



MATCHING PEOPLE TO POSSIBILITIES.

The Definitive Guide to Recruiting & Retaining Top Talent

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About the Author


Riia O'Donnell is an HR professional and consultant with more than 15 years of hands-on experience in every discipline of the field. A subject matter expert, she has written for the on-line HR market for over 8 years.

Introduction

A company's most important asset and highest risk can be the talent they attract and retain. The market may make it harder or easier to hire, but no matter what the conditions, your job is to acquire the best talent your company can find.

The best recruitment strategies require a deep knowledge of company needs; how the top performers currently on staff are providing for those needs; and what can be done to acquire more talent just like them.

Throughout this eBook I will explore how the modern hiring process starts with a great job posting, preparing for successful interviews, interview questions that pulls candidates out of their shells, and the importance of having a good experience for candidates.

A background image showing a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A glass of orange juice is visible on the desk next to the laptop. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal white line that separates the text from the quote.

“*The best recruitment strategies require a deep knowledge of company needs; how the top performers on staff are providing for those needs; and what you can do to acquire more talent like them.*

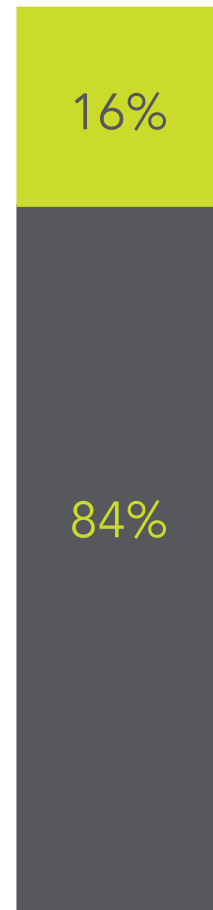
The Modern Hiring Process

When it's time to hire, your job posting says everything about your business. Are you a dynamic, cutting edge company? Are you socially conscious? Are you a digital dinosaur? Every touch point in the communication process is an opportunity to promote your organization, along with its culture and values. Job postings can either attract top talent or send them yawning onto the next ad.

Like any marketing tool (you are marketing your company to the talent community!) you'll want to generate interest and even excitement. You know what's great about working for you - you should be boasting it at every opportunity.

Your brand is a valuable asset. When polled, 84% of job seekers say the reputation of a company is important. About one-third of those same respondents wouldn't work for a company with a negative brand image, even for a pay increase. Studies suggest the cost of recruitment itself can be reduced by over 40% if companies have a strong brand in the market. Where are the savings realized? In the reduced effort business has to make to attract talent to apply.

In today's "unemployment is so low it's making headlines" market, you need job postings that pull triple-duty: boosting your employer brand, finding the best applicant, and illustrating why that job seeker should look no further than your ad.



“Every communication touch point is an opportunity to promote your organization, its culture, and its values.”

3 Steps to Crafting a Great Job Posting

Messaging in job postings must include what you have to offer as an employer as well as what you want from the candidate you hire. Get attention and interest by defining your company, its culture, and the position. Rather than looking for keywords that refine a job search, focus on “key” language that top talent associates with their skill set. Post for those to find the best match.

Step 1: Focus in on Key Language

Try to avoid internal jargon when you post to a broad audience. You may know what Level 6 Admin means, but no one else will. Try to avoid too cute or overdone language. Wording that attracts candidates that want to work for you is genuine and authentic. Why start off on the wrong foot?

You know the qualifications and experience level you need. But you also know they’re not always predictors of success. Soft skills, emotional intelligence, and potential to learn and grow are often as important, if not more, than what’s on a candidate’s resume. Identifying the traits of top performers can help you search for those traits in candidates.

Highlighting key characteristics of your company can increase interest. Data suggests that 75% of workers would consider a pay cut to work for a socially responsible company. If that’s your mantra, make sure your posting keys in on corporate social responsibility.

When you quantify the shared characteristics of top performers, you know what to post for, what to interview for, and what to hire for. Is your company driven by innovative thinkers? Are meticulous, detail-oriented staffers your top performers? Whatever characteristics make for a successful employee, using those key terms can help you target the best applicants for a successful hire.

