5 STEPS TO MASTERING THE HIRING PROCESS
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Employees are the lifeblood of any organization. They perform tasks necessary to keep your business running. They interact with customers, ensuring they receive the products or services your company provides.

Yet that’s not all. The right employees bring something new to the table, whether an innovative idea or a great attitude that keeps their co-workers motivated. In other words, employees have the potential to contribute to your organization’s growth while making it a great place to come to every day.

However, organizations struggle to hold on to employees. While they may leave for various reasons, the problem often starts before the first day. In fact, the Harvard Business Review found that poor hiring decisions are responsible for as much as 80 percent of employee turnover.

Luckily, employee turnover can be reduced with the implementation of good practices. Now, you may be thinking, “Great, I just need to hire the right employee. Where do I begin? How do I know my new hire is the best one?”
In this guide, we’ll cover the five steps that will help you master the hiring process and deliver a great candidate experience.

Before jumping in, take a step back and understand your current hiring approach.

Next:
Evaluate Your Current Hiring Approach
EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT HIRING APPROACH
Evaluate Your Current Hiring Approach

Finding and hiring employees is a costly game. According to a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) study, employers typically spend six to nine months of a former employee’s salary finding and training a replacement.

Before you can improve your recruitment process, you must have a clear idea of its current state. Evaluate this process honestly by mapping the current journey candidates travel when they apply for jobs.

Follow every step, from how your listings are perceived to the application process to the interview to, most importantly, the follow-up. Create a seamless flow by identifying any disconnects and addressing them accordingly. If necessary, consider polling previous applicants for additional feedback and insight.

Set Goals

Before re-defining your candidate experience, it’s important to know exactly what you’d like to accomplish over both the short and long term. You can identify and set benchmarks for things like recruiter accountability, improved quality, an increased number of applicants, more optimized applicant tracking and management, and more.
Remember, you can’t possibly know if you’re heading in the right direction with your recruiting process if you can’t measure quantifiable results along the way.

With a solid understanding of your current process, you’re ready to work on improvement. Let’s start by thinking about what every hiring professional dreams of: hiring the ideal candidate.

**Goal examples:**

- Reduce unqualified candidates by **20 percent**
- Reduce the time from the job posting to hire by **three weeks**
- Increase the number of applications via social media channels by **50 percent**

**Key Takeaways:**

Before you can **improve** your recruitment process, you must have an idea of its current state.

Before you **re-define** your candidate experience, it’s important to know what you’d like to accomplish over both the long and short term. You can do this by **setting goals**.

Next:

**Step 1: Understand What You Want from Your New Hire**
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A great applicant may possess a superb educational background and skillset, but that’s not all you need to look for. Dig deeper and discover more about candidates’ personalities. Research by the Harvard Business Review found that a person with higher emotional intelligence (EQ) is more likely to perform better at work.

While it isn’t necessary to prepare a battery of tests for applicants to plow through, you should know exactly what behavioral qualities to look for. This will help you present better questions and scenarios during interviews (more on that later in this guide).

Let’s walk through some “soft skills” you should consider when forming a list of candidate expectations.

Adaptability

Today’s business environments are dynamic. Employees who refuse to change often grow frustrated with their jobs and may never advance their careers. It’s very important to find team members who not only recognize opportunities for change, but embrace them.

Think about times when your current employees were confronted by change or forced into uncomfortable, unfamiliar situations. Were they able to overcome? Did they embrace the challenges?
The right person was flexible and, despite difficulties, successfully adapted to the change. He or she maintained a positive working attitude and rose to the challenge. Future employees should follow suit.

**Temperament**

Everyone has stressful days at work. Meetings may last too long and co-workers may rub each other the wrong way. Handling and resolving these conflicts isn’t every applicant’s strength.

Think about times when your employees incorrectly handled stress. What caused the stress? How could they have handled it differently? Are they still with your organization?

