



## How to Attract and Hire the Right Fit Every Time

People aren't your greatest asset. The right people are!  
Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

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## Executive Summary

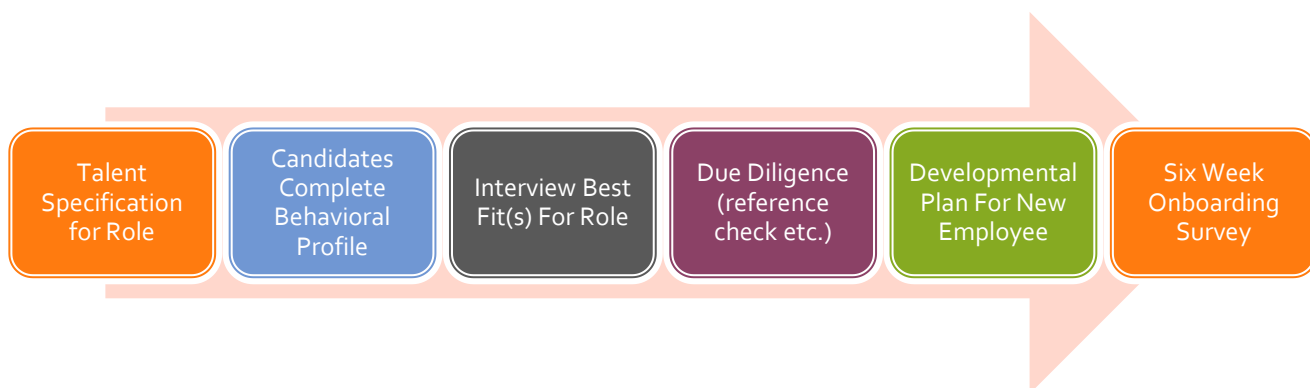
Hiring the right people can make or break your business. Whether you are looking to hire sales people to improve top line revenue, people to help your operation keep pace with sales production, the support team that makes the company run smoothly, or leaders to bring it all together, hiring the right fit is critical. The cost of making a bad hire has been estimated as being somewhere between 1.5 and 3 times the salary of the person, and that doesn't include the cost of lost opportunity.

A misstep in the recruitment and selection process has a implications for the organization that reach far and wide. To begin with it has a major impact on your brand in the marketplace. Not just from the perspective of being a desirable location for candidates to work but from your customer/client and suppliers points of view as well. Every time your organization experiences a hiccup in this process they are left wondering about the quality of your organization. The one thing that most hiring managers dislike the most about their jobs, other than having to let someone go, is recruitment and selection. It takes them away from what they are good at and a hole in their headcount generally means that someone (read them) has to pick up the slack.

We are about to show you a surefire method that will actually make the recruitment and selection process easier for your hiring managers, align the HR function of the organization with the day to day efforts at achieving the strategic plan and help you to find new talent for the organization that will be completely in line with the tactical requirements of the overall, organizational strategic plan.

The process begins with a talent specification that is aligned with three to five key result areas for the role to be filled. This is crucial to the process. If you want behavior that is in alignment with the strategic plan you need to identify what the critical KRA's are for the role in question. Once you and the appropriate team members have established the behavioral benchmark for the role we begin to compare candidate behavior to the benchmark. In doing so we typically save your hiring managers the time they would have spent interviewing candidates that will never be a fit for this role, on this team and in your organization. Your hiring managers will approach the interview with a much better understanding of the candidate and a far better ability to ask the behavioral interview questions that are the correct ones for the role in question.

Once the hiring decision has been made and an offer presented, and accepted, the process includes several important onboarding elements. If you hope to hang onto great talent in this competitive market it is essential that you be able to demonstrate a plan for their development. Our hiring process includes the first step of that development plan for every new hire. It is also vital for you to check in with the new hire and his or her peers within six weeks of the start date. This will allow you to make sure that the onboarding process is on track and improve the amount of time to a complete ramp up.



