Perfect

Hire

Blueprint

eBook

A step by step process to hire
the right person for the job

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Introduction

My passion is to help small businesses (1 to 500 employees) succeed. That is my full time job – Business Advisor for mPower Advisors. I left corporate America to do just that: become a business advisor, coach, and executive mentor.

The odds are not in the favor of the small business. We've all heard the data: 20+ percent of small businesses fail after one year and less than 1/3 make it to 10 years.

Bad hiring plays a huge part in the execution issues that cause small businesses to fail. It's important to hire the right people who fit the job AND the company. Small businesses need the attitude AND the skill, but most small businesses don't know how to find the right people.

This eBook is an attempt to improve that. It will cover the process, but the deep implementation details that make it the PERFECT Hire Blueprint are in the complete book. You can get more information about the book here.

* * *

You need to hire someone now – but what's the best way to do it and ensure the hire is successful?

The U.S. Department of Labor estimated that the average cost of a bad hiring decision can equal 30% of the individual's first year potential earnings, but that could be just direct costs. What is the cost of mistakes and failures that top performers wouldn't make? Depending on the job level, these can be *hundreds of thousands of dollars*.

> The cost of a bad hire can be in the *tens of thousands of dollars* in direct cost and opportunity costs.

It doesn't have to be this way.

In a growing company, hiring people seems to be never ending process. Most hiring managers dislike the process of hiring. I've spoken with many who feel that even after all the hard work and due diligence, it is still a gamble as to whether the person is a good hire.

> Low performers underserve key customers, attract other low performers, undermine customer loyalty, erode employee morale and trust, fail to proactively find great opportunities, fail to execute, waste money, and repel high performing employees.

This eBook is written for leaders who need to hire and want to build a team that achieves great things.

There are many factors that can make hiring more difficult:

- It takes a lot of time that most managers believe they don't have
- In order to engage with good candidates, you need to move fast
- Resumes are sometimes works of fiction, "edited" by experts
- The interview is a coached performance rather than an authentic conversation, and you may not know the real person until many days after he starts
- References are either friends or past coworkers who won't (or can't) tell you the truth
- Recruiters and headhunters are compensated or incentivized to fill the position regardless of whether the person is the best fit
- The hiring manager goes with his gut, thinking he is a good judge of character.

This eBook will outline a process that works, is scalable, and promises that you can hire a great team.

Can't I just hire a headhunter?

Some think that headhunters are the solution, but I don't believe that they are. There are four acceptable reasons to use headhunters (any combination of these make hiring harder and are also are acceptable):

1) You need the person immediately (zero schedule flexibility), your recruiting engine is not currently running, and you are OK potentially sacrificing long-term retention.
2) You're looking for a needle-in-the-haystack skill set – truly rare to find. You need all options open to you (ex. MLB Shortstop that hits >.300).
3) Unemployment (i.e. available talent) is at historical lows and you can't get the employees that you want. As a reference, the 50 year lowest unemployment rate in the US was 3.4%.
4) Hiring from a client/customer. The 3rd party relationship keeps the footsteps from coming directly from your company's front door, enabling you to maintain a good relationship.

If you can't do it all in house, get outside help with the time consuming tasks, such as crafting an effective job posting, sourcing passive candidates (if needed), culling resumes, and filtering candidates. My team does this for our clients.

We recently hired an Engineer for a client using the Perfect Hire Blueprint. With a targeted Job Ad built from the Benchmark Assessment, we were able to narrow the field down to a few GREAT candidates and make a perfect hire in just a few weeks:
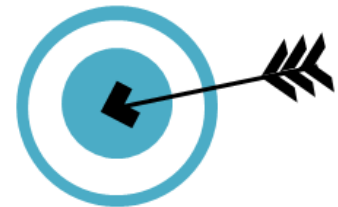
41 Days from **JOB POST TO CLOSE**

<$90 TOTAL COST **TO PLACE JOB ADS**

16 APPLICANTS

5 Phone Screens

4 In-person Interviews

2 Finalists

1 Job Offer

A successful hiring process can be executed by a company of any size to find A-players. Yes, finding the right person takes time, energy, passion and coordination, but the ROI is worth it. Your work team can go from good to great by getting the right players on the bus.

* * *

There are many things to worry about:

- Is now the right time to hire another person?
- Is there a long-term need for the position?
- Is part-time the right answer?
- Can we afford another person on the payroll?
- Is the needed skill set available?
- Where do I look to find the right person?
- What if the talent we need is too expensive?
- Can I offer a competitive package?
- Will our culture change with new people and growth?
- Who can train this person when we are all so busy?
- How much will it cost to find this person (job posting sites, headhunters, recruiters, temp agencies, paying people to look at hundreds of resumes, paying people to interview candidates, ramp-up time)?
- What interview questions can be asked and what can't be asked legally?
- How will those who interact with the new employee feel about sharing information and recognition?
- What if we train someone and he leaves for the competition?

…no wonder companies procrastinate and don't look forward to hiring!

What are the costs of hiring?

The cost of hiring is more than just the total compensation of the person you hire. Here is a list of tangible costs to recruit and hire a candidate (*opportunity costs are additional*):

1. Developing the ad (time/salaries for all involved in drafting the ad)
2. Headhunter/recruiter fees (hourly if on-site, or up to 20+% of salary if a headhunter)
3. Placing the ad strategically (salary or outsource expense, and cost of postings online and offline – at least a few hundred dollars per month)
4. Tracking and filtering the candidates (tracking software, filtering time in data entry, wading through applicant info, and sending filtering email)
5. Paying your A-players to interview candidates (time/salaries for your top performers)

6. Paying your A-players for the roundtable discussion on candidates (time/salaries for your top performers)
7. Travel expenses for candidates (just mileage if local, but airfare, hotel, car, and meals if not)
8. Cost of getting the offer approved (typically more than one manager at a big company)
9. Relocation and sign-on bonus, if applicable (immediate expenses).

What is the best way to keep your expenses down, yet find the right A-player for your job opening? Fish for the right candidates where they can be found, and get the first great candidate to accept.

> To do hiring right, it must be a priority.
>
> **Speed is your friend when hiring**.

Hiring the Right People

It's easy for a candidate to "game the system" to present himself as someone he is not.