Ideal candidates should have previous experience resolving conflicts with colleagues, bosses, or subordinates. During interviews, let candidates open up about how mood swings have affected their performance and relationships.

**Empathy**

Empathy is a hot term in today’s HR world, and for good reason. It’s especially important for employees who constantly interact with people. This includes both remote workers, such as customer support representatives, and in-person workers, such as cashiers.
Think back to conflicts that your current employees resolved successfully. Were they aware of the causes? Were they able to identify a behavior change in the offended co-workers? Are they now better able to read situations and anticipate outcomes?

Empathy can help co-workers both avoid unpleasant situations and foster a stronger bond between themselves.

**Love of Learning**

Strong candidates should be open to correction and new knowledge. Desiring to learn new things is not enough; they must also acknowledge mistakes and learn from them.

To a coachable person, endless opportunities are available, especially when he or she has a positive attitude and turns a mistake into a learning experience.

Consider successful employees who have experienced failure. What did they learn? What would they have changed? In the same way, candidates should be able to recognize mistakes, consider how they could have changed an outcome, and maintain a desire to improve despite failure.

**A Resume Is Never Enough**

A resume, or even an interview, will never allow you to fully know a candidate. Sure, these will give you some information, but you can never know if a candidate is just putting on an act.
Social media can help you see what’s behind official papers.

According to Rosemary Haefner, chief human resource officer of CareerBuilder, “Tools such as Facebook and Twitter enable employers to get a glimpse of who candidates are outside the confines of a resume or cover letter.”

By checking candidates’ social media profiles, you evaluate whether they comport themselves with professionalism, and also see what others post about them. Individuals’ posts or the pages they like can reveal more information than they are aware of.

Understanding exactly what you want from a new hire can lay a solid foundation for the rest of the hiring process, allowing you to manage expectations for both you and your potential candidates.

Once you have a checklist of the qualities to look for, it’s time to start a more informed candidate search!

Key Takeaways:

- **Adaptability**, **temperament**, and **empathy** are all “soft skills” you should consider when forming a list of candidate expectations.

- Strong candidates should be **coachable**, meaning they should be open to correction and new knowledge.

- A resume, or even an interview, will never allow you to **fully** know a candidate. **Social media** can help you determine a candidate’s true personality.

Next:
Step 2: Identify Where to Find Your Best Candidates
STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHERE TO FIND YOUR BEST CANDIDATES
Step 2: Identify Where to Find Your Best Candidates

Finding the right candidates comes down to one simple rule:

“Be where your candidates are.”

Unfortunately, following this rule is easier said than done. Today’s employers have a variety of options, from job board postings to hiring events to LinkedIn. Every industry is different; you may need to better target your search.

In this section, we’ll review a few of the most important channels available for your candidate search. If your organization has previous experience with the hiring process, you may be familiar with candidate search best practices, but it never hurts to review!

Job Boards

General job boards like Indeed and Monster give companies instant access to many candidates and offer other advantages to streamline the hiring process.
Employers can use job postings as a branding tool by providing a company and culture overview, along with job details. You can also search through uploaded resumes and reach out to people who may be passively job searching.

Of course, general job boards can have their disadvantages. Implementing applicant filters that are too stringent can cause you to miss out on applicants.

One way around this is to use specialized job boards that may better fit your industry or business stage. These boards attract specific candidates, removing the need for filtering and in-depth vetting of candidates required on more generalized boards.

Here are some examples of specialized job boards in various industries:

- **allretailjobs** — Used by retailers and franchises to find candidates at all career stages, from sales reps to corporate executives

- **AngelList** — Used by startups to attract new talent, including developers, growthhackers, sales reps and even co-founders

- **idealList** — A non-profit clearinghouse that connects thousands of applicants to a large directory of non-profit jobs

- **Manufacturing Jobs.com** — Used by manufacturing and production employers to find candidates in plant management, quality control, engineering, logistics, and more
Go Social

Sometimes you need to do more than run an ad for a job opening; this ad may never reach the perfect candidate.