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## What defines the “right” fit?

The first secret to attracting, hiring the best people is to clearly understand who the best people are when it comes to this position in your organization. We're not talking general terms here, but specifically for your company for the job you have to fill, the team that will be working with whomever you select, the hiring manager and the culture of your organization.

To some, the best people are the ones that will produce. To others, the best people are the ones who will treat their customers' right. Still others see the best people as the ones who will quietly do the job with the fewest complaints. The truth is that the characteristics of the best person for a specific job in a specific company are very complex. Think of this job as the missing piece in one of those very complex jigsaw puzzles. The one piece that makes it whole has some very unique characteristics that are even hard to describe. No wonder it is so hard to find a good fit!

Our first task is to somehow, accurately, define the 'best' person for our position in terms that will allow us to know that person when we see them and in the context of the key result areas for that position.

## Who defines the “right” fit?

If we agree that someone has to define the characteristics of this person, who is that someone? Most would agree that the person's manager would have a good idea of who would fit the job. After all, the manager knows what needs to be done and knows what type of person has worked out well in that position before. They should also know what type of person has not worked out in the past.

How about the CEO, owner, or another senior manager? This person is responsible for the culture and future of the company. This person may be looking for an eventual replacement for the manager or a person who could eventually manage a new division. Should their input be included in the definition?

One person we often fail to ask is the person who had the job last or another person who currently holds the job. If you ask most front line employees, they will describe their position much differently than their managers and completely differently from senior management. It might be useful to get their idea of what makes an ideal employee for their position.

And let's not forget human resources. HR is charged with building our organizations and should have a clear understanding of what is needed in each position. While their perspective may not be field tested, it certainly provides a critical piece to the puzzle.

So at the very least we have three or four people that must be included in defining the characteristics of this 'best' candidate. This is called the "Requirements Team" because they set the ultimate hiring requirements. Before we even begin to advertise and attract a group of candidates we must synthesize the opinions of each of the individuals into one clear picture of our target person.

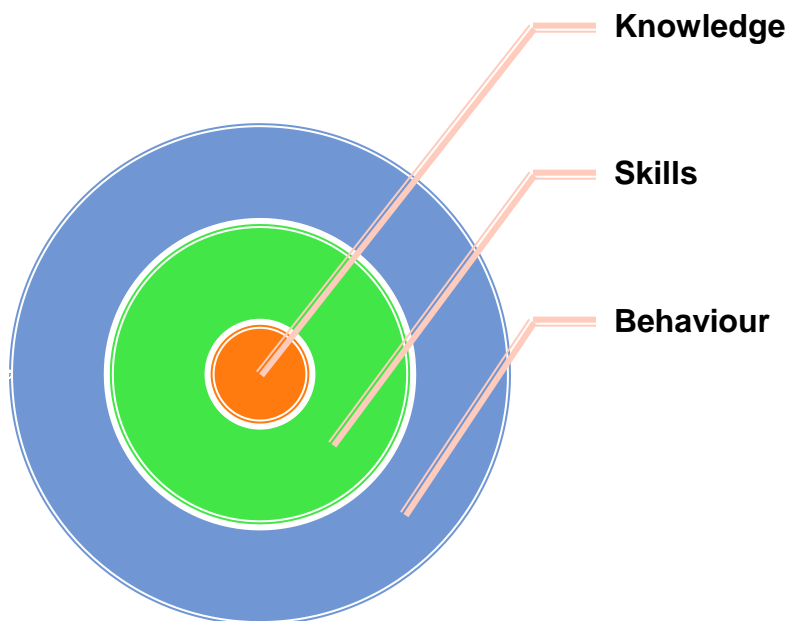
## Defining the job requirements

Now that we have agreed that we are going to take the input from a Requirements Team and use it to develop an ideal model with which to compare our candidates, we need some criteria to work from. At bare minimum there are three criteria that most organizations include in one way or another as part of their selection process. They include skills, knowledge, and behavior. The starting point for the discussion has to be the three to five mission critical key result areas that align job performance with the organizational strategic plan.