- The resume and cover letters may not have been created by the candidate, or may have been "massaged" by a friend or family member with more experience in crafting these documents. They often stretch the truth, to put it mildly.
- The interview is just a performance – a well-coached interaction when the candidate is on her best behavior (and/or medication), which may not be consistent if hired.
- The typical reference checking calls are useless because the reference is not objective and knows not to say anything negative. Or you might just be directed to HR.

The hiring manager must change the game to get additional insight into the candidate.

The good news is that we have developed a process that delivers a 90%+ chance of hiring success.

A significant key to hiring success is the assessment portion of the process.

Defining "Mis-fits"

So far I've referred to good hires and bad hires, but let's be clear. A bad hire is not necessarily a bad person. You should give yourself and your team more credit than to say

you hired a bad person. That person was just not right for your company or the position. The person may be fine in another culture and job.

Going forward, I'm going to refer to a bad hire as a Mis-fit™. This bad hire was a bad fit, a mistake, hence Mis-fit™. On the opposite end of the hiring scale is a great hire, and we should make that clear as well.

You want A-players

A-players are driven to succeed. They are typically goal oriented. They consistently get the job done on time without a manager looking over their shoulder. A-players challenge each other. A-players seek continuous improvement.

B-players are not quite as results-driven as A-players. They see what the A-players can accomplish, but they don't have the aptitude (talent, ability), are not willing to do the work or won't put in the time that is required to get those results.

C-players do not stand out. They don't do great work, and they don't do bad work. Passion and motivation are the energy that drives a business. People who are just there for a job will sap energy from others.

A-players don't play it safe. A-players rise to the challenge. Look at a candidate's past to see where she was challenged and how she responded. Look at the resume for continuous improvement, and verify the information through the interview process.

> **Don't settle for B-players or C-players.**

The Process

The Perfect Hire Blueprint process is a logical, step by step, linear process that has been used to hire positions such as sales, marketing, admin, CPA, membership services, fitness trainers, front desk greeters, laborers, engineers and other tech positions, and managerial positions.

Overall Issue: How do I hire the right person when the resume and cover letter are written by experts, the candidate is coached on how to interview, the references won't tell me the real scoop, and headhunters cost too much?

	Step	Problem	Description/Solution	Transformational Benefits
Setup	**Step 1** Profile/Benchmark	Who is the ideal candidate and what behavior, values, and skills are needed?	Stakeholders determine why the job exists. Each takes an assessment to create an ideal candidate benchmark.	* Buy-in on ideal candidate * A standard for measuring * Agreement of stakeholders
	Step 2 Job Description/ Ad/Sourcing	What will the person do? How do I reach the ideal person? How do I get enough candidates?	Tell exactly what the job is, and speak directly to the perfect fit. Fish in the right pond.	*Job Function Clarity * Reduces # of bad applicants * Perfect applicants apply
Screen	**Step 3** Track and Qualify	How do I track all the people and their info? How do I filter it down to just the best?	Use a system to track all applicants and relevant info. Filter out those not close to the benchmark	* Tracks all candidates * Organizes all information * Communicate with stakeholders * Reduces # of phone screens
	Step 4 Phone Screen	How do I know if this person is a good fit? How can I determine that quickly?	A cursory check to see if the candidate is a possible fit, and if job/company is a fit for candidate	* Efficient way to filter * Saves time and money * Sets expectations
	Step 5 1st Interview	How do I determine if this is the right person without wasting everyone's time?	A team of Behavioral Interviewers with non-overlapping questions. Practical if applicable.	* Get all the info needed * Gives candidate feel for environment * Observe body language
	Step 6 Assessment/ Gap Analysis	How can I get more info that is not written or said by candidate and check what was said and my gut feel?	Science-Based Assessment uncovers strengths and weaknesses. Analysis compares that to the benchmark	* Objective assessment * Deeper than surface * EEOC Compliance
	Step 7 2nd Interview	How do I uncover what we need to know? Can I determine gaps in skill set?	Focus on the gaps between the benchmark and the assessment.	* Fills in the blanks * Create a stronger bond * Raises candidate excitement
	Step 8 Other Requirements	How can I confirm the candidate meets all the requirements?	Reference checks, background check, transcripts, physical, certifications needed	* Reduces surprises *Reduces liability * Confirms if qualified
Secure	**Step 9** Job Offer	How do I know what is a good (yet affordable) offer that will motivate the candidate?	An excited applicant accepts a reasonable offer. Now what will be accepted?	* Will not have to overpay * Will have a motivated employee
	Step 10 Post Offer Actions	Now that the offer is made and accepted, how do I know if the person will show up?	Walk her through all the decision steps: definitive decision, giving notice, telling people, preparing.	* Helps ensure the candidate shows up on the first day feeling eager and energized.
	Step 11 Onboarding	How do you motivate the new hire when they can't contribute yet everyone is busy?	Use the development plan to give initial direction. Have the new hire shadow another and document.	* Keep new hire motivated from Day 1 * Will have a motivated employee

Overview of the process

There are 10 steps outlined above in the grid for a snapshot of the Perfect Hire Blueprint.

Part 1: Setup

1. Job opening is determined.
2. Profile/Benchmark for position is created.
3. Job description is created and pay structure is determined.
4. Approval to hire is obtained.
5. Interview team is determined and roles are defined.
6. Ad is created and pushed to all sourcing channels (if necessary, recruiters are contracted).

Part 2: Screen

7. Leads come in from all sources and all are entered into tracking software.
8. Leads are either filtered and sent to hiring manager or are sent directly to hiring manager without qualification depending on department.
9. Hiring manager reviews the candidate's material and determines if phone screen is warranted.
10. Candidates that don't make the grade are informed that the company does not see a good match.
11. If phone screen goes well, hiring manger (may have help of assistant) schedules interview with candidate and with team of interviewers.
12. The day of the interview, the candidate meets with each interviewer.
13. Assessment is taken and Gap analysis is created.
14. Assessment analysis is provided to the hiring manager.
15. Hiring manger has second interview to follow up on issues raised during first visit and by the assessment.
16. A roundtable is convened to confirm which candidate, if any, is qualified.
17. Hiring manger determines if offer is to be made and creates offer letter (may have admin help).