Branch out by searching for employees through social media. According to recent statistics, 84 percent of organizations recruit candidates on social media. Many potential candidates only passively job search, so you must help them easily discover that you’re hiring.

One of the best business platforms is LinkedIn. You can recruit candidates by visiting their LinkedIn profiles and reviewing their work experience. To speed and simplify the recruitment process, be sure to know all the possibilities LinkedIn offers and how to properly use them.

Develop Your Brand

Once you create a social media account, be sure to develop a strong corporate brand. Many job seekers won’t work for a company with a bad reputation.

According to professionals from the Liquid Creativity branding agency in Melbourne, the more confident you are, the more you can strengthen attitudes regarding your organization. If you show hesitation or uncertainty, you risk losing your audience.
Don’t forget to add hashtags and make your posts public so individuals who don’t follow you can see your posts. Some popular Twitter hashtags include:

- #hiring
- #tweetmyjobs
- #HR
- #jobopening
- #jobposting

There are many advantages to social media; you just have to find a way to use the strategies efficiently. Incorporating these benefits into your hiring strategy will help you overcome the difficulties of the recruitment process.

**Incentivize Current Employees**

Never forget that the power of networking includes the people right in your office! Employee referral programs are a great way to incentivize current employees to attract new talent.
Bonuses are typically only a fraction of full-time salaries (between $1,000 and $5,000)—worthwhile investments that all organizations should consider.

The benefits don’t end there. Organizations with employee referral programs have an average retention rate of 46 percent, while organizations that only use job boards have an average retention rate of 33 percent. Barry Maher of Barry Maher & Associates explains that when it comes to your current employees:

“[They] know what it takes to do the job. They have a vested interest in bringing in people who will make the workload lighter, not heavier.

Each company will use a different mix of recruiting channels in their hiring processes. Some may rely exclusively on specialized job boards and LinkedIn, while others may actively engage potential hires via other social media channels.
Both your ideal candidates and your industry will determine the best channels for you.

Step 2: Identify Where to Find Your Best Candidates

Next:
Step 3: Create a Seamless Recruiting Process
STEP 3: CREATE A SEAMLESS RECRUITING PROCESS
Step 3: Create a Seamless Recruiting Process

Before you publish those job postings and social media updates, seriously consider what exactly to write. Go beyond a few-sentence job description. What company image do you want to portray? What’s the best way to organize applicants and choose the best candidates?

A seamless recruiting process can answer these questions by keeping all your efforts centered around a single goal: finding the best candidates. In this section, we’ll cover job description tips and ways to stay organized when lining up interviews.

Write a Great Job Description

Every company wants to attract the best and brightest talent, but not every organization is looking for straight-laced employees with traditional personalities. Creative organizations, unique start-ups, and companies with eccentric leaders often look for employees who can fit their unconventional company visions.

People who fit outside the box don’t respond to generic job postings. If you want to attract employees who complement your standout team, tailor your job posting to weed out the more traditional types. If your company is the type that looks for out-of-the-box people, then consider some of the following bold tactics.
KEEP IT REAL

Traditional advice on writing a job posting recommends providing a detailed job description and a list of the qualifications you’re looking for. While these components are certainly important, they are also boring and don’t hone in on the type of people your company needs.

Of course, there are rules about discrimination in job postings that prevent companies from specifying about gender, age, or religious affiliation. That said, you can be real about wanting someone with an edgy attitude, a knack for working with an off-the-wall team, or the ability to handle high-maintenance clients.

Attention-grabbing language in your job posting will catch the eye of the off-center personalities you’re after.

SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS

It’s hard to attract the right applicants if you don’t reveal your company culture and who you really are. Lay everything out in your job posting — let candidates know exactly what they’re getting themselves into, even if it’s off-beat or unconventional.

If you’re clear about what working at your organization is really like, you’ll receive resumes from people excited to join. Don’t be afraid to inject your post with humor or sarcasm, even if it pushes the envelope. If someone replies to your colorful ad, you can have confidence that his
or her personality can handle the vibe of your organization.