Skills encompass the ability to do the job required. Whether they are learned skills such as those gain through on-the-job training in the trades or academic skills gained through formal education, we must define what is required to do the job.

Knowledge encompasses an understanding of the job on one or many levels. It is possible to be skilled at doing a job, yet lack the knowledge that would be required to go beyond the basic activity.

Behavior defines how a person will act or react when faced with various situations. Do you need a person who is good with people or one who is focused on details? Do you need a person who can multitask or do you need someone who will not become bored when repeating the same task over and over? Studies have shown a very high correlation between behavior style and job performance in virtually every type of job.



We have seen far too many cases in which an inappropriate decision to hire was based on knowledge and skills while the decision to fire was based on a behavioral mismatch with the requirements of the role or the relationship with the manager, the team, or the values of the organization.

The behavioral component is placed on the outside of this graphic for a reason. That's what the outside world uses as a point of reference. You need to be very much aware of the behaviors that your team, clients and suppliers will see.

### Skills

Ask each of the people on the Requirements Team to make a list of the skills required for this position. This step creates a Skills Inventory for the position to be filled. You might want to include someone who actually is doing the job or even shadow a current employee and record what they do. It is amazing how often we forget what a person

really does in a day. Even if you have a job description you must know that most job descriptions are out of date and incomplete and should not be used as a hiring document.

Once the lists are completed, they should be compared with an eye for differences. It is important to reconcile these differences and agree on a common Skills Inventory before starting the hiring process. There is nothing worse than putting your new hire in the middle of a disagreement on job requirement.

Consider implementing a skills based test to confirm that candidates do in fact possess the level of skill that they indicate on either their résumé or during the interview process.

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## Knowledge

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Once again you need the input of your Requirements Team. This time the task is to develop a Knowledge Inventory; a list of what the new employee will need to know to do the job. Remember that some things can be taught, but you have to start somewhere. For instance, you can teach a person to prepare a report but you may not want to teach them to work with an Excel spreadsheet or simple Word document. You may be looking for knowledge of specific systems, machines or industries. You may even want someone who has knowledge of specific groups of people or geographic areas.

As before, once the lists are completed, they should be compared with an eye for differences. Reconcile these differences and agree on a common Knowledge Inventory before starting with the hiring process. You don't want to hire someone only to find out they lack the critical knowledge needed to be successful in that job.

This is another area that you should consider testing the candidate's knowledge to verify that they possess what you are looking for in the role that they will be filling.

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## Behavior

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Of the three criteria groups, behavior is often the hardest to define. Studies have shown that it may also be the highest predictor of success in the job. Behavior describes how a person will function in a given situation. It is possible for many people to be technically able to do a job but not behaviorally able to do it in your company or the way you need it done. Behavioral mismatches are leading causes of organizational friction, failure and turnover from front-line workers to the CEO.

Again, you need to have your Requirements Team develop a Behavioral Inventory; a list of the behavioral characteristics that will make this person successful. If you do this right, you will hire someone who will not only do the job well but will be happy doing it.

We recommend the Predictive Index® PRO® tool for this task. It automates the process by allowing several people to collaboratively define the job or to operate independently and then brings the

*PI® can be used for far more than just as a hiring tool. Since it identifies an individual's behavioral traits, it also gives you the entire scope of a person's behavior. That includes a deeper understanding of how to motivate and impact their performance.*

*Susan Landgraf  
Chief Learning Officer  
Massage Envy*

results together for comparison. The results can be compared with similar positions at other companies to build a behavioral profile that predicts success in the position. If you would like to try a PRO we would be happy to forward a link to you at no charge. There is no question that you will get great value from the experience.