Part 3: Secure

18. Approved offer is presented to candidate.
19. Offer acceptance procedures are followed to ensure new hire shows up on first day.
20. Onboarding.

This might look like a lot of steps, but all of this can happen very fast, and it needs to.

Determine Openings

Before you decide to hire another person, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you really need to hire for this position?
- Is someone in the wrong place in the company who can fit this need?
- Can you restructure/shuffle current employees to cover the tasks of this position?
- Can it be done by a part time person?
- Can it be done more economically by a contractor? (Usually this is not a core function of the company, e.g. bookkeeping or marketing.)
- What will be the return on the investment? (Will you bring in more than you pay out?)

Now that you've determined you need to hire someone, for what job are you hiring?

This is where a great job description comes in. The job description should motivate A-players. It should say "What success looks like."

Benchmark/Job Profile

As I've stated before, a significant key to hiring success is the online assessment portion of the process.

The Benchmark assessment, or Job Profile, must be the starting point for all hiring. While it's possible to hire without it, the chance of success is much lower. The Job Profile is the standard by which a candidate should be measured, and the Job Benchmark Assessment is the key to the perfect hire.

The Benchmark Assessment will determine the ideal candidate for the job. Company owners, managers, stakeholders, and selected employees will take a benchmark job assessment to determine the qualities necessary or desired in candidates.

- 3-6 people are involved in the Benchmark: those that are currently in or are in close contact with position
- Vital Responsibilities are created
- Interview questions are created by Benchmark (Job Report)
- Stakeholders help create the multi-respondent Job Report (online assessment)
- Full Benchmark binder is created (recommended, but not required)

A Job Benchmark will help determine whether a candidate has the desired qualities necessary to be successful in the position.

With an accurate Profile, the job description will be more than just a list of duties. The Benchmark forms the job description and the ad that will be seen by prospective employees. It is the starting point that helps ensure that the right candidate is hired.

> No matter your hiring process, the Benchmark and the Personal Assessment will improve your hiring success rate dramatically. *We have found that in over 90% of the cases using this process, new hires stay at least a year.*

Step 1: Perfect Hire Profile (Avatar)

Where does he live? How does he dress? What kind of car does he drive? What is the family's income? For hiring, this definition is good as we are looking for a specific "type" of person. **It is much easier to find the perfect hire if you first know what behaviors, values and skills you are looking for.**

The ideal first step is to create a perfect hire profile for the position. This entails getting 3-6 stakeholders into the room together and asking why this job is different than any of the other jobs - why is this position needed? The right people to contribute and answer these questions might be:

- the manager of the position,
- the most successful person doing the job (definition of success is up to the manager), and
- the people who will interact with this position most.

Profile of a Perfect Hire

The perfect hire will have some combination of Behaviors, Motivators and Soft Skills from the assessment. The desired amount of each is determined through the Benchmarking process.

Step 2: Determine Vital Responsibilities

These people will determine what the unique requirements (Vital Responsibilities) are for this job. What is required for someone to succeed in this position? Brainstorm the reason, group the responses, then prioritize the groups. This will help you determine what responsibilities are vital.

Step 3: Building the Benchmark

While it is possible to find a perfect hire without a Benchmark, I strongly recommend one. Steps 1 and 2 can enable some consensus, but it is hard to implement consistently.

The Benchmark is created with each stakeholder taking a Job Assessment – that is an assessment on what is needed for the job. They refer to the Vital Responsibilities document that was created with the input from all the stakeholders. This ensures that everyone is on the same page for what is needed for the position.

After everyone completes the assessment, the results are merged and the Benchmark uses the average score of the group for each desired behavior or skill. If there are outliers that would skew the results, the specifics are inspected to see if the results should be included or excluded. Now you have the Avatar for the position.

Why is a Benchmark necessary?

Without an online Benchmark and using a profile, the hiring process is less dependent on the personal assessment, and more dependent on human interaction. This means many steps in the process will be more susceptible to human bias. It has been proven that we each have biases that we don't know we have, and it is these biases that lead to Mis-fits. To get the perfect hire, objective data is needed, and assessments provide that data.

Job Description

The job description is an important step. It is critical that all involved understand what the role of the candidate will be. While this should be covered under benchmarking, this process fleshes out the SOAR Model of HR problem solving:

- **S**ituation or problem to solve
- **O**bstacles to success
- **A**ctions needed
- **R**esults expected

A good job description includes:

1. The job title
2. Department and Manager (who the person reports to)
3. Responsibilities
4. Qualifications, skills and experience required

Keep the job description concise, clear and conversational.

Creation of Ad

How to post a great job ad

In order to make a good hire, you first need to attract great candidates. Writing a highly targeted ad using the right keywords and phrases will attract more qualified candidates and make the hiring process much smoother.

What separates good ads from average ads is how they are written: the ad should be written to "speak to" your ideal candidate. When the right person reads the ad, he should think, "That is my ideal job." If he thinks that, he is more likely to apply, and also more likely to do any prequalification activities that you require.

Our experience is that when you write a highly targeted ad, fewer people apply – but more of them are a better fit. This not only saves you time in culling resumes, but also provides a qualified candidate pool.

How do I write the ad?

Using the information from the Multi-Respondent Job Report, meet with owners, management, and employees currently in the position to write an ad for the open position. Make sure to reference behavioral qualities from Job Report.

The ad is meant to attract the candidates that you want and exclude those who do not meet your requirements. Don't set out the minimum criteria that anyone can meet. The ad should be clear about what a successful candidate looks like.

A successful ad:

- Has a simple, clear, compelling headline:
    - Accounts Payable Specialist – flexible hours & career advancement
    - Health Coach – help our members make positive changes
    - Inside Sales – great work/life balance
- Starts with WHY – paints an exciting vision:
    - Why is your company in business?
    - Why should the candidate want to work for your company?
    - *Use phrases such as: "You'll help people…" and "We'll enable...because you…"*
- Challenges the candidate:
    - Gets at the underlying motivations
- Shares the vital requirements and key performance indicators of the job profile:
    - Job description and qualifications
    - Great candidates should be drawn to the job because it just feels right

Placement of Ad (Sourcing)

As the competition for great talent and the need to fill positions gets more frantic, the placement of ads is all the more important. You want to carefully consider WHERE your ideal candidate is looking.

