

# The Hiring Handbook

Everything you need to make the perfect hire





**Claire Walker & Hannah Essex,**  
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Across the Chamber of Commerce Network, business of all shapes and sizes recognise that people are the key to their success. Filling roles and retaining staff is crucial for their productivity, morale and growth potential.

Regardless of the size of the company, finding the right person can be a challenging and resource-intensive exercise. That said, getting it right is so important and the benefits to a business of a good team are limitless.

This guide will help firms to think about the critical things that they need to consider during the recruitment process. From finding the right person, to successfully onboarding and to building fruitful relationships for the future.

We do hope that readers will find this a useful guide to recruiting successful teams that allow their businesses to grow.



**Dr. Pawel Adrjan,**  
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Indeed Hiring Lab

We're delighted to support the small business community through our partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce - an organisation that has been helping to shape the UK's business agenda for more than 150 years.

Our mission at Indeed is simple: we help people get jobs. Many of those jobs are found at small and medium sized businesses (SMBs), which account for approximately 40% of all UK vacancies. Through their diversity, ubiquitousness and hiring appetite, SMBs are a key part of the labour market and the overall economy.

Hiring the right people can be one of the biggest challenges for SMBs. We hope that by covering topics from knowing when to hire to how to compete with larger companies, this handbook can help SMBs succeed in today's competitive and uncertain recruitment market.



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# INTRODUCTION



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## Introduction

For a small business, making the right hire can be a transformative undertaking. As something that is often done infrequently, finding the right person for the role can carry significant weight. It can also be hard to know where to begin and how to proceed. While search engine technology has levelled the playing field for attracting applications, the prospect of managing a comprehensive hiring process can be daunting, especially for businesses without dedicated HR staff.

This guide is designed to walk you through the process of finding and hiring a new employee, beginning with the initial decision to hire. There is also guidance on assessing CVs, interviewing and making a job offer.

Indeed provides this information as a courtesy to users of its site. Please note that we are not recruiting or legal advisors, we are not responsible for the content of job descriptions, and none of the information provided herein guarantees performance.

## When and why to bring on a new employee

### Hiring expert advice

Ask yourself, "Am I losing money by not having someone completing this work?" If the answer is yes, it's time to hire.

For smaller companies, it is common for each member of the team to wear many hats and take on tasks as needed. This essential resourcefulness can mask the need for a new hire and cause a business to be inefficient, undermining productivity.

## Clues that it may be time to hire

### Signs of burn-out

Teams in need of additional manpower often show telltale signs of overextension. Watch for these indications that employees are stretched too thin.

If multiple team members report struggling to get everything done, that's a sign that too much responsibility may have been redistributed to existing employees.

Don't miss nonverbal clues, such as difficulty with goal setting and project completion.

Employee turnover is a common sign that employees have been given more responsibility than they can handle.

### Opportunity cost

Did you know that not hiring can cost you money? Watch for these common signs that you are losing business or incurring costs as a result of being short staffed.

- Increases in overtime pay are both a sign and consequence of an under-resourced team.
- Spikes in customer complaints. Overtaxed employees may take longer to respond to inquiries or requests or miss them altogether.
- Scheduling gaps. Are you having to rely on the same person over and over to fill a shift? Or filling it yourself?

Turnover is not only inconvenient, it's expensive. Losing employees means losing their valuable expertise and experience.

Having to say no to a new contract, project or market due to insufficient bandwidth is a classic opportunity cost.



## Benefits of adding to your team

When a small company adds to its core team by hiring externally, the opportunities to grow revenue, capacity and brand awareness increase along with its employee count. By recruiting for experience and expertise that augments your existing team rather than mirroring its skill set, you can put your growing business in a position to do more, sooner.

With strategic recruiting, a new employee can bring:

### New expertise

Hiring someone who knows things or people you don't can create new efficiencies and opportunities. An expert in a critical function like IT or Human Resources can improve critical business processes while a marketing or sales pro may have long-standing contacts that help build awareness and drive revenue.

### Immediate scale

The right new employee can walk in the door with skills that take years to develop. Hiring for a new skillset builds capacity quickly and frees up your existing team members to focus on key objectives.

