use hiring assessments were 36% more likely to be satisfied with a new hire than those who didn't.⁴ Keep in mind, however, that assessments aren't a magic bullet for your recruitment woes -- to be useful, they need to be used in conjunction with other hiring best practices.

HR COLLABORATIVE IS A WILEY DEALER

Wiley provides assessments and learning programs for hiring, professional development, and training designed to help companies succeed. HR Collaborative leverages Wiley assessments for their clients to hire and nurture great employees.

INTERVIEW

Interviews can be nerve-wracking, and not just for the candidate. Ask the right questions, and you can uncover a lot about an applicant; ask the wrong ones, and you won't have the right information to make a decision. Here are some interview question best practices:

- **Ask open-ended questions.** Yes or no questions, like basic requirements, should have been answered on a resume. Take the opportunity to learn more about how your candidate processes questions, how they word answers, and let their personality shine through. Example: What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?
- **Avoid riddles or 'gotcha's.** Everyone's heard the story of an interviewer asking what the candidate would do if they encountered three people at a bus stop while driving a two-seater car, and that's the issue: everyone's heard of it. Riddles to determine cleverness or creative problem solving have been around the block, and people understand their structure well enough to give the "right" answer. Instead, present the candidate with a problem they may have to solve on-the-job for more valuable insight.





INTERVIEW CONT.

- **Make it a conversation.** Interviewers may think that the candidate is the one under scrutiny, but that road goes both ways. Enhance the candidate experience by encouraging conversation -- asking them to pose their own questions at the end is more awkward than an ongoing dialogue throughout the meeting. And don't forget that this is your chance to sell your organization to the candidate.

Remember, interviews are less about qualification, and more about fit. By the time candidates shake your hand, you should know if they're qualified for the job, so use your interview to learn about how they'll act as a part of your company's team.

MAKING AN OFFER

So you've chosen a candidate you think will be right for your company? Congratulations! But you're not done yet. Until a candidate has accepted your job offer, they might still be on the market.

Start by reaching out to them with a verbal job offer. You may not be aware of where your potential employee is in their job search, so lock down their interest as soon as you can. Then, create a formal offer letter that includes:

- Job title
- Job status
- Overview of primary tasks
- Supervisor's name
- Expected start date
- Pay rate, pay schedule and pay-for-performance programs
- Exempt or non-exempt status
- Benefits (and don't forget to highlight your company's unique non-financial benefits like casual dress code or community service days)

Avoid wording that can be interpreted in different ways, as well as non-specific words like "usually" and "generally."





ONBOARDING

Onboarding is at the end of our list, but in reality, it should be present throughout the hiring process. The candidate experience is the first step in the broader employee experience, and if you haven't begun introducing your company's culture to the candidate before you send out an offer letter, you're taking a gamble at not hiring the right employee. Each step of the way, you should be simultaneously learning about candidates and teaching them about how your company functions, so onboarding really begins in the planning stage.

A good onboarding process will confirm for your new hire that coming to this company was the best career move they ever made. A study by the Aberdeen Group revealed that companies with best-in-class onboarding practices retained 91% of employees hired, as compared to only 30% in companies with limited or no formal onboarding process.⁵ Developing an onboarding process that helps new employees learn about the company and their place within it over the course of a year ensures that you're doing your best to help your hires succeed.



ONBOARDING CONT.

While onboarding is a critical part of the search and recruitment process, it is not a one-time event. It's just as important to train, evaluate, and nurture new employees in the first six months or first year as it is in the first few days, so don't consider your job done after they turn in their paperwork and receive basic training.





The Benefits of Using a Talent Search Management Service

Without considering the year it takes to transition a new employee from onboarding to retention, the average time-to-hire is about 42 days.⁶ That's a month and a half of screening applications, interviewing candidates, rinsing, and repeating, and that's if qualified people are replying to your job posting. For those situations where candidates are thin on the ground? You're losing even more valuable time.