Elements of an Effective Job Posting



Focused Language



Core Values



Skills Needed

3 Steps to Crafting a Great Job Posting

Step 2: Focus on Core Values

Carefully choosing the wording of your posting speaks to the right candidate at the right time. Research shows some language dissuades candidates from applying. In the same way some language discourages candidates from applying, a strong job posting includes terms that encourage job seekers to see themselves in the role and quickly submit their resume. And seeing themselves in your company is important. One survey revealed the number one reason a candidate chooses one job over another is organizational culture. Recognizing traits as valuable to the organization as any other skill shows job seekers you're a well-rounded company, looking to hire individuals, not just resumes.

Step 3: Weigh Your Options

It's easier to teach someone to code than to be a leader. When you know what soft skills are needed, it's easier to make the right hire. You may even find a diamond in the rough: a candidate with all the characteristics you need who, with a bit of training, could be your next rock star. It all begins with a job posting that appeals to personality as much as qualifications.

With cost-effective assessments from SENTIO, you uncover the traits that drive success for the top performers in your company. A great job posting, with these traits top-of-mind, optimizes your interview and hiring

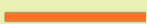
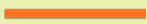
“Rather than looking for keywords that refine a job search, focus on “key” language that top talent associates with their skill set.”

Preparing for Successful Interviews

You've found a selection of candidates to interview for your opening and you're juggling schedules to get them on site. You hope to be successful in finding a candidate that's the perfect fit for the work, the team and the organization. To set yourself up for success, getting ready for the interview is as important as the interview itself. Like everything in life, it's all about the prep.

To have successful interviews, follow the three steps below:

Be Internally Prepared

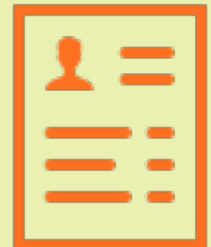


Preparing for interviews can be critical. A bad hire can mean more than a bad employee: the impact they might have on data, privacy and your reputation could be devastating.

See the checklist of questions to ask internally before beginning the interview process on the next page.

Look Beyond the Resume

A new focus is on soft skills and emotional intelligence (EI) like empathy, leadership, communication skills, and the potential to learn and grow. EI may be as strong an arbiter of success as background and qualifications, but screening for these may be challenging. To capitalize on EI, identify the behavioral traits needed for the role, then develop a list of questions to uncover the person beyond the resume.



Assemble the Interview Team



Once you have a full perspective of what the role requires, assemble your interview team. Review the traits and skills you're looking for, and the questions you've developed to uncover them; then assign a subject matter expert to each. The tech guru will discuss IT skills; managers tackle the day to day duties; others search for soft skills. These experts are your ideal interview team. Each brings strength and value to the process, increasing your chances of an effective hire.

Preparing for Successful Interviews

Check off these questions to be internally prepared.

Who should be involved?

In the past, recruiters have typically screened for the basics (basic skills, factual information, etc.) and often a hiring manager would follow up with job-specific questions.

In today's time-to-hire pressure cooker environment, it might make sense to rethink who is involved, and when. To move the process along faster, build standard job-specific questions into the first interview to save managerial time. Beyond background and experience, many companies are looking to assess soft skills. Arm your recruitment team with the tools they need to uncover these traits. Assigning the right person to each task, one who is qualified to discern which answers mean the best fit can result in a more cohesive hiring process and faster, more successful hires.

What don't we know?

Do you know what you don't know when it comes to hiring specific candidates? Many companies today are dipping their toes into tech waters, for example. Those who previously outsourced tech are finding it's more cost-effective and efficient to have an in-house employee. But few have the skills to assess a candidate's technology chops. The same can be said of other uncharted avenues companies are exploring.

When do we schedule, and with whom?

Some employers' processes require a series of interviews: others hire on the spot. In today's tight applicant market, a lengthy interview process could mean losing a good candidate. If you're hoping to snag talent before someone else has the chance, consolidate several interviews into one longer session. Rather than having HR pre-screen, then schedule a follow-up interview at a later date, have hiring authorities, team members and others at the ready if the candidate is worthy of passing up the ladder.

In addition to quickly scheduling, you'll want to schedule smart. When you know exactly what you want in a new hire, it's easier to assign interview questions to the person who knows what to look for and how to interpret answers. An internal look at your top performers can provide insight into the traits that make them successful. Are they strong leaders, meticulous workers, or out-of-the box thinkers?