### Fresh perspective

Even the healthiest growing business can benefit from new ideas that help the company innovate and make process improvements. A new person can ask important new questions and help the team see things from a new angle especially if you recruit someone with a different background or experience from others in your firm.



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# ATTRACTING POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES



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## How Can SMBs Compete with Larger Companies?

The battle for talent is tough for all employers, with the UK labour market continuing to tighten and unemployment at its lowest levels since the mid-1970s. But with many jobseekers able to take their pick of would-be employers, new research by Indeed has found that many SMBs feel their larger rivals enjoy advantages when it comes to attracting talent. Here we examine some of the challenges and provide some solutions for SMBs to attract, hire and retain skilled staff.

### SMB challenges

Indeed researchers who polled SMB owners found the vast majority (81%) believe recruitment is more difficult for them than it is for larger, more established companies.\*

Past experience suggests they might have a point. A third (34%) say they have issues even finding suitable candidates for roles, let alone enticing them to join their company.

Coupled with this, nearly half (42%) of SMB owners find that it takes them more than a month to fill vacancies.

The reasons given for these struggles throw up some interesting food for thought. Money can't buy you love, and it possibly can't buy you a workforce, or not exclusively at least, with only 26% of SMB owners feeling that salary is the key battleground on which they lose out to larger companies.

The main reason staff are less likely to choose a small company over a large one is the lower level of job security SMBs are assumed to offer, with 59% of small business owners citing this as their main recruitment issue.

Other stumbling blocks include a lack of name recognition (49%) and the reduced likelihood of career progression (43%), while perks also feature prominently; 42% of small business owners feel they cannot compete with their rivals in this regard.

The small business leaders polled also felt their appeal is diluted by jobseeker perceptions that working for an SMB involves harder work (29%) and less prestige (18%) than working for a big name company.

Whether or not these fears accurately reflect the impulses of prospective employees is largely irrelevant; the more pertinent question is what SMBs can do to counter the challenges posed by the goliaths of the UK business scene.

### Building an attractive offer for staff

SMB owners are making their cultures more attractive in a number of other ways. Office treats (19%), expanded holiday allowance (18%), contributions towards the daily commute (13%) and private health insurance (10%) are among the most popular methods being adopted to lure skilled staff.

SMBs can provide positive environments for fulfilled, engaged and productive staff. Loyalty can be strengthened in many ways other than just a bigger pay cheque, and while SMB owners will always have a fight on their hands to compete with big businesses in many ways, owners can relish the opportunities to do so.

Small size can actually play to their advantage. Many employees actually prefer to work within smaller organisations as they feel more connected both to their colleagues and to the goings on within the business itself.



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From an employer's standpoint, being small can actually allow their company to be more nimble and react more quickly to what employees want. Having positive attitudes to flexibility in working hours, healthy work-life balance and the need for many employees to manage caring responsibilities are increasingly important when dealing with a tight labour market and maintaining a productive workforce.

Higher salaries are another viable retention solution, though many SMBs may feel they will struggle to compete with larger companies. Instead, the opportunity for career growth, variation in roles and responsibilities, and a flexible approach to time off are all emerging as strong options for smaller employers.

Happy motivated staff are not the sole preserve of big businesses, not least because money can't buy happiness. All employers face difficulties in ensuring their staff are motivated and fulfilled, leading to constant challenges in terms of retention and engagement of their workforce.

Smart SMB owners are already growing wise to this and in many cases are showing bigger businesses — with all their inherent advantages — how it is done with imaginative and forward-thinking solutions.

*\*Methodology: Researchers interviewed 1,006 decision makers in companies with fewer than ten employees in the UK. The research was carried out by Censuswide on behalf of Indeed in May 2018.*

## Company reputation more important than ever in a competitive jobs landscape

Today we live in an age of radical transparency. In our interconnected world, we have almost instant access to a quantity of information that was unimaginable even a few years ago.

This online revolution has changed both simple things, such as how we decide what to eat for breakfast, and complicated, life-changing decisions such as how we look for jobs. If jobseekers want to know what it's like to work at an organisation, insider information in the form of reviews is only a few [taps away](#).

