

The Ultimate Hiring Checklist

So, you need to hire someone pronto!

Maybe you've tried recruiters in the past, but they're annoying, expensive, and a waste of time. It's time for you to take control of your own recruitment destiny. That's why we've compiled *The Ultimate Hiring Checklist* for you, which outlines everything you need to do to make sure your next hire is a great hire. It probably includes everything you kinda-sorta know about hiring, with some things you might not.

1. Defining the job and the "who"

Let's figure out what they look like – figuratively, not physically! What do we need this person to do?

- What are the measurable outcomes and business goals that this next hire will help us achieve?
- What's the general overview of what this person will be taking on?
- What will "a day in the life" look like (responsibilities and tasks they'll have to perform)?
- What are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and "hard-to-teach" attributes (a.k.a. soft skills) they'll have to possess on day one? Be careful, don't get too greedy!
- What are you willing to teach and what will they have to learn?
- Don't forget about experience, education, and certification or licensing requirements
- Be sure to get feedback from the other stakeholders involved
- What does this person need to get paid? Check out [CareerOneStop's salary finder](#)

2. Writing the job description

Time to write a comprehensive, yet not too long, yet compelling, yet friendly, yet not too casual job description.

- Job title – make sure it's something people are searching for. **Indeed tracks insightful job title trends** so you can compare options and see which titles are gaining or losing popularity. Keep in mind that you *can* advertise a job with a different title than how you refer to it internally -- "Senior Account Executive" is more meaningful to folk than "Account Executive III"
- Compelling intro that highlights your organization's culture, values, and this unique opportunity in a way that appeals to your target audience
- List of responsibilities or activities this person will be performing
- Essential requirements -- what do you *need* this person coming in already knowing or having? Avoid a 20-point laundry list that might scare candidates away, and keep this to the true essentials, with a "plus" or two if desired
- Compensation and benefits – be sure to list all the perks!
- Don't forget to include: **[My Company Name]** is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, national origin, citizenship status, disability, genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic partner status, military status, protected veteran status, disability

- status or any other characteristic protected by law.
- If you do E-Verify: Federal law requires all employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired to work in the United States. **[My Company Name]** participates in E-Verify.

3. Marketing the job

- Share the job with your employees and create an incentive to encourage referrals
- Post on both your corporate and individual Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter profiles
- Don't forget to post the job on your website's careers page. You DO have one, right? :-)
- Cast a broad net on one or more of these sites:
 - Indeed, which has become the #1 job site in the US
 - Glassdoor
 - ZipRecruiter
- Cast a narrow net on:
 - Local colleges and universities
 - Job sites of relevant industry or professionals associations
 - Meetup groups
 - Niche job sites such as:
 - StackOverflow or GitHub for developers
 - Idealist.org for non-profits
 - Teach for America's job board for educators

4. Resumes, emails, and phone calls... (Get out your pitchfork!)

Time to sort through all those resumes and create a shortlist!

- Create a punch-list or resume checklist beforehand with your must-haves, so you can quickly skim 'em, or delegate the resume review task
- Follow an easy Yes, No, Maybe system
- ~~Make it fun! Take a shot of tequila every time you see the words, "synergy," or "team player," or "passionate," or "hard working!"~~
- On second thought, shots are a bad idea – make sure alcohol, drugs, and sharp objects are out of reach. Otherwise, you may not make it through the first resume.

Phone screen the candidates you've shortlisted

- Make sure the baseline requirements check out (e.g., experience, compensation, start date, etc...)
- Ask about gaps in employment, what attracted them to this position, why they left their previous position, or why they are searching for a new one
- Make sure they sound coherent over the phone and seem to know what they're talking about (and what company they've applied to)
- See if they have any questions and let them know what to expect about next steps

Consider sending the candidates with potential a brief assessment or exercise to perform, such as:

- Personality assessments
- Cognitive assessments
- Skill-based assessments

- Or create your own job-related exercise

**Make sure assessments have been validated, and that any exercises you have candidates perform are job-related. Also, if you are hiring for in-demand or hard-to-find talent, be wary of the impact of making them jump through too many hoops.*

5. Interviews (are we there yet?)

- Decide which candidates to bring in for in-person interviews
- Figure out:
 - Who should be involved with interviews (I like tandem interviewing)
 - How many rounds of interviews (10 may be a bit much)
 - The focus or purpose of each interview (e.g., technical, soft skills, cultural fit)
- Coordinate interview schedules and send out calendar invites. Again, you probably want to make sure no sharp objects are in reach
- Equip interviewers with the right questions to ask
- You may want to give them examples of questions not to ask – unless you're scared to give them any ideas (e.g., Are you planning on having any children? Who did you vote for in the last presidential election? What are you up to this weekend?)
- Conduct interviews, take notes, gather objective interviewer feedback, and pray for consensus

6. Check references

It is always tempting to skip the references, but don't do it! You'll be surprised how much information a reference can give you if you get to talk to the right person. You can even get good feedback about how to best work with or manage the candidate if you hire them.

- Request specific references from your final candidates (e.g., a boss at this job, a co-worker at that job, a customer at another job)
- Ask the candidate to help you get in touch with the references, maybe they can even do email intros so the reference clearly knows the candidate wants them to talk with you
- Create a list of questions to ask references, such as:
 - Did you work from this date to that date with the candidate at this company?
 - Were you this person's (manager, co-worker, customer, etc...)?
 - Why did the candidate leave the organization?
 - Is the candidate eligible for rehire?
 - Would you recommend this candidate for this position at our company?
 - What advice do you have for me about training this candidate? How do they best learn?
 - Any feedback about the most effective way to communicate with them and manage them?
- Take notes and compile objective reference feedback

7. Background checks

- First, know your local and state employment laws!** If you work in a "ban the box"

locality or state, you cannot ask a candidate if they have a criminal record on their employment applications. Some "ban the box" jurisdictions, like Philadelphia, only allow criminal background checks after a conditional job offer is made.

- ❑ If you are conducting background checks, find a reputable provider who can honestly help you determine which checks are relevant to you. There's a long menu of background services (e.g., federal, state, and county criminal background checks; motor vehicle checks, credit checks, drug tests), which vary in relevance based on the nature of your company and the position.

8. Final decision and job offer

- ❑ Again, if you operate in a "ban the box" jurisdiction, you may have to make a conditional job offer before the background check.
- ❑ If one of your top candidates is clearly ahead of the pack, then go head and offer them the job!
- ❑ But if you have two or three candidates who you can't decide between:
 - Revisit your notes and scorecards from the phone, interview, and reference check process
 - Look over your interactions with the candidates throughout the entire process
 - If they took any assessments or exercises, look at how they scored or the reports that were generated
 - Consider their compensation requirements
 - Line up this information so you can compare each candidate side-by-side
 - ~~Facebook stalk the candidates, Google their names, hire a private investigator to follow them around~~
 - Ignore that last item, not sure how it made the list
- ❑ Make a decision!
- ❑ Decide if it is more appropriate to offer them the job over the phone or in person
- ❑ Prepare to make them an offer that you're confident in by knowing the market, the motivation of the candidate, your organization, and what you can realistically afford
- ❑ Brace yourself for the negotiation, and keep a win-win mindset
- ❑ Send them an official offer letter
- ❑ Cross your fingers and pray that they accept, so you don't have to go through this whole rigmarole again

They accepted!

Pop the bubbly!

Rip your shirt off (first check your employee handbook) and run around the office like you just scored the winning goal in the world cup.

Kiss (or high-five or fist-bump) the nearest person by you.

Oh yeah, and get ready for the on boarding process...

For your next hire, do you really want to do all this again?



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