**SPELL IT OUT**

If you have trouble finding good candidates, broaden your reach and write a job post that goes viral. Get micro-specific about the job details. The more you cut to the chase in your description, the more likely you will be to attract candidates who can really hack it on the job.

Does the position involve grunt work or boring meetings? Put it right out there. Get raw and authentic so you can filter out the weaklings who can’t handle the real tasks or unglamorous challenges.

A bold job posting will capture the attention of open-minded, tough individuals who can take the heat and bring unique strengths to your organization.

**LIMIT ADJECTIVES**

In an online recruiting ad, the more adjectives you use to describe the imagined candidate, the more likely the ad will contain a subtle gender bias. For example, words like “dominant” are unconsciously associated with masculinity, while words like “committed” are often linked with femininity.

To reach a larger talent pool, purge gendered language and limit adjectives, ensuring your ads reach out equally to men and women.
Use the Right Technology

To ease the process of sifting through applicant pools, be sure your online recruiting efforts leverage today’s technology. Applicant tracking software (ATS) solutions such as HiringThing are specifically designed for this purpose.

An ATS can bring many benefits to your recruiting process by:

- Keeping your company in compliance by helping monitor diversity objectives
- Streamlining initial candidate vetting by automating the removal of unqualified candidates
- Eliminating hours of manual applicant review, saving your organization valuable time and labor dollars
- Identifying the strongest candidates based on predetermined qualifications and traits
- Providing you with powerful reporting tools to monitor hiring activities across your organization and evaluate the effectiveness of your recruiting channels
Step 3: Create a Seamless Recruiting Process

Organize Your Interview Scheduling Process

When scheduling interviews, you want to eliminate scheduling mishaps, double bookings, and back-and-forth communication, especially when an entire recruiting team is involved.

Integrated calendars like HiringThing’s can allow you to view upcoming appointments, as well as free/busy times for your entire recruiting team. This calendar works with Google, Apple, iCal, Outlook.com, Exchange, and your office 365 calendar.
Many companies also use computer algorithms to narrow down the applicant pool. Researchers are busy developing artificial intelligence (AI) applications that can sift through candidates with a focus only on qualifications — blind to gender, race, and other potentially biasing factors.

An app called Joonko, for example, is an AI-powered diversity coach designed to root out workplace bias. Another app, called Blendoor, hides a candidate’s name, age, photo, etc. so employers only focus on job qualifications.

With a solid recruiting process, you can be sure to identify the most qualified candidates.

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Key Takeaways:

- If your company is the type that looks for out-of-the-box people, then you should consider taking on bold tactics when writing job descriptions.

- To ease the process of sifting through applicant pools, applicant tracking systems (ATS) solutions such as HiringThing, can bring many benefits to your recruiting process.

- You can organize your interview scheduling process to avoid double bookings, and back-and-forth communication by utilizing integrated calendars like HiringThing’s.
STEP 4: CHOOSE THE BEST CANDIDATES
Step 4: Choose the Best Candidates

Nearly a quarter of today’s job applicants attest that after positive experiences with potential employers, they are more likely to increase their relationships with the employers’ brands, including through future purchases and ongoing networking.

The centerpiece of the candidate experience? The interview, of course.

Emphasize Authenticity and Transparency

One way in which many recruiters fail to satisfy candidates is through a perceived lack of transparency. Set exact expectations concerning what the interview process will entail. Be open and honest about the job role, what you are looking for in the ideal candidate, and what the competition looks like. Make sure that everyone who interacts with candidates is on the same page concerning how information is shared and presented.
Consider Video Interviews

Video interviews with multiple participants can help counteract hiring bias

While video interviewing may seem to contradict the anonymizing aspects of the online recruiting process, it can actually reduce hiring biases. Because they are often viewed by multiple people, video interviews can act as a check and balance to inherent biases.
While video interviewing gives indications about a candidate’s attractiveness, accent, race, age, and other characteristics, companies can train interviewers to focus only on criteria relevant to the job in question. Video interviews can also be far more cost effective than transporting candidates for in-person interviews. This allows employers to interview more extensively.