But it has also changed how employers hire. A whole discipline of employer branding has emerged in HR; people working in this field seek to attract and retain talent by telling their companies' stories and using an array of methods and solutions to proactively communicate the story of what it's like to work for them.

Indeed's [Company Pages](#) is one such solution, combining employer storytelling with employee reviews and ratings on work/life balance, compensation and benefits and more to provide deep insight to jobseekers. The public nature of this feedback can make some employers hesitant, but today's jobseekers require transparency and insight into a company's culture before even applying. And it's a two-way street: Company Pages can turn those reviews to their advantage, and help employers more effectively reach jobseekers where they are searching by collecting all the information they need in one place.



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At Indeed, we recently redesigned our Company Pages and added new features, empowering jobseekers and employers alike to connect faster. To mark this, we surveyed 545 workers in the UK to dig into the details surrounding transparency and what it means in the world of job search and talent attraction.

## Inadequate online presence provokes “automatic” distrust from 57% of jobseekers

Our most recent research found that 70% of jobseekers said that insight into a company’s employer reputation is important while considering a job opportunity.\*

More than half (56%) said that they wouldn’t even apply for a role at a company with no online presence. Furthermore, our research found that companies with no online profile risk being dismissed out of hand by jobseekers, with 57% saying they would automatically distrust a company with no internet presence.

Information about employee satisfaction and how companies treat their staff is a key factor in a typical jobseeker’s decision on whether to apply for, and then accept a job. Employers need to win the trust of potential recruits, and transparency is one of the most effective ways to achieve this.

Our research suggests the smartest companies are embracing the connective power of the internet to ensure they attract the best possible candidates, and that they inform them as well as possible.



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## Online company reviews amongst the top 3 factors when considering a job offer

Online reviews aren’t just important when candidates are researching whether or not to apply to a company. They also play a vital role at the other end of the process, when deciding whether or not to accept a job.

Only salary information and word of mouth were more important, with 43% of respondents saying that salary information is the most important consideration, however, nearly a third (30%) of respondents named online company reviews by current and former employees as one of the most important factors for making this decision.

## Name recognition remains vital

Despite the huge amount of information available online, and the ease with which it can be accessed, a strong brand name remains a vital asset for a company seeking to recruit. Just one in nine jobseekers (12%) classes a recognisable name as unimportant when deciding whether to apply for a role.

The internet is also replacing straightforward word of mouth as a trusted source of information about a potential employer, with only 23% of jobseekers willing to overlook a negative online reputation when searching for a new role.



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## How to build your employee brand?

The culture and expectations surrounding job searches have changed forever. Employers should embrace this new culture of transparency and seize every opportunity they have to start sharing their stories online and build their employer brands.

How can you do this? Each employer's brand will vary depending on the business and culture of each organisation. However, it is good to focus on compelling stories - human stories of how your company makes a difference and why its culture is unique.

Spotlighting how you enable employees to fulfil their own goals and aspirations is also key. Go beyond clichés of pool tables and happy hours. Today's jobseeker wants a job that provides meaning as well as a salary. Many firms highlight how employees, or the company as a whole, play a role in social action.

[Company Pages](#) play a crucial role. On Indeed, employers can claim their employer profiles and use them to engage current and potential employees by hosting and sharing useful information, such as their company descriptions, photos and videos, jobs and other insights about their companies.

*\*Methodology: Indeed partnered with Censuswide to survey 545 UK workers in April 2018 (20.04.18 - 23.04.18). All respondents were over the age of 16.*



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## 5 Tips for Building a Workplace That Includes Everyone

Every day our news outlets and social feeds are full of reports about strife over racial, religious and gender issues. Pair this with a polarised political climate, and it's clear that the need for the acceptance - and celebration - of our differences is vital. This applies to the workplace, too.

Embracing diversity in the workplace encompasses many things: gender, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, age and neurodiversity, for instance. Today, business and HR leaders should be working to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.