With cost-conscious assessments from Sentio, you identify the traits and characteristics that drive success in your organization today. Understanding exactly makes for a great new hire, assign the strongest interviewers to assess those skills and qualities.

Interview Questions that Pull Candidates Out of their Shells

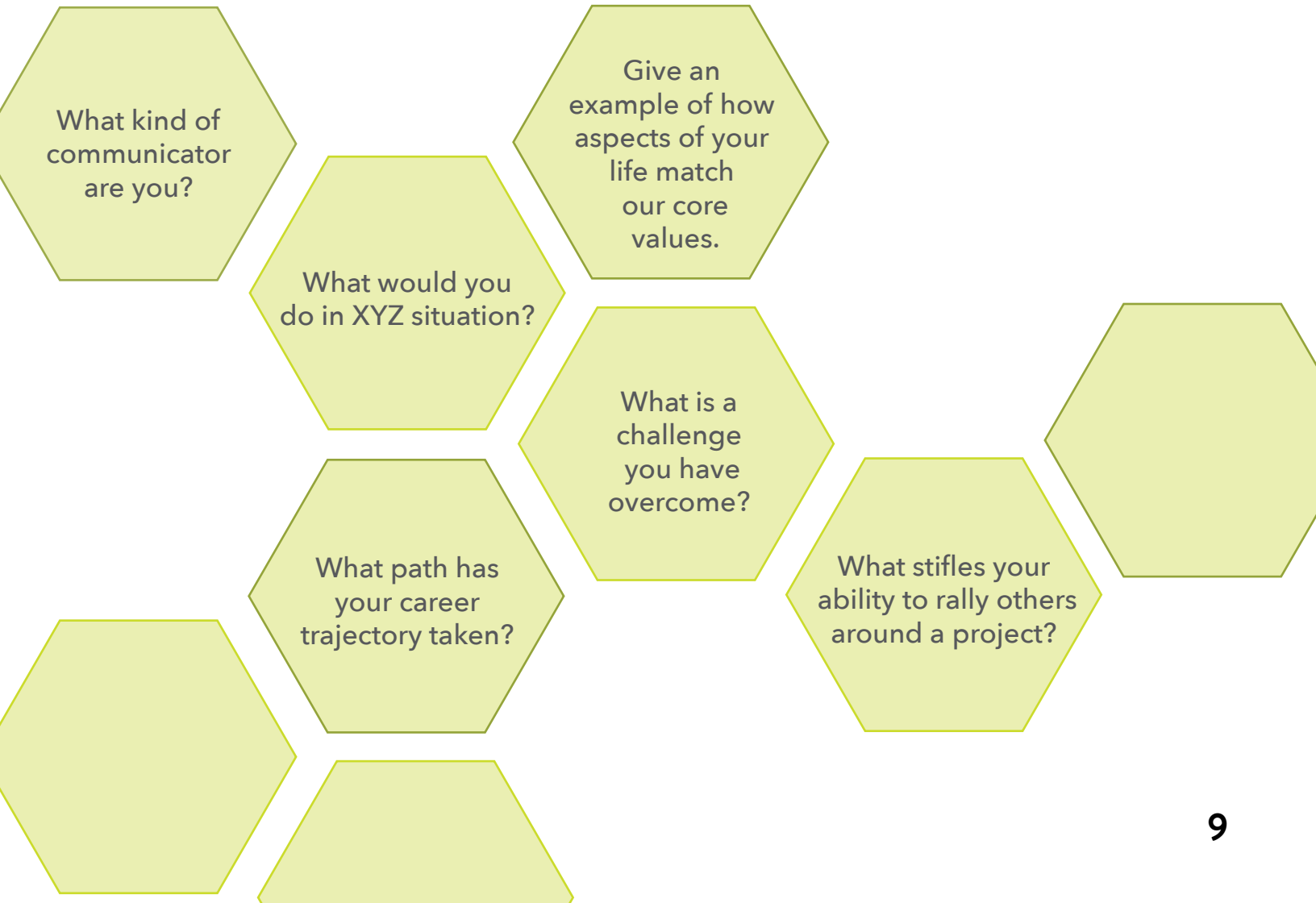
You've invested time and resources to attract talent. Your job postings were worded carefully and placed in the right markets to push job seekers into your talent pipeline. You're ready for the interview process with the right people to speak to candidates about their skills, qualification and goals. The most important step in finding the perfect match for your opening may be getting candidates to open up during the interview process.

