

# 6 Step Hiring Process

A photograph of a modern conference room. In the foreground, several dark brown upholstered chairs with black legs are arranged around a long, dark wooden conference table. The table is supported by gold-colored metal legs. In the background, the word "CHANGE" is written in large, bold, teal 3D letters against a white wall.

**CHANGE**

**Employee Talent Is Your Most Valuable Asset**

**Learn How to Hire the Best!**

# 6 Step Hiring Process

Recent studies confirm the importance of an organization's talent. Executives recognize that recruiting, managing and retaining high performing talent is not only a competitive advantage but it is imperative for survival. The rapid change in business today has put an even higher value on attracting and retaining high performers.

With the focus on recruiting high performing talent at all levels of our businesses, we need to create or revisit the process by which we recruit to make sure we are effective in attracting and hiring the candidates who will provide the maximum contribution to our business goals.

There are two key things to measure when evaluating a hiring process. We focus on the cost of turnover because it is significant and relatively easy to measure. The most conservative turnover study I have seen recently, and there are many available, is from the Center for American Progress which states that, on average, the cost of turnover for an employee is 21%. This ranges from just under \$5,000 for entry level workers to well over \$20,000 for more highly compensated workers. That is a very significant cost to your bottom line if you have even average turnover!

**“Getting the right people in the right jobs is a lot more important than developing a strategy.”**

*Jack Welch*

The other important measure is productivity. Measuring productivity can be straightforward in some jobs which have objective measures. Consider sales jobs where you can compare revenue contributions for different sales people. However, measuring productivity in many jobs is tough. The fact is, hiring highly productive candidates has an even bigger impact on your bottom line than simply avoiding turnover.

# Hiring Challenges:

Many organizations are using the same process of hiring that has been used for decades. We post a job, review resumes and/or applications, interview, maybe do a background or reference check, and hire. The world has changed and our hiring process must change with it!

## Problems with the “old way”

- An article in The Journal of Organizational Psychology observed that 26% of the time the hiring decision is made in the first 5 minutes of the interview. 50% decide in the first 15 minutes. We take more time to research and buy office equipment!
- Over 50% of resumes have exaggerated or faulty information.
- We get very little value from reference checks due to fear of litigation.
- Interviewees are better trained on how to present themselves than hiring managers are on interviewing.

The fundamental issue is we don't have good objective information with which to make an informed hiring decision. This leads to hiring by instinct (gut feel). Studies show that this results in a hire which meets your expectations less than 25% of the time. Surely we can do better than that!

Here are some thoughts on a 6 step process that will help you get better results.

**“The secret of my success is that we have gone to exceptional lengths to hire the best people in the world.”**

**Steve Jobs**

## Step 1 - Determine what is required and desired

The biggest issue I find today is that we rush headlong into “recruiting” without first laying the foundation for a good process. This step doesn't take long, but has incredible value for making the entire process stronger.

We need to get all of the people involved in hiring for a given position to agree on the characteristics of a great hire. It is a good practice to identify needs versus wants at this stage. These may include but are not limited to:

- Education level
- Skills
- Experience
- Training, certifications, licenses
- Reasoning ability
- Personality traits

You may find a job description helpful, but consider using your top performers in the position, if you are blessed with them, as examples to build your baseline. We can guide you to additional resources as well, including reasoning ability and personality traits needed for different jobs.

As you do this, make sure you get buy in from all the stakeholders involved. There is nothing worse than thinking you have found a great candidate, only to find a key stakeholder has a different view.

Finally, create a candidate scorecard based on your needs and wants. We'll refer back to this when we talk about interviewing. This is also a good time to assign roles in the process if it isn't already obvious.

## Step 2 - Wear a Marketing Hat

Many of us have become complacent after years of high unemployment. This has allowed us to be "selectors" rather than "recruiters" when it comes to finding talent. In today's world we have to think more like marketing and sales departments when we approach hiring.

### Market the Job

We need to think about the advantages or selling points that our job and organization offers to candidates. What are your competitive advantages in attracting great talent to this job? With that in mind you can create a job posting that reads like a marketing brochure. You will also want to make sure you incorporate these advantages in any interview and offer letter.

### Lead in to Sourcing

Professional marketing people also think a lot about the profile of a great prospective client, and how to find them. You have built the profile of a great candidate in Step 1. Use that to brainstorm on how to target the best candidates. A landscaping company had identified that top employees love to work outdoors and many had outdoor hobbies like softball. That led them to a very successful sourcing campaign with the local softball organization.

## Step 3 - Sourcing Candidates

Here is where most organizations are struggling. Gone are the days where we could hang a “we’re hiring” sign on our front door and wait for the flood of applications.



I don't claim to have all the answers for sourcing. However, here is a guide to some of today's best practices. If you have questions or want to discuss, feel free to call or email

- Existing employees ready for promotion or change
- Employee referrals - ask for them and reward referrals that become hires
- Competition - pay attention to good people in the industry, even when you aren't hiring
- Social media - LinkedIn, Facebook, Industry groups, Special interest groups
- Job Boards - many are free but many others may target candidates that fit your needs and are worth the cost.
- Traditional media - still works for some jobs, even the “we’re hiring” sign out front
- Job fairs - are your targeted candidates attending? Some are virtual now if that works for your job.
- Military - there are various resources to help members of our military transition to the civilian market. Well trained and often disciplined candidates.
- Consider changing workforce dynamics:
  - Retirees looking for part time or second careers
  - Work From Home - expands the geography of the candidate pool
  - Disabled workers - resources available to help match with your job
  - Contractors - tap into the shift to “gig workers” if appropriate
  - Outsource - many organizations find they can outsource entire functions
- If you need help, consider engaging a professional recruiting firm or an HR consulting firm. They can bring candidate networks and hiring skills to the table.