Choosing between the right employee and your other responsibilities isn't fair to you or your company. That's why businesses have looked to outside expertise for help. Talent management services excel at finding companies their best fit employees, partnering with key stakeholders within the company to deliver high-quality candidates without compromising the day-to-day of the business.

EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE

One advantage that talent management services have over in-house hiring teams is the sheer volume of experience they have to draw on. Hiring managers within a company may have extensive knowledge of their own industry, and perhaps a few more depending on how long they've been working in the field. Talent management services firms are incredibly well-connected and have the opportunity to work with companies in different industries, of different sizes, and with different cultures. They understand that recruitment doesn't always mean ticking boxes, and they can identify trends for what works in similar situations.

In addition, because search and recruitment is their business, talent management services have access to advanced, enterprise-level tools and software that may be cost prohibitive for all but the biggest players. Sophisticated applicant tracking systems, compensation planning tools, and hiring assessments can help immensely in the hiring process, but many human resources departments have budget priority items that push big-ticket recruitment purchases to the bottom. By partnering with a team of experts, you get all the benefits of a corporate HR department, even if you're not corporate yourself.





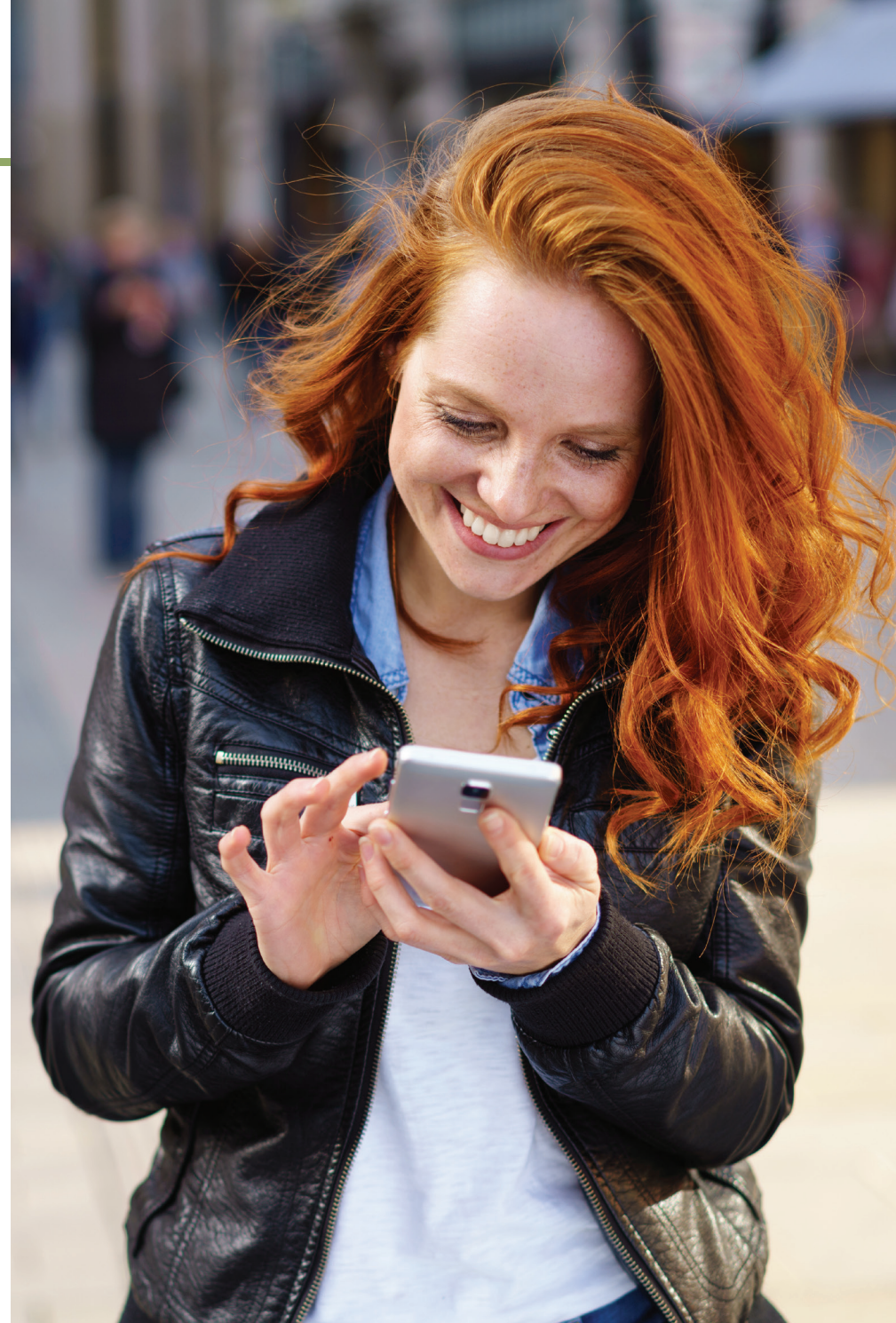
EFFICIENT AND STRATEGIC

Unless your only job is managing the recruitment process, chances are that hiring throws a wrench in your daily work life. Leveraging a talent management service provider can help you and others on the hiring team regain valuable time that can be spent on strategic company goals and initiatives. For owners and managers, it means refocusing on revenue growth, without putting projects on standby to fill a new or vacant position. For HR staff, it means more time elbows-deep in the needs of your company rather than paging through resumes.

Working with a service provider comes with a caveat, however. Not all companies dedicated to search and recruitment can be considered partners. Talent management services should also be strategic, getting to know your business and the people who make it great. A strategic provider is able to collaborate with stakeholders to discover what a good fit employee really is, then use their expertise to the company's advantage. They should care about the business's goals, not just for the recruitment process, but long term growth and revenue goals as well.

EFFICIENT AND STRATEGIC CONT.