Unless you're hiring for the most entry-level job, you've determined each interviewee has the hard skills and/or experience needed. You're looking for insight beyond the resume. So how do you draw more than yes/no responses from an applicant, to get a well-rounded version of who they are?

Soft Skills Assessments Provide Interview Guidance

Psychometric assessment tools can be invaluable to delve deeper into the values and qualities an applicant holds. Imagine an applicant whose test reveals strong leadership qualities: you'll want your questioning to focus on this talent. What drives them? What kinds of teams respond well to their leadership style? What stifles their ability to rally others around a cause or project?

If a candidate tests well for communication skills, you'll be able to go deeper. Are they a persuasive communicator, or an empathetic one? Armed with these data points, you can focus interview questions around characteristics that provide a more complete version of the candidate.



What kind of communicator are you?

Give an example of how aspects of your life match our core values.

What would you do in XYZ situation?

What is a challenge you have overcome?

What path has your career trajectory taken?

What stifles your ability to rally others around a project?

Interview Questions that Pull Candidates Out of their Shells

More than assessing the candidate's soft skills, knowing what characteristics and traits are predictors of success in current staff is equally helpful. The best and brightest in your organization bring more than their resume to the table. When you know what personality type works best for the team specifically and the organization as a whole, you're better able to make a successful hire. In addition, personality clashes are costly.

They're a Genius, But...

For many candidates, passion lies within their work. They come alive discussing skills, interests and goals in the cyber-universe. But in the 3D world, they may be uncomfortable. When it comes to interviews, they're not alone. Most people feel pressured when interviewing. Your job is to ease their nerves and get to know the real person, whatever their passion.

Ask a job seeker a yes/no question, you'll get a yes/no answer: not very insightful. Situational, open-ended questions let you delve deeper. Ask a candidate how they've overcome challenges, personally or professionally. Has their career trajectory gone as planned or taken detours: what did they learn or adjust along the way? What are your core values and mission? Ask the applicant to discuss when their work, personal life, or volunteerism has demonstrated those. Structure interviews as conversations, not quizzes, to gain the most insight into the candidate.

Google research found the best predictor of how someone would perform in the job had almost nothing to do with structured interview questions. A sample test worked best for them in about 30% of hires. While you may not be in a position to provide a job seeker a desk and task, scenario discussions may be just as effective. Ask an applicant how they would respond to situations likely to occur on the job. These types of questions will provide the insight you need.

Finding a team member VS. filling an opening

For most businesses, finding the right hire is more than filling a job vacancy. No one works in a vacuum: the new team member will need to interact productively with others, uphold and further the mission and goals of the company. A job match is just that: a person who matches the job. A great hire goes beyond a job match: it syncs the talent's goals with those of the company so everyone succeeds.

49%

of workplace conflict is due to personality clashes or ego wars.

\$360 B

is the cost to US business in a year for the lost productivity from conflicts.

Giving Candidates a Good Experience Gets Better Hires

In this section we will step back through the hiring process, but from the perspective of a candidate.

The days of leaving candidates waiting for a response to their application or their status in the hiring process are long gone. A poor candidate experience not only turns applicants away, it can spread, to deter even more job seekers away from your company. The best candidate experience considers every connection during the process, optimizing each step along the way.

Step 1: Before They Apply

Your online presence is critical to attracting candidates, but too often businesses neglect to keep it positive and current. A recent study revealed 83% of job seekers will research a company before applying. They're evaluating what a company does, what it stands for and how it has treated applicants in the past. It's a sad commentary that the majority of job seekers, 60%, have had a negative candidate experience. It can be devastating to the hiring process to learn that of those 60%, 72% have posted negative comments on social networks and job sites like Glassdoor. Negative comments are costing you talent. Stay current with your online presence: encourage positive comments and work to correct any negative remarks to keep job seekers interested and excited about joining your ranks.




Giving Candidates a Good Experience Gets Better Hires

Step 2: During the Application Process

Job seekers are looking for an application process that's fast, easy and intuitive. In a recent survey, 55% of job seekers admit to abandoning up to five applications during their search. Length and complexity may add to their frustration: keep it short and simple. Mobile applications today are a must. Over 90% of applicants use their phone to find vacancies. A website that's mobile friendly captures their attention and application immediately.