## Step 4 - Screening Candidates

Refer back to the results of Step 1 focusing on what is really needed for this job. Some of these things may be “knockouts” and you do not need to go any further with the candidate. If you need a licensed nurse or a certified forklift operator and are not willing to train and certify them after hire, you can eliminate them from further consideration at this step. Often, this information will be contained in resumes or you can insert specific questions in your application.

If you use an online applicant tracking system, most of them allow you to set up knockout questions in your online application. This saves time and resources in your process.

Some organizations choose to do a screening interview by phone or video meeting at this point to further pare down candidates for consideration. If this is part of your process, make sure you have specific job needs that you are evaluating. Without specific screening objectives, you may inadvertently eliminate great candidates.

## Step 5 - Assess for Job Fit

At the very start of this guide we discussed the challenge of making good hiring decisions without good objective data on the candidate. Proper use of assessment data can increase your rate of hiring candidates who meet or exceed your expectations from under 25% to 75%.



Research published in the Harvard Business Review tells us that the best predictors of high performance in a job are a candidate's reasoning ability and personality traits, matched with the needs of the job. There is no way to get this candidate information from resumes, applications and interviews. The "new way" incorporates assessment tools to measure these candidate characteristics and compare them with the benchmark you established in Step 1.

There are many assessments available to you. First, make sure they have been thoroughly validated by the assessment vendor for use in the hiring process. Second, fit the assessment to the level of the job you need to fill. Assessments for entry level and/or customer service jobs can be shorter and targeted at traits important to those jobs. Assessments for managers, professionals, sales, etc. may be longer and measure additional traits. Mid-level jobs may need a mix of the two. [Click here](#) for more information on pre-employment assessments.

Most companies use assessments before they conduct their interviews to maximize their time and ensure they are interviewing those candidates who are the best match for the position. Assessment reports often suggest interview questions to help interviewers explore traits where the candidate does not match your benchmark. Over time many companies push the assessment forward in the hiring process to maximize the value of the information and to leverage it throughout the rest of the process.



# Step 6 - Interview

We find that few interviewers, outside of the Human Resources staff, have been trained on how to interview effectively. We will provide a brief overview here but email [info@PDServices.com](mailto:info@PDServices.com) to request a copy of "Mastering your Q & As". This document goes into more detail on effective interviews. You may want to share it with your hiring managers.

## **The interview has 3 simple components: Open, Body and Close**

### Open

To open the interview you have two objectives. First, try to put the candidate at ease. If they are nervous, you may not gain as much accurate information as you'd like from the interview. Ask an off topic question, walk with them to get a coffee or drink, or give a short office tour. Anything that breaks the ice and calms the candidate is important.

Second, set the agenda. You want to control the interview rather than the candidate. Let them know you will start with your questions, next describe the company and position, finally allow time for candidate questions. If you have a firm end time, let the candidate know and manage the interview accordingly. It is important to ask your questions first before discussing the position. A trained interviewee will listen for tip offs during the job discussion and spin answers to your questions if you reverse this order.

### Body

Hopefully you have prepared some questions. To prepare, refer to questions suggested by the assessment or refer to "Mastering your Qs & As" mentioned above. Focus on evaluating the traits that were defined in Step 1.

Listen and take notes. If you remember you will need to score the candidate on the needed and desired traits for the job, you will naturally pay close attention and ask clarifying questions which help you evaluate those traits.

### Close

Describe the position. This should be a combination of accurate information about the job and organization while stressing advantages from Step 2. Do not over embellish the job. If a new hire feels they were misled in the interview it will impact retention and productivity.

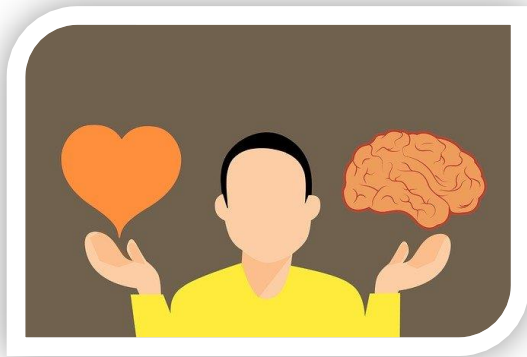
Answer the candidate's questions honestly. Take an interest in their questions. If their questions are well prepared and show they have done some research, that tells you they are interested and thorough.

Discuss the next step. Do not overcommit on the timing of getting back with them. We believe it is important to communicate, one way or the other, to a candidate who has reached this stage. Even if you do not make an offer, you want the candidate to end the process with a positive attitude about your organization.

Immediately take notes and complete the candidate scorecard.

## Make a timely decision!

By now you have most of the information you need to make a decision. You may want to add information from reference checks, background tests, drug screens, etc. Consider making an offer contingent on successful drug screens and/or background checks where possible to speed the process.



Gather the information from the scorecards, assessment, application/resume and any other sources. Depending on your organization's decision-making culture, the hiring manager may have the final call or the stakeholders may meet to discuss. In either case, this process should make the decision much more objective and favor information over gut feel.

**Remember, odds say you'll hire the right person less than 25% of the time using your "heart" or intuition, but objective data from assessments increases that to 75%.**

PDservices offers tools and assessments to help you improve your hiring process. Contact us at 740-326-4494 or [info@PDservices.com](mailto:info@PDservices.com) for a free consultation.