Company website:

By posting directly on your company website, this is the easiest way for interested candidates to see all available openings that may suit them.

ZipRecruiter:

When you post a job on ZipRecruiter, that job posting is published to many other websites. Candidates can apply quickly and easily – you can manage them in the ZipRecruiter database, and applications also are emailed directly to the account on file.

Industry specific site:

These will vary by industry – they usually will push to a number of other recruiting sites including Indeed. (Examples include: fitnessjobs.com, dice.com)

Indeed:

Posting a job listing on Indeed is free, but you can use a pay-per-click method to "boost" your job for more visibility. Indeed is also an aggregator: it pulls jobs from hundreds of sites.

Craigslist:

Craigslist can be effective for the home services industries or part-time positions, but is not great for more corporate positions.

LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is an amazing networking tool, depending on your number of contacts. For a fee, you can get recruiter privileges and post the ad on a company page.

Referrals:

Often one of the best ways to get good people that fit your company and culture is through referrals. I have found that once you tap into a new vein for good candidates, you want to keep mining that vein. Your best people already know other good people: ask your current employees if they know anyone who would be a good fit for an open position.

Outsourced recruiters (headhunters):

As mentioned before, this is your last resort. Reasons to use a headhunter are:

- money is no object – you want the best talent at all costs
- you need a short term fix
- the reason stated in italics above
- you are looking for a needle in a haystack
- unemployment rate is historically low
- they have a track record of sourcing fantastic passive talent

Again, I don't think it is necessary for most businesses, but I've put it here for completeness.

Filter Applicants (Qualify)

What should I look for in an application?

Any number of things can throw red flags on an application or resume.

- Employment gaps (-)
- Jumping from company to company (-)
- Short history at many companies (-)
- Upward trajectory (+)
- Achievement pattern (+)
- Following directions: if the job posting specified "email jobs@company.com with your resume and cover letter" and you received a resume through another tool (not to the specified email address), you may have someone who has difficulty with details, and/or following directions (-)

Move fast – great candidates likely have other companies pursuing them. If you have a great system in place for following up and moving them along the process quickly, they are more likely to stick with the process.

Get More Role Specific Information

One way to qualify – or disqualify – candidates easily and quickly is to send them a follow-up email regarding their experience, habits and desires. Choose 2-5 questions that are important and send a short email to all candidates you have deemed qualified by resume.

Why ask questions in this email?

People will often show their true colors in a more informal communication such as a casual email. Even though it is coming from the hiring manager, it is phrased in such a way so that there are no right or wrong answers. If a candidate's answers are way off base, you are able to disqualify them earlier in the process, saving both of you time.

(I have provided suggested questions in a six page document – you can get it here.)

Rejecting Candidates

We've all been on the receiving end of a bad hiring process. There's nothing worse than not knowing where you stand with a company, or waiting months to hear back from a hiring manager – except never hearing anything at all!

Key points of communication:

- We have received your resume
- Waiting for response from questions
- Phone screen process
- Interview process
- Extend offer or reject candidate

Rejection – how do I do it?

If you have spoken with the person and they have come in for an interview at the company, I've found that the best, most personal way to reject a candidate is by a quick phone call. That way, they can hear the tone of your voice and know that you value them and their time enough to make the call.

If the candidate isn't that far along in the hiring process, an email will do just fine. These can be generated easily on the recruiting platform such as Indeed or ZipRecruiter.

Schedule Phone Interviews

Within one week of receiving the resume, schedule quick phone screens with qualified candidates. Send qualified candidates an email to set a date and time for the call. Be specific about your company and the title of the position – often candidates are applying to dozens of job listings.

Conduct Phone Interviews with Qualified Candidates

We conduct phone screens to save ourselves the time and hassle of bringing someone in for an interview who is not a good fit. You can find out a lot about a person during just a quick phone call.

Interviewing someone who is clearly unqualified for the position is a huge waste of time and resources for both the employer, and the job seeker. It's best to try to only let qualified applicants in the door, and the phone screen is a quick, effective method!

"Building rapport" starts with this phone call, and it should also be the first filter to determine if the hiring manger and others should invest their time interviewing the candidate.

What are you trying to accomplish in a phone screen?
- Verbal ability, and motivation
- Getting a feel for the applicant that is not apparent via text – sometimes I can discount someone right off the bat (e.g., if they are notably unenergetic for a position that requires high energy) and sometimes I am surprised since the way they behave via text is opposite of their behavior on the phone
- Gauging their excitement about the company/position
- Giving them more details about the position

How long is the phone screen?
- Typically 5-10 minutes, though some will go shorter/longer based on applicant's personality and the position they are interviewing for

A six page document of scripts and suggested questions to ask in a phone screen can be found [here](#).

Have a Pre-Interview Meeting

Some hiring managers think that the in-person interview is supposed to be stressful, so that you can better gauge how the candidate may perform under stress at work. I have two answers to that:

1. **There shouldn't be that much stress at work, and**
2. **You will not get a true read on the candidate's natural behavior at work.**

To have a better chance of seeing how someone will really behave if hired, **I recommend a face-to-face meeting before the formal interview.** This is especially important for a job that tends to draw introverts, or people with lower social skills. (I highly recommend a Job Profile/Benchmark to identify these traits.)

There are many good reasons to have a pre-interview meeting:

- More casual - less stilted
- Less stressful for the candidate
- Prescreen for any anomalies – strange behavior or appearance
- Isolate strange behavior early – don't bring it into the office
- More realistic view of behavior – not under the spotlight
- Better in-office interview – fewer unknowns means more comfort
- Saves time and resources – don't schedule if not a fit
- The candidate will be more comfortable at the interview

The ideal environment is a coffee shop for several reasons:

- Short amount of time – much less than with a meal
- Neutral ground – no one has home field advantage
- In public – likely won't make a scene, safer for strangers to meet
- Comfort of knowing what to expect – likely been to one before
- Low cost – any budget can afford it
- Daily routine – may already be going there in the AM
- Fits the candidate's schedule – won't have to take time off from current job

Remember, this is not a formal interview. It is a casual conversation to get to know the candidate. Don't bring a prepared list of questions or give a test. Keep it light and topical, but don't cross the line by talking about personal, non-job related topics that may make the candidate less desirable in your mind (for example: relationships, children, extra-curriculars, military activity, criminal record, age, religion, etc.).