It's not just the right thing to do; it's good for business. McKinsey's report [Why Diversity Matters](#) examines how diversity affects profitability and long-term valuation. Companies with the highest gender diversity among their executive management were 21% more likely to show better-than-normal profitability than competitors with the least gender variance in management. Similarly, companies with ethnic and cultural diversity outperform those without by 33%.

So how can we boost our efforts to be as inclusive as possible?

### 1. Educate your employees

It's important to train new recruiters and hiring managers to recognise bias and then how to take action. There are lots of good courses available on Unconscious Bias and professional associations that can help you work to eliminate bias from your hiring process. The key thing is to do your homework and choose the curriculum that is most meaningful to you and your company culture.



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But remember: as you introduce this training, reassure your audience that this is not about judging them as individuals. Bias, sadly, is just part of being human. We start to make a difference when we acknowledge it. Then, knowing what to look for, we can find ways to correct it.

## 2. Make job postings inclusive

Taking gendered language out of postings may help jobseekers to see possibilities they may not have considered before and so diversify your talent pool.

The language of job postings can influence the kinds of applicants you attract. For instance, researchers at [Duke University and the University of Waterloo](#) found that ads for traditionally male-dominated professions — such as engineering and programming — also prominently featured words associated with male stereotypes, such as decisive and dominant.

This same study suggests that replacing stereotypically masculine wording with gender-neutral phrasing can lead to more gender parity among candidates. For instance, instead of talking about “dominance,” you might instead talk about “excellence in the market.”

Similarly, avoiding words traditionally associated with female stereotypes, such as responsible and together, can attract more men to jobs in traditionally female-dominated fields such as nursing.

Look for stereotypes and rethink them — then reword them. Tools such as this [gender decoder](#) or [Textio](#) can help to identify biased language in job postings and other communications.

It is also extremely helpful to demonstrate that you are committed as a business in recruiting a diverse workforce and highlighting any specific policies (e.g agile or flexible working) that the company offer that demonstrate this commitment.



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## 3. Expand the search

If your company isn't attracting a diverse set of applicants, encourage recruiters and managers to cast a wide net earlier in candidates' job search.

Do they have good contacts with local universities and alumni associations? Are they networking with professional association chapters and other groups that offer student memberships?

If your company can sponsor historically under-represented groups in your area, you can expose many different people to careers they might not have considered in the past.

Reach out. You'll likely find there are many partners eager to cooperate with you!

## 4. Tell good stories

People love a good story, and good employee stories can do wonders to demonstrate your company's inclusive and welcoming culture.

What stories do you have to share? It doesn't have to be an article. It could be a video, a social campaign or a review shared on a third party website such as [Indeed Company Pages](#). Just make sure you get your stories out there.

Demonstrating your own inclusivity and diversity to a wide audience shows your commitment to providing opportunities. By doing so, you will attract candidates who live by these principles, too.

## 5. Build an inclusion team

If your company doesn't already have one, consider adding an inclusion leader to head up your diversity and inclusion strategy.

This leader can advocate for inclusion inside your organisation, spearhead partnerships with external organisations dedicated to advancing inclusion, set up speakers series and advance the formation of inclusion groups where members can collaborate and host outreach events. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.



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## Spreading inclusion

Inclusion is not restricted to any one company, and the more that organisations working to create a more welcoming workplace team up to learn from one another, the better. In this area of business, there should be no competition — only partnership.

## Work/Life Balance and Flexibility

The [Meaning of Work](#) is a study by Indeed exploring what work means to people in the UK in 2019. 2,008 full-time employees in the UK were surveyed, weighted to reflect the gender and age composition of the UK's full-time employee population based on data from the ONS Annual Population Survey from January to December 2018.

Achieving a balance between the demands of work and everything else in life was almost as important as pay to everyone we surveyed, and for those aged 45 and over it was the most important factor in their current role.

When we asked what elements of work have become more important to people over time, work/life balance swapped places with salary to take the top spot having been chosen by 48% of respondents (versus 46% for salary). Gen X (39-54 year olds) felt this most strongly, with 52% believing work/life balance has increased in importance throughout their career.

But are people willing to put their money where their mouth is? Yes.