## Attracting the Best

Now that you know who you want to hire, you need to find candidates to choose from. Ideally, you want to attract a pool of candidates who are reasonably close to your ideal model. In other words, they fit the Knowledge, Skill and Behavioral Inventory's that your Requirements Team developed. Accomplishing this not only improves on the available pool of talent you will be considering it also eliminates all of those interviews that you used to conduct with candidates that just don't fit your requirements.

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### Make Your Advertising a Magnet for the Best

Studies have shown that ads written based on the Behavioral Inventory of the ideal candidate will attract applicants who fit the model. For instance, if you are looking for a person to network in the community and you include phrases like "must enjoy working with people" or "community involvement a must" you will tend to find the right people. Imagine a person who hates networking when they see this ad. They will skip over it, while the person who loves networking will make it their first priority. Your lobby will be full of people who have already preselected themselves. This reduces your interviewing time and maximizes the options you have to choose from.

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### Look for Talent Where the Best People Are

It is important to place your advertisements where the right candidates will see or hear them. If you want to appeal to those who are unemployed, job boards, the internet or the newspaper are the media of choice. Everyone who is looking for work is looking there. While there is still some great talent available among those that are unemployed we are now getting well past the economic meltdown of 2008.

What you really want to do is to attract people who are not looking for work. You are looking for someone who is already successful and productive somewhere else and you want to jar them loose from their current situation. In this case, you need a less typical approach. LinkedIn has become the best of the social media tools for finding great talent. Facebook is another option for you to consider, especially if your employees are willing to post an update on their individual walls. Both methods dramatically increase your ability to reach out to successful talent. LinkedIn also offers the ability to advertise.

Another approach is to advertise in traditional media but in a non-traditional way. In other words, place your ad in the general advertising section of a local community paper or shopper's guide. One contractor I knew placed his ads in local car magazines. He knew the type of person he wanted also read those magazines and he was able to out-flank his competition by using this unique approach. Another company actually purchased the billboard across the street from his competitor. He knew his audience and he knew where to find them.

The bottom line is this. The combination of an ad written around the behavioral profile and then placed where the right people would see it generated the greatest number of viable candidates.

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## Network with a Focus

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If you take the same approach to networking you will have equally good success. Give your current employees a clear understanding of who you are looking for and reward them for bringing in their friends or former colleagues. You'll be amazed how powerful an army they can be. That same information in the hands of other business leaders can also generate results. We have seen companies who were hiring approach companies who were faced with laying people off and almost walk the best people from one company to the other.

It all comes back to the work we did earlier. If you can clearly describe who you need, you can more easily find and attract them. If you're looking to fill a void in your organization why not make this a part of your 30 second elevator speech at networking events or at the conclusion of meetings that you have over the course of the day. You never know who you will be talking with that could be well connected with the best possible candidate for the vacant position in your organization.

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## Hire the Best of the Best

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### Catch the Best Quickly

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Once you attract top candidates, you need to make sure they actually fit your criteria and then engage the best before your competition does. A quick pre-screen will help you see who is close and needs your immediate attention.

While resumes are often exercises in creative writing, they do indicate if a person potentially has the skills and knowledge needed, based on their previous experience. A total miss-match goes to the bottom of the pile while a close fit gets a second look.

A behavioral assessment like the Predictive Index® (PI®) can quickly tell you if a candidate has the right behavioral characteristics for success in your company. Since it can be administered on paper or online and takes less than 15 minutes to complete, we recommend that every applicant be given the PI when they first apply. This gives you the opportunity to scan the applicants and quickly bring the best to the top of the pile. As a result, you can often take the best people out of the job search before your competition ever sees them.