If you still feel good about the candidate, move them to the next step in the process: the interview at the company.

First Interview

The in-person interview continues the process by having management and key employees ask specific questions to get a gut feel of the candidate and decide if she should be moved to the next step in the process.

An interview should:

- **Sell** the value of the company
- **Qualify** the candidate
- **Communicate** the culture of the company
- **Show** the caliber of people the candidate will work with
- **Convey** a typical day of working at the company
- **Identify** if the candidate is a good fit for the company and the position.

Does your company have a plan for who asks which interview questions? Is it a well-choreographed endeavor? If it isn't, your company may not only be missing a great opportunity, but it may also be missing out on hiring the best candidates for the company.

> **To hire the best workers, the in-person or on-site interview should be 70% interview and 30% selling.**

Selling the company is not a sales pitch, but should be done by your A-players talking about why they work there – what keeps your top talent motivated?

Day of interview checklist

- Stay objective – fight against falling victim to first impressions.
- The manager should start by setting the stage:
  - Get the candidate excited about the opportunity.
  - Describe what success looks like at the company.
  - Explain what to expect from interview process.
- A tour of the company typically makes sense. It should be done by an employee who has done a tour previously to show the highlights and not get bogged down in the details.
- Each interviewer has an assignment:
  - Multiple stakeholders – 30 minutes each (hiring manager decides on interviewers)
  - Each interviewer asks different questions
  - Each interviewer needs to remember to be a good ambassador of the company.
  - These are behavioral – what happened in the past will likely happen again.
  - Ask for specific examples, don't stay at 10 thousand feet. Get specifics on results
  - Looking for Action and Execution – not generalities and what the "group" accomplished.
  - Find out what the environment was like, and determine how it is similar to or differs from your environment.
  - Did the person act as a leader of others?
  - What motivates the person to do their best?

- ➢ QUESTIONS MUST PERTAIN TO THE JOB, NOT ONE'S PERSONAL LIFE OUTSIDE OF WORK.
  - o If the person is not hired, any conversation regarding what is done on personal time could be scrutinized.
  - o For example, you can't ask what they do for fun after work, but you can ask if they achieve a healthy work/life balance.
  - o Stay away from topics of (alphabetically):
    - ▪ Age
    - ▪ Alcohol or drug use (but tell them is a drug test is required)
    - ▪ Arrests
    - ▪ Birthplace
    - ▪ Citizenship (if not a requirement)
    - ▪ Children (current or future)
    - ▪ Disabilities (physical or mental)
    - ▪ Financial situation
    - ▪ Height or weight
    - ▪ Marital status
    - ▪ Race
    - ▪ Religion
    - ▪ Sexual orientation
  - o Check your local laws to be sure.
- ➢ A post-interview roundtable meeting is held with all interviewers to debrief to the manager.
- ➢ The manager is responsible for the hire, so it is the manager's call how the decision to hire is made.
- ➢ Before leaving, the candidate may take a TriMetrix assessment if hiring manager deems the candidate may be qualified.

Company Culture

The culture of your company plays a large part in hiring A-players. It is important to uncover what motivates the candidate during the interview. Your unique culture could be motivating or demotivating. If there is no culture match, a great candidate can become a nightmare employee.

It is important that the person you hire fits the values and motivators of the role she hopes to fill. A mismatch will likely become painful while the person is employed, and will lead to another candidate search within a year.

Hiring for FIT

When companies are looking to hire employees who "fit" their company, many times they look for commonality. What they are actually looking for (or should be looking for) is common values, but in most cases the interviewer is not aware of that.

First, create your company values if you don't currently have them clearly stated. You can try to do it yourself or hire a company like mine, mPower Advisors, to help you.

Why do you need to sell an interview candidate?

At the time of this writing the labor market is tightening. There are fewer candidates applying for each job, and there are fewer good candidates who are actively looking. The best candidates will have more opportunities than just your company – this is why getting the candidate excited about your company is critically important.

Acumen

The Acumen assessment uncovers whether a candidate can assess situations and performance, and make good decisions on external factors. It also does the same internally to determine if he can understand, decide and control his actions.

Talent Assessment & Gap Analysis

Each viable candidate will be given a talent assessment. After the candidate takes this assessment, it is compared to the standard (the Benchmark) via a Gap Analysis report– the gap between the perfect hire (as determined by the stakeholders) and this candidate.

Many factors determine if the candidate is the right fit: the cover letter, resume, interviews, references and the online Behavioral Assessment. The assessment is objective, so it cuts through the nervousness – or charisma – that the candidate displays that may affect the interviewer's perception. The assessment also takes away the unconscious bias of the interviewer.

Second Interview

The second interview gathers more data on the areas of concern from the first interview and the assessment. This is also a great time to dive deep into the resume, asking specifics about past managers.

Use the questions provided by the Job Report that pertain to the areas of concern from the assessment. Based on the answers to the questions, discern if the gaps from the report can be bridged.

This process will be more objective than the first interview. This will help reduce any known or unknown biases, and bring to light any blind spots that were not seen in the first interviews. Also remember to continue to make a great impression and sell the company. The goal is for the candidate to accept a reasonable offer if you make one, so the candidate has to want to work at the company.

Assuming everything went well, this is a great time to discuss the candidate's references. Stress that your rigorous hiring methods do not let weak candidates become employees. To ensure that what is on the resume is the truth, reference checks are taken seriously.

Making an offer at the end of the second interview, while done by some, is not recommended. Even if there were only a few areas from the Gap Report in which to dig deeper, the resume deep dive did not uncover any surprises, and if the hiring manager is prepared to make an offer the same day, the reference checks need to be executed.

This can also be a time when you find out if the candidate is really serious, or if she is just trying to get an offer to either raise the salary at the current job, or to get another company to offer more.

Post Interview Roundtable/Interview Candidate Roundtable

The roundtable is a discussion among the people who interviewed the candidate to determine who should be given an offer based on the resume, interviews and assessments. The goal of the roundtable is to discuss what was asked and what was answered during the interview.

I recommend at least 3 interviewers (I prefer 5). Smaller companies will have fewer, and larger companies will typically have more. Each interviewer should ask different questions, and those questions should align with the person's expertise if possible.