When we asked people what salary they would need to earn to ensure happiness, the average answer was £51,000. Those who prioritise work/life balance felt they needed to earn around £49,000 to be happy, while those who did not required £55,000. That is a substantial £6,000 less per annum. This underlines the considerable value many employees place on keeping the demands of their job and their lives outside work in balance.

One area that can contribute to a better sense of work/life balance is having the option to work more flexibly. Desire for this is surging – in the last five years searches for working from home or flexible or remote work have soared 116% as a share of all searches on Indeed's UK site. Thankfully, employers are catching on: between 2014 and 2019, we saw a 136% increase in the phrase “flexible working hours” in job descriptions in the UK.



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# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT CANDIDATE



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## Finding great candidates

### Hiring expert advice

To maximise the chances of finding a great match, you need a game plan.

## Assessing CVs

If you know what to look for, a CV can tell you more about a candidate than just what jobs they've held in the past. CVs hold important clues about how an applicant approaches their work, allowing you to determine whether the person could be a transformative hire for your business.

When assessing a candidate, keep in mind both the duties a new employee must be prepared to perform as well as the competencies your job requires. These are known as hard skills and soft skills, respectively. Many hard skills are developed through specialised education and past job training and experience, while others you may be willing to supplement with training.

**Indeed Assessments** is a great tool screening talent based on skills. It quickly identifies your most promising candidates, offering free\* pre-employment aptitude, skills and personality tests.

#### Examples of hard skills

- Advanced software knowledge
- Language fluency
- Certifications or licenses

#### Examples of soft skills

- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Character attributes like dependability and tenacity
- Work style characteristics such as flexibility and an eye for detail

*\*Terms, conditions, quality standards, and usage limits apply.*

Soft skills include personality-driven attributes that are more difficult to identify and train for. These are the traits that make high potential candidates, and high functioning employees, so valuable. Learning to recognise these attributes in CVs is key to making a great hire.

## Clues from the CV

CVs are more diverse than ever in their design and style, so you'll likely see many different approaches by candidates. No matter what the document looks like, here are a few things to look for:

### Format

The way information is arranged on a CV can give you a sense of how a candidate thinks. Is there a clear flow of ideas and are information categories meaningful? The CV of a great candidate will tell a clear story.

### Details

Attention to detail is always an asset and is a must in many roles. Did the candidate take the time to check spelling, capitalisation and grammar usage?

### Preparation

The CV is your first indication of how closely a candidate read your job description. A motivated candidate will have highlighted skills and experience that match your job.

## Looking for soft skills

CVs also offer important clues about the character of applicants. Here are some of the most important attributes a new employee can have and clues you'll find in their CVs:





## Grit

Big results take big effort and tenacious candidates will be eager to point out what it took to be successful on past projects. Look for evidence of having tried many approaches in order to get the desired result.

## Motivation

Driven employees have accomplishments and responsibilities that transcend their titles. Look for words that imply ownership. Motivated candidates will have “led,” “developed” and “designed” projects and should be asked to elaborate on these in interviews.

## Integrity

A candidate with integrity will want you to have a complete view of his or her accomplishments. To this end, they will be clear about the role of their team members in any success as well as the challenges they faced. Watch out for candidates who portray all successes as entirely their own and without obstacles.

## Finding experience that matters

Some CVs are impressive for their length and scope, but don't assume that a CV with many job entries indicates a strong candidate. Here are the factors that matter when assessing experience:

## Longevity

The amount of time a candidate spent in a past role can be revealing, but in complicated ways. A relatively short tenure, marked by promotions and completed projects is more valuable than a long employment period with no upward movement or increased responsibility.

## Results

Look for quantitative evidence of a

candidate's past effectiveness. Even if the results weren't directly applicable to your business, empirical results (percentage increases or decreases, numbers of people served or products made, etc.) show a candidate's inclination to track their efforts, evaluate their impact and be accountable.

## Upward Movement

It is important to see a career progression that indicates improvement and increased capacity. It is particularly significant to see that a candidate has held multiple jobs of ascending seniority at the same company, as this shows that they were recognised for their work and abilities.