**More Than the Traditional Interview**

It’s no secret that traditional job interviews do very little to show candidates’ true colors. In fact, a study by the Harvard Review Board showed that most people (81 percent) lie during interviews. Candidates give employers the answers they want to hear, making it difficult for employers to assess their actual skills and knowledge. Traditional job interviews show how confidently candidates can answer questions, but succeeding on the job involves much more than the ability to pay lip service to an employer.

Fortunately, a better screening method has arisen. This ironclad interview process helps employers staff their businesses with the right people, helping reduce the risk of turnover caused by hiring individuals who don’t fit.

Following are some of the most popular trends in new screening practices:
CASE STUDIES

Case studies put candidates’ smarts to the test by requiring them to solve problems on the spot. Applicants have the chance to show off their true analytical abilities, prove they can work well under pressure, and demonstrate their methods of thinking and approaching projects.

Case studies should not pressure candidates to do each job perfectly; that’s not the point. The real exercise is evaluating how they think and handle themselves in stressful situations.

TRIAL WORKDAYS

After an applicant has successfully made it through several interview rounds, consider asking him or her to step into the new role for a day. A trial day* allows an employer to see how an applicant fits into the office environment, how he or she works with the rest of the team, and how he or she can adapt to a given role.

This type of trial run is also beneficial to the candidate, giving him or her the chance to experience the company’s culture first hand. A trial work day is a technique to be used when a candidate has nearly passed the interview process or when a manager wants to confirm the decision before making a formal offer.

*Trial day: Please note that you may have to compensate an applicant for a trial work day.
In short, a trial workday gives both parties an out if they change their minds at the last minute.

THE TEAM PROJECT

Very few people spend an entire day working solo. Most employees are members of a team, and the ability to work with others is an essential skill to look for when recruiting new hires.

Rather than asking, “How well do you work in a team setting?” or another standard question, try putting a candidate’s teamwork skills to the test by asking him or her to complete a small group project. You can conduct a team project interview with a group of candidates, or you can put an applicant to work with his or her would-be team.

In either situation, you can assess how a candidate meshes with others, how he or she fits into a team dynamic, and what role he or she plays within a group.

FOLLOW-UP

Don’t neglect follow-up. This is consistently where many candidates feel the experience takes a turn for the worse. Keep in mind that this final step will make the most lasting impression.

If you do what you say, not only will you be able to maintain relationships that could come to fruition in the future, but you’ll be more likely to retain candidates as customers.
If you take the time to follow up — even if the news isn’t what the person hoped for — you will be respected, appreciated, and remembered.

**Key Takeaways:**

Nearly a quarter of today’s job applicants attest that after **positive experiences** with potential employers, they are **more likely** to increase their relationship with the employer’s brands.

- Putting an emphasis on **authenticity** and **transparency** can bring greater satisfaction to a candidate’s interview process.

- Video interviews with multiple participants can help **counteract hiring biases**, and also can be far more **cost effective** than transporting candidates for in-person interviews.

Next:
Step 5: Create a Great Onboarding Process
STEP 5: CREATE A GREAT ONBOARDING PROCESS
Step 5: Create a Great Onboarding Process

While many of us would love to think the offer letter marks the end of the hiring process, that’s far from the case. Employers are responsible for setting up new hires for success. A solid onboarding process is crucial.

Use Onboarding Documents

Utilize dedicated recruiting and hiring tools that provide documentation features for use throughout the hiring process. For example, HiringThing has an Offer Letter Wizard that allows users to create onboarding documents to accompany a candidate’s offer letter.