To make a hiring decision, the assessment should make up no more than 30% of the decision. Other components to the hiring decision are the interviews, the job specific test, references, background checks, experience, proximity to work, unexplained job gaps, education level, and responsiveness.

Below is a sample grid that you can use to make a hiring decision. Some things are non-negotiable. You can use this to set expectations and calibrate your interview team. In this model, 100pts is a NO HIRE – the lower the score, the better. You can find this as a

spreadsheet for download at perfecthireblueprint.com. Build your grid with criteria that you should not give an offer to anyone over 25 points. If you give an offer to someone who is over 30 points, you are settling. Don't settle - keep looking for a better fit.

Non-Negotiable	100 points	10 points	5 points	0 points
Criminal Background	Felony, theft, abuse/ violence	Felony -DUI (use some discretion)	Misdemeanor	No Criminal Record
Education Level	HS Diploma	Some College	4 yr. Degree	Masters in field
References	2 negative	1 Negative, 1 Positive	2 Positive, 1 Negative	3 Positive
Direct experience	None	2 yrs. or less	2 to 5 yrs.	5 yrs.+
Gaps in Work History	Unexplained Gaps	Dubious Gaps	1 Explained Gap	No Gaps
Proximity to Job	Not in area	Willing to commute	Within 40 min of worksite	Lives near worksite
Match to Benchmark (13 matches)	More than one red	Few yellow - maybe 1 red	Blue, green and maybe 1 yellow	All blue, maybe a few green
Interview - Experience questions	Mis-Fit (Poor Answers)	C-Player	B-Player	A-Player (Great Answers)
Interview - Behavioral questions	Mis-Fit (Poor Answers)	C-Player	B-Player	A-Player (Great Answers)
Interview - Motivation questions	Mis-Fit (Poor Answers))	C-Player	B-Player	A-Player (Great Answers)
Interview - Skill Questions	Mis-Fit (Poor Answers)	C-Player	B-Player	A-Player (Great Answers)
Total Points				

Summary of interviews

1) Develop the hiring criteria
2) Ensure each interviewer has unique questions
3) Have each interviewer ask the same questions to all candidates
4) Have a brief roundtable after Interview 1 to winnow down the field further (don't waste your time or theirs). Send assessment to all candidates who are going on to interview 2.

5) Have a roundtable after interview 2 to determine: hire or no hire.
6) Have a facilitator of the roundtable to ensure interviewers have equal time to voice opinions, and that all relevant questions are asked and answered.
7) Gain unanimity if possible

Reference Checks

This is an area where many managers fall short. They either don't check references thoroughly enough, or don't check at all. The candidate should give at least 3 references, and the best are former managers, though it is understandable if the current manager is not provided.

I know some larger companies have a person in HR do the reference checks, but I disagree. The hiring manager needs to make the best decision possible, thus more firsthand information is important. So the hiring managers should ask the questions.

In reference checks, it is important what is said, but it is also very important what is not said. The candidate gave you the references, so they should be stellar. If you are expecting to hear very positive comments, neutral responses or lack of comment would be a sign that you should not ignore. Also listen for the tone of voice. If there is not excitement in the conversation, you should try to determine why.

The best reference to check may be one that was not provided by the candidate. If someone in your company knows someone in the candidate's current or prior company who is not on the candidate's reference list, try to talk to that person in a casual way to get candid information and opinion.

> Reference checks are an essential piece of the puzzle that is the candidate's job performance.

Background Check

The background check is an optional step. We don't always do background checks. Criminal background checks should be required if employees are entering clients' homes, but may not be required if they stay in an office.

We also recommend that a credit check be done for anyone with access to the company's financial accounts. If you want to do a background check, I recommend that you go to nationalcrimesearch.com. You can go there directly, sign up and get a report with any of this info: criminal history, sex offender status, SSN validation, list of known aliases, list of

known addresses, terrorist search, motor vehicle report, credit report, federal district court search, bankruptcy search, federal & state tax lien search, civil litigation search.

The Offer

You need to think about more than just the cost of hiring – think about the value you will gain.

If the company doesn't feel comfortable about a high price to be paid, consider a variable compensation model. One model that I like and have instituted in many places is the Management by Objective, or MBO. For example, let's take 20% of the person's total compensation and tie it to attaining goals and objectives. Speaking broadly, if the objectives bring in revenue or reduce expenses, then the company may have the money to pay the 20%.

Personal assessments give an indication of what is important to the individual. If the person is risk averse, then benefits might be more important to them. If the person wants to be seen as successful, then public recognition or a fancy title may be more important than a higher salary.

> The tricky part about compensation is to be aware of what motivates the person. If the business is small, there is more leeway for compensation variation.

Small businesses may not be able to compete with larger businesses when it comes to compensation and benefits. But small businesses do offer other intangibles, such as flexibility in work hours, that allow people to spend time with children or elderly family. Working from home (or other remote locations like shared office space) is often an added benefit for solo workers.

When an offer is given, the hiring manger should have a good idea that it will be accepted. The salary requirements and other NEEDS should have been uncovered and explored before the offer is given.

Other needs could include:

- Insurance and other benefits
- Vacation already scheduled
- Upcoming Paternity leave
- Times when the candidate cannot work
- Work/life balance – whatever that is for the candidate
- Any relocation expenses that the candidate will absorb to take the job

How do you know if the offer will be accepted?

If the interviews were conducted properly, the candidate should be champing at the bit to get an offer and accept it. If the job is a great fit, the conversations with the interviewers were positive, the company is a great fit, you have built a good rapport as the hiring manager, and the compensation is on par, you should be able to close the candidate. If you don't know for certain that your offer will be accepted, then you have missed some steps in the earlier stages.

If you're worried about offering too much and throwing off your compensation structure, consider a "signing bonus." This is a one-time deal sweetener that won't come back to haunt you every year in the future. Even in times when the hiring market was not very competitive, I typically gave a small signing bonus because it was unexpected, was very meaningful to the candidate, and helped ensure a motivated new hire.

If you finally get all of the information you need and propose a win/win acceptable offer, you won't have to worry about the candidate waiting for another offer or surprisingly not showing up on day 1.