*"Understanding and utilizing the behavioral profile results of PI not only changes the way your recruit and manage human capital, it fundamentally changes the way you approach organizational development in general.*

*Trey Maust, Co-founder  
Lewis & Clark Bank*

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## Gap Interviewing

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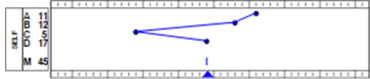
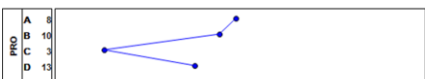
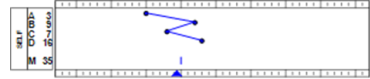
Using the process we have outlined, you now have a selection of candidates to interview that are reasonably close to what you need. In preparation for the interview, compare each candidate with the Requirement Team's ideal profile. Make notes for yourself highlighting the gaps between the ideal and the particular candidate.

What knowledge is missing?

What skills are missing?



How does their behavioral profile (PI<sup>®</sup>) differ from the ideal? Here is an example of the output from the PRO with a comparison to two potential candidates:

Candidate # 1 	The PRO <sup>®</sup>	Candidate # 2 
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactivity, assertiveness, and sense of urgency in driving to reach his goals. Openly challenges the world around him.</li> <li>• Independent in putting forth his own ideas, which are often innovative and, if implemented, cause change. Resourcefully works through or around anything blocking completion of what he wants to accomplish; aggressive when challenged.</li> <li>• Impatient for results, he puts pressure on himself and others for rapid implementation, and is far less productive when doing routine work.</li> <li>• Proactively connects quickly to others; he's open and sharing of himself. Builds and leverages relationships to get work done.</li> <li>• Comfortably fluent and fast talk, in volume. He enthusiastically persuades and motivates others by considering their point of view and adjusting his delivery.</li> <li>• Collaborative; usually works with and through others. Intuitive understanding of team cohesion, dynamics, and interpersonal relations.</li> </ul>	<p>The focus of this position is a confident, independent action, initiative, a sense of urgency, and the ability to make decisions and take responsibility for them. A well-suited candidate can react and adjust quickly to changing conditions and come up with practical ideas for dealing with them.</p> <p>The style is purposeful, directed at getting things done quickly. There is a great deal of challenge and pressure, and people and problems must be handled with confidence and determination.</p> <p>The position requires a self-disciplined person who can handle details as long as they only an intermittent aspect of the job, and not the primary responsibility. This job requires self-assurance and competitive drive. There is a strong demand for high quality, organized and repeatable results. The responsibilities are broad in scope, encompassing a wide variety of activities requiring rapid shifts in priorities.</p> <p>This is primarily a task-focused job, requiring a somewhat authoritative, directive leadership style that encourages results-driven, task-oriented collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driven to protect the company against risk by thoroughly leveraging her background and strictly following 'the book.'</li> <li>• Cautious; follows a well-established and proven plan to avoid making mistakes. Does the background research necessary to have proof to support her decisions before she takes action.</li> <li>• Detail-oriented and accommodating; most comfortable working as part of a well-defined team for which she produces high-quality output and decisions.</li> <li>• Socially-focused, she naturally empathizes with people, easily seeing their point of view or understanding their emotions. Positive, non-threatening communication.</li> <li>• Teaches and shares; she's often working collaboratively with others to help whenever she can.</li> <li>• Accommodating; most comfortable working with others, she often puts team/company goals before her own personal goals. Promotes teamwork by actively sharing authority.</li> </ul>

In your interview, spend your time drilling into those gaps to see if there are any critical missing pieces in knowledge, skill or behavior. If you believe you have a winner, ask yourself this simple question, "What still bothers me about this person?" Tell the next interviewers about your concerns and ask them to drill in on that area. In your next interview with them, drill deeper yourself.

Only when you find no glaring gaps should you begin to spend time telling the candidate about the position. Only

now can you start selling the candidate on your company.

When you follow this simple process, you will dramatically increase the quality of your team and the results of your company. As Jim Collins said in “Good to Great”, to be successful, “You need to get the right people in the right seats on the bus!”

If you would like help improving your hiring process, including developing your Knowledge and Skills Inventories or using the Predictive Index behavioral assessment, please contact us. We also offer training including Behavioral Interviewing.