The process of recruitment has outgrown the days of having a starting and ending date. With so much of our personal and professional interaction taking place online, the truth is that potential employees are always forming opinions of your employment branding, regardless of whether either party is looking for the other. Employment branding, or the outside-facing picture of what it's like to work for your company, is an ongoing, time-consuming process of curating and advertising unique, attractive experiences. This requires time and strategy, and is one reason it's so important to work with a provider who cares about the details.





SHOULD YOU OUTSOURCE RECRUITMENT?

Outsourcing can be a sticky word. Are you outsourcing the hiring process for a single position, or for all of them going forward? Are you hiring consistently and frequently, or once in a blue moon? And is outsourcing really what you're looking for?

Many companies who provide talent management services offer different options for providing short- and long-term services. Rapidly growing startups, for instance, may benefit from a single provider doing all their recruitment, whereas nonprofits seeking a new leader may only have the budget for one search. But a company who considers the work they do as external to your business's may not understand enough to provide you with the best candidates. You're not looking for a pile of resumes, you're looking for someone who can help you find the jewel within them.

SHOULD YOU OUTSOURCE RECRUITMENT? CONT.

So should you outsource recruitment? If the search company you chose treats it as outsourcing, then no. Unless you partner with a talent search management provider whose goal it is to understand your business, you're not going to get the best person for the job. And if that's the whole point of recruitment, shouldn't you do it right?

Hiring can be a long, tedious, and even scary process, but it's also a rewarding one. Finding the right fit for your company is a great feeling, and your business can reach for greater heights with the best people behind it. Contact HR Collaborative to learn more about how search management could help your company by clicking below.

[CONTACT US](#)





END NOTES

^{1 6} Society for Human Resource Management, "2016 Human Capital Benchmarking Report." <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2016-Human-Capital-Report.pdf>

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³ LinkedIn Talent Solutions, "Talent Trends 2014." <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/c/14/3/talent-trends/2014?trk=s-bl>

⁴ Zach Lahey, "Pre-Hire Assessments: An Asset for HR in the Age of the Candidate." http://v1.aberdeen.com/launch/report/research_report/10326-RR-advanced-prehire-assessments.asp

⁵ Madeline Laurano, "Onboarding 2013: A Look at New Hires." <http://deliberatepractice.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Onboarding-2013.pdf>



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