Post Offer

Congratulations, you've followed an effective process to get the right candidates into interviews, interviewed well, checked all the data you can find on the candidate, made an offer, and it was accepted. You should feel good about yourself - you are done, right? **Wrong.** You are not done until the candidate shows up for work and gets through Day 1.

We've seen situations where a candidate will verbally accept a job offer, then change her mind the next day. You then have to re-open the job listing, start sourcing candidates and start the whole process over again. The steps below will outline how to prevent this.

1. **Make an offer** that the candidate will happily accept. It may include an unexpected bonus just to get the candidate excited about the job. Tell her that you fought for more incentives, as a way to motivate her.
2. **Now ask** – "Is this decision yours alone? Does anyone else have a say in this decision?" Even if she says no, ask, "What will your spouse think of this decision? Will your spouse be fully supportive?" If there is hesitation, you don't have a deal yet.
3. If #2 is not a solid answer, **walk the candidate through** this process:
    a. "What will your spouse say?"
    b. "Why are you accepting this offer? Is it a better opportunity than your current job? Be ready to tell your spouse why this job is a better fit. Do you think the reasons are convincing? Why is this transition good for your spouse?"

    c. Is there anyone else who will influence this decision? Walk through b. again for this person.

4. **Now ask** – "When you give your notice for your current position, what reaction do you expect?"

    a. "Will they be happy for you?"

    b. "Will they want you to stay more than 2 weeks?"

    c. "Will they be unhappy and walk you to the door?"

    d. "Will they counter-offer with, 'What will it take for you to stay?'" (This question will expose whether you are being used to get a raise at the current position.)

        i. "If they do, what will you do?"

        ii. "If you decide to stay,

            1. do you think your wanting to leave will shake the trust they have in you? If so, do you think that may put a target on your back?"

            2. "Will the reasons that you want to leave now change? Will you want to leave only a few months from now when nothing really changes?"

        iii. I recommend that you go in and tell them, "I'm giving my notice today. I've given this a lot of thought, and this is an opportunity that is great for me. I've put a lot of thought into this and my mind is made up.

        iv. If they push further, tell them, "There is nothing you can say that will convince me to stay. I am excited for the transition and so is my family. Please don't try to jump through hoops to keep me. It may be flattering to me, but the basic reasons for leaving will not change."

            1. The candidate is saving them all the work that it would take to counter offer.

                a. (By the way, if the old company counter offers, the candidate will look to you to sweeten the deal. Nip that in the bud. That is why you tell them up front that you fought for them and gave them a very good, motivating offer. She is less likely to come back asking for more if she feels you've already fought for her.)

            2. If she rejected the counter offer, more bad feelings would result. Terms like *ungrateful* and *manipulative* may be used.

5. **To test the eagerness of the candidate**, **ask** – "Would you like some pre-work that you can do before you arrive to ensure you hit the ground running?"

    a. If she answers yes, you should feel pretty good that she will show up.

    b. If she answers no, pause and let her fill in the dead air. She'll either reconsider or answer why she will not have time to look at it before she starts.

    c. Either way, this question will give you more comfort depending on the answer.

6. **To really seal the deal**, send flowers to the house with a note, "Welcome to our family, you'll make us even better."
   a. If there was any doubt in her mind, her guilt and/or her spouse's will prevent any reconsideration.
   b. This gives the spouse confidence that the new company cares and that the right choice was made.
   c. An alternative (or supplement) would be to send some company clothing that can help them envision being part of the team.

And you thought you were done when you gave an offer!

Follow this process, and your star prospects will show up eager to contribute immediately.

Onboarding

Now that you've hired the best value candidate, how do you keep her excited about the opportunity? She has made the decision to leave where she was to join your company, and likely is expecting this change to be a great career move. But if the new company throws the new employee right into the job without any training, that excitement will dissipate and resentment may creep in.

60% of companies don't set onboarding goals. This often leads to dissent among new employees. I hate to see this happen at companies – that's why I put such an emphasis on onboarding.

Onboarding is important for the employee and the company. One's great potential can be squandered by poor onboarding. A good onboarding process should include (ideally):

- Having their equipment ready when they arrive
    - Desk/office is set up
    - Computer is set up and updates/software are installed
    - Phone is set up
- Orientation
    - An overview of the benefits and filling out HR forms
    - A personal walkthrough of the high points of the employee handbook
    - Time to read the handbook in the first week (may not be extensive, but prevents future issues)
    - Facility tour
- A mentor who will answer questions (even the "stupid" questions)
- A development plan that bridges the gap between the ideal candidate and the new hire's skillset

- Shadowing another person doing the same or similar job
- An opportunity for others in the group to meet the new hire out of the office (for example, a group lunch)
- A presentation from the new hire on knowledge that will help others, or on what was learned in the first week or two

Assigning MBOs/goals (paid or unpaid) to the new hire to facilitate a fast ramp up and help prioritize what is important. (While MBOs for employees are jointly set, these first MBOs should be prescribed.)

Problem: hiring the right person who is successful in a year

1. On-boarding plan is put in place
2. Preparations for hire's first day are completed
3. Personalized job-related development plan is created (optional, but recommended)
4. New hire executes on-boarding plan
5. Formal review is done with candidate at 30, 60 and 90 days at a minimum

Why I Use TTI Assessments

There are a lot of assessments available today. The assessments that I use are the best for me and my clients. I've taken all kinds of assessments in the past. The first one that I remember taking was Myers-Briggs (now MBTI) years ago, and it was insightful. I was later introduced to DISC, which has a similar lineage, and I found it better for me and I'll tell you why below. There are many companies that offer DISC, just as many offer MBTI, but they are not all equal.

Accurate/Predictive

My clients and I have found the results to not only give us insight into the person being assessed, but they also give us a view into the future. TTI just reaffirmed the validity of Behaviors and Motivators via an independent study in 2015.

Understandable

Unlike other assessments, the TTI assessments make sense to the typical reader that has not spent hours trying to understand the jargon. The terminology is not the use of 4 letters, but uses clear language such as Conductor, Persuader or Analyzer. These terms are accessible to all employees and can be used in work interactions.

Applicable

The information in the assessments can be applied immediately. The information can shape a new hire's onboarding plan, or an employee's performance plan, or for setting goals. The reports give the reader ways to successfully interact with the person assessed. This leads to fewer misunderstandings and ultimately helps create a work environment for all employees to thrive.