If your application process directs candidates to a job page on your site, make sure it's easy to use and puts your firm in the best possible light. A short process is a must, but many companies don't take the opportunity to market their recruitment and employer brand. The majority of sites, 59%, do not include content that explains why a job seeker would want to work for them. Every touch point in the application process is an opportunity to boost your brand. Including the plusses of working with you can net more applications and hires.



“ 59% of job postings do not include why a job seeker would want to work for them.”

Giving Candidates a Good Experience Gets Better Hires

Step 3: Scheduling the Interviews

Candidates are looking for an immediate response to their application and an HR professional who acts quickly to pre-screen and schedule moves ahead in the talent wars. Businesses shouldn't play phone tag with applicants and department heads to put everyone in the same room. Scheduling software simplifies the process, allowing applicants to pick a time that works for them when all the relevant shareholders are available. Scheduling platforms save time and emphasize your company is tech-savvy.

Step 4: Continuing Communication

Constant contact with prospects is key. A new trend, ghosting employers, has been on the rise. One study found 41% of applicants believed it was reasonable to simply stop communicating with an employer during the hiring process: 48% thought it was fine to do so in the earliest stages. Establishing a relationship with a candidate translates that you're interested and excited to have them meet with you. The more you connect with applicants during the hiring process the more opportunity you have to boost your employer brand and the less chance you have of being ghosted.



Giving Candidates a Good Experience Gets Better Hires

Step 5: Speak Their Language

When you know the traits and characteristics you're looking for in a new team member, it's easier to appeal to those strengths during the interview process. The candidates you're interviewing are thoughtful and methodical: provide them with step-by-step details of your process, giving them the structure they need. If you're interviewing for an outgoing, communicative role: make sure you include extra time to chat when you connect with them. Candidates may be more relaxed speaking virtually. In every case, speaking to their strengths shows you've taken the time to really understand who they are, and what they bring to the table.

Step 6: Deliver on Promises

Once a candidate has begun the application/interview process, it's important for business to meet its deliverables: if you say you're going to call, make sure you do. Job seekers who were given feedback on interview day were 52% more likely to continue their relationship with a potential employer. That included reapplying with the company, referring friends or even making purchases from the firm. Let job seekers know how they've done, what the next step(s) will be, and when they can expect to hear from you: and make good on all your promises.



Giving Candidates a Good Experience Gets Better Hires

Step 7: Fill in Lag Time

For some jobs and employers, an offer on the spot is routine. For others, it's just not possible to do so. But while you're waiting for reference checks or other lags between interviews and offer, keep the lines of communication open. Stay in contact with the candidate by sending information about benefits and perks or arranging coffee with potential colleagues. If you believe they're a strong candidate, keep reinforcing you're excited about bringing them on board as you wait for the process to finalize. Anything you can do to keep their interest and boost your brand can help convert a candidate to a new hire.

Candidate experience is critical to attract, recruit and convert top talent. The best job seekers in today's tight market are examining every point of contact along the recruitment process. They're evaluating your company as much, if not more, than you're evaluating them. A positive candidate experience reflects a positive employee experience. Job seekers want to work for a company that responds to their needs and wants, is attentive and appreciates what they have to offer. If your experience for candidates reflects those core values, you'll net top talent for every job you post.

Final Step: Beyond the Right Hire

Once you've found the best candidate for the job, the team and the company, you'll need to work hard to keep them on board. Keeping new hires (and everyone) happy at work begins with respect. One study revealed encouraging employees to identify and build on their unique attributes and strengths was critical to employee satisfaction.

SENTIO's assessment tools can help staff uncover their strengths and help them build on them, for their success and yours.



Concluding Statement

The process of hiring for any position is unique. The language and interactions crafted for an effective job posting must reflect that of your company's top-performing employees in that position or department. Considering new ways of interviewing and interacting with candidates to speak their language shows that your company values them.

When a company is able to understand their own needs, determine their top-performers for each position, and what they want out of a new hire, using hiring assessments, a streamlined and effective process for hiring the best candidate for each position can be created.

Due to the costliness of making a bad hire and the potential data breaches associated with tech positions, hiring people who share the mental makeup and values of your top-performing employees is a beneficial way to ensure a good hire is made. These recommendations are based on the research conducted for the purpose of this paper and the reasoning behind the use of psychometric testing in the hiring process.