You can upload pre-made documents or attach an existing template from your HiringThing library.
Peer-to-Peer In-House Training or Mentoring

Passing knowledge and information from one employee to another is critical for business success. If one of your employees has performed a certain job for a long period of time, he or she has likely learned a great deal about how to best go about it. If you move that employee to another job without asking him or her to train the next person, you will lose much valuable knowledge, and your new employee will have to repeat the learning curve.

If you realize that one employee’s job skill could benefit the rest of your employees, capitalize by holding an in-house seminar. Mentoring is also a great way to use existing resources to create ongoing training. In many cases, the mentor also benefits from what the mentee brings to the table, causing training to work both ways.

If you send an employee to a conference or seminar for training, get the most bang for your buck by asking him or her to present key takeaways to the rest of the team. Not only is it a great way to share new knowledge and skills across an organization, but training others is a vehicle for the trainer to deepen his or her own understanding about the subject matter.

Service Providers

Service providers, such as the Microsoft training program, often offer training with their programs or packages. Generally, the covered topics relate directly to the companies products, but some service providers address broader, industry-related topics.
Whenever you purchase a new product, piece of equipment, or machinery, or even when you renew a license for an existing product, check if the company offers ongoing support training so you can utilize that resource for every new hire that will be using the software or product.

Gamification

Employers may balk at the notion of “entertaining” employees in training, but there’s no hiding from the truth. The more senses we use when engaging with information, the more likely we are to retain it.

Game mechanics are a great way to help employees not just listen to material but actually interact with it.

The gamification of training programs also helps develop strategic thinking, as well as build competitiveness and teamwork.

Popular gaming techniques include:

- Badges
- Leaderboards
- Avatars
- Levels
- Rewards
- Challenges
Learners receive instant feedback on their actions and knowledge, and they learn to self-diagnose their performance as they go.

**Learn from the Best**

Whether you seek to keep up with industry standards or receive critical training about a new machine, growing and learning is an ongoing part of job effectiveness. This doesn’t have to cost anything. A number of industry associations offer free or low-cost training programs for members at annual events, at seminars, or even online.

Since you likely pay a fee for your association membership, this is also a great way to get the most value. Check your trade association website or newsletter for any training programs.

The most important aspect of employee training is whether or not it applies to the real-life situations they will encounter. Too often, employees are trained in inapplicable areas, while being denied training in areas that matter.
Training must be consistent and measurable so you can determine if it is helping employees meet your business goals. Measurability helps you adapt to changing needs as well as fill in crucial gaps in training.

Key Takeaways:

- Employers are responsible for setting up new hires for success, which is why a great onboarding process is crucial.

- Mentoring is a great way to use existing resources to create ongoing employee training.

- The gamification of training programs can help develop strategic thinking, as well as build competitiveness and teamwork.

- Training must be consistent and measurable, so you can determine if it is helping employees meet your business goals.

Next: Putting It All Together
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
Putting It All Together

Congrats! You now have the knowledge to create a seamless hiring process. We’ve covered everything from identifying the right qualities in candidates to helping them onboard during their first days on the job.

Now it’s time to use your new knowledge to revamp your candidate hiring process. We recommend approaching this through a method we’ve all been familiar with since childhood: the telling of a story.

Storyboard

You can improve your candidate experience by creating a story that envisions your new process. By storyboarding a new “scene” (step by step — like watching a film), you can tap into a candidate’s emotions throughout the recruitment and hiring process.

Here are some key areas to focus on when mapping out your new and improved process:

- Efficiency
- Convenience
- Enhanced communication
At HiringThing, we understand that no business can succeed without the right employees. However, the hiring process, which involves multiple people, tools, and steps, can easily lead to a long, inefficient candidate journey that doesn’t guarantee the best person is hired.

The right processes help ensure you find the right candidate who not only fits the open position, but contributes to your company’s culture and morale. Our five steps will get you on the right track.
It’s easy to get started sourcing top talent, hiring quickly, and doing great work with HiringThing.

Start your free 14-day trial today!

https://www.hiringthing.com/plans-and-pricing.html