Safe for Hiring

I see the interviewer's biases all the time when hiring. Sometimes it is subtle, but other times it is overt. I've had hiring managers say that they prefer only men or only women, and only in a certain age range, or only married. We discuss this when creating a job Benchmark, but none of this appears in the Benchmark assessment. And I have seen that when a Benchmark is used, biases are reconsidered.

Continuous Education

TTI continually educates their certified Value Added Associates (VAA). To ensure the person getting the report understands the results, the assessments are not sold by TTI to the company that is hiring. The assessment is administered by a VAA and the report is debriefed with the end client so that the report is fully understood in the context of the intended job. The reports are easily digestible, but there are important nuances that only a Certified VAA who has debriefed many assessments can fully understand. I have delivered hundreds (approaching 1000) of reports, and each time the reports are improved, there is even more data that can be gleaned from the combination of assessments.

Social Proof

Over 100,000 companies have used TTI assessments. Over 22 Million TTI SI assessments have been taken since 2000, and another assessment is taken every 7 seconds around the world. TTI is written up in business journals and often quoted as being an authority on unbiased, accurate assessments.

Science of Self

TTI does extensive research to ensure the assessments trigger the appropriate parts of the brain. This is also used in validating the assessment accuracy in other languages.
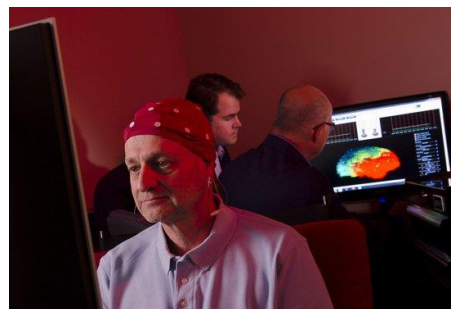
For these reasons and many more, TTI is my "go to" company, and the TriMetrix HD assessment is what I count on for hiring A-players. To see samples of the reports mentioned in this process, visit perfecthireblueprint.com/resources. For more information about TTI, visit ttisuccessinsights.com/why-tti.

Benefits of This Process

If the Perfect Hire Blueprint process is followed, the likelihood of a good hire is very high. Other benefits include:

- Perception that the company is ethical, selective (full of A-players), and thoughtful.
    - Ethical – follows the rules and laws
    - Selective – enables the cream to rise to the top
    - Thoughtful – treats candidates with respect
- Confidence that laws are not broken
- Better retention – existing employees recognize the benefits of the process
- Efficiency – spend time only with the right people and doing the right things
- Saving money – cuts the cost of a mis-fit
- Increasing customer satisfaction – clients only deal with A-players
- May increase margins – customers will pay more for a better service or product
- Lower overhead – A-players need less supervision: should be able to reduce the manager to employee ratio
- Life balance – leaders worry less because they trust the competence of the team, and the leaders are called less after hours to clean up mistakes

What are people saying?

"David Clough and his crew were invaluable in my efforts to hire an Administrative Assistant in my accounting practice. His company placed the online ads and did the initial screening which eliminated all people who did not have the skills to perform the work or were located hundreds (or thousands) of miles away. They also did the next screening to look more deeply into their background and do the initial telephone interview.

They presented us with a list of candidates and we then took over and did the in person interviews. The candidates took the TriMetrix Assessment and Dave went over the results of the test with me and made his recommendations.

The results have been spectacular. The person we hired has been much better than we had anticipated when we first started the process. She has been with us for three tax seasons now and is constantly looking to improve what she does and to take on more responsibility.

I highly recommend Dave & his company if you are trying to add good people to your team."

- Thomas Arrison, Vallas & Arrison, PC

From the company that hired a senior engineer referenced on Page 6:

"So far so good. He seems to be catching on quickly. He's enthusiastic and tells us he really enjoys what he's doing. I believe he's going to work out fine!"

- Steven Powers, President, Intrepid Advisors LLC

"Dave was hired to consult our Club on the hiring process. A big part of our success was from implementing the assessment within our hiring process. The benchmarking part was incredibly helpful. Comparing a candidate's attributes to our ideal employee was invaluable and gave us the confidence to make hard decisions on potential hires. Over the past 4 years with Dave's systems, I have hired over 10 employees and each one has been an asset to our company. I would recommend Dave to any company looking to improve their hiring process as well as improving or creating the right culture."

-Jason Deranian, Director of Fitness & Sales, Mount Auburn Athletic Club

Summary

Hiring the right people can make or break a business. Every hire is important when a company is small, some of these hires will be your future leaders, and key positions of leadership are critically important in larger companies. The quality of the people and the fit within the company culture determines how the person will thrive in the position.

The sum of the hires determines the growth trajectory of the company. A-players, while they may cost a little more, are worth it because you'll get a higher multiple of ROI on A-players than B-players or lower. Don't settle; work hard and recruit the right person that is the perfect hire for the job and the company.

Follow the Perfect Hire Blueprint and stop making the hiring mistakes that plague companies of all sizes. While any business can follow all these steps and improve their hiring process without the assessments, adding proven, EEOC compliant assessments to the

hiring process will uncover blind spots and biases and will take hiring to another level that attracts A-players and leads to the retention of your existing A-players.

I have referenced information for specific sections in previous sections. These include helpful email communication and telephone scripts, and you can get them [here](#). For additional resources go to www.PerfectHireBlueprint.com. There you will find additional information for hiring and retaining A-players, a sample of the assessments that I use, and an opportunity to take the assessment yourself. You'll be able to see how "spot-on" it is in capturing the whole person, taking most of the guesswork out of hiring.

The assessment report is like a user manual for an employee; you'll know what to do and what not to do, and how your interactions can benefit both the employee and the company. The stereotype says that people don't read manuals. Reading the assessment report will likely be the difference between an OK hire and a stellar, long-term employee and key contributor.

Now that you know the secret, why would you risk your company by ignoring this advice and continuing to hire with your gut? I want you to beat the odds, and grow a successful and profitable business.

To your success!

* * *

If you're interested in the complete Perfect Hire Blueprint book, which has much more detail about how to hire A-Players, visit perfecthireblueprint.com.