Hiring is the most important step you can take to grow your business. Use these tips to help you choose strong applicants to go on to the next step of your hiring process.

## Effective interviewing strategy

### Hiring expert advice

Each time you meet with a candidate, you are having what could be the first interaction of a new employee's tenure at your company.

CVs provide important clues about the qualifications of candidates, including their experience and character-driven attributes known as soft skills. But there is no substitute for an interview as part of your evaluation process. Interviews, both in person and over the phone, allow you to test your impressions of a candidate's CV and ask questions to get a complete picture of how an applicant might contribute to your team. Don't forget that with each interview, you're also representing your company to a potential new employee.

A productive interview is more than the meeting itself. To maximise the chances of finding a great match, you need a game plan.



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## Prepare thoroughly

### Ask the right questions

Taking the time to think strategically about the profile of an ideal candidate and asking the right questions in interviews are the keys to finding the high potential employee you're looking for. In order to elicit answers that will help you gauge a candidate's abilities, it's important to prepare good questions. To help you, here are some tips:

An effective interview begins with careful preparation.

1. Take a fresh look at your job description and make a list of the competencies (flexibility, innovative thinking, attention to detail, creativity) the job requires. These are personality traits and soft skills that will make the ideal candidate successful in the position for which you are hiring.
2. Use this list of soft skills to help you develop your questions. For example, if your job requires interpersonal and communications skills to work with other teams, you may want to ask interviewees to describe experiences where their work involved working cross-functionally.
3. Experienced hiring managers recommend over-communicating with candidates about the interview beforehand. In addition to the time and location, prepare them for traffic conditions and parking and let them know pertinent details such as how reception works at your company (whether or not they will need to show ID, for example).

## Understand candidate protections

To prevent discrimination, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published

guidelines for employers to help them understand what kinds of questions violate the rights of jobseekers. Familiarise yourself with these best practices before interviewing candidates.

## Under-asked questions in interviews include:

### What do you know about our company?

It's hard to equivocate when answering this question. Either the candidate has done research in preparation, or they haven't. This question also lets you know how detailed to be in your overview of the company.

### Describe your career progression and the story it tells about you

Understanding a candidate's motivation for job changes helps you understand their goals and interests.

### Why do you want this job/ think you can do this job?

There is a difference between wanting a particular job and wanting any job. A good answer to this question shows that a candidate has done their homework and is motivated to join your team because they believe they have something to offer.

### Describe past team dynamics that either inspired your best work or held you back

It is important to know what factors create an ideal situation for a candidate and this question will give you something to compare to the profile you created while prepping for the interview.



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## Give an example of an unsuccessful project you've worked on. What happened and what did you learn?

Asking candidates to reflect on “meaningful mistakes” helps you tease out the markers of grit and resilience as well as the impulse to try new things and work for better results. In key roles, beware the candidate who can't think of any examples of missteps or places the responsibility elsewhere.

## Don't forget to follow-up on answers for additional insights

### How did you do that?

A candidate with real ownership of an accomplishment will be able to detail the planning, innovation and necessary resources that were required to do impressive things.

### What was the result?

Press for details to better understand a candidate's investment in their projects, their drive to see a project through to completion and to evaluate the impact of their work.

## Quantify key skills with application tasks

An in-person interview can tell you a lot about a candidate, but you may find it necessary to have an applicant demonstrate proficiency by performing an application task. Here are some ways they can be useful as part of the interview process:

## Writing samples and on-site exercises

Provide a situational cue and ask the applicant to write an email to a customer or a sales letter to see how clearly they can express ideas in writing.

## Role plays and scenarios

Describe a situation an employee might encounter and ask them to describe or act out a response. This strategy works particularly well when interviewing for customer service roles.

## Technical assessments

Certain roles may require maths skills or software proficiency that can be verified with commercially available tests. You can also create your own assessment based on your company's needs.

## Document and debrief

When the interview ends, record and reflect on the conversation.

Immediately after each interview, review and add details to notes you made during the conversation. Important nuances and ideas can be lost if you delay this step.

Outline the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and what support they might need to be successful.

Collect written input from others involved in your hiring process and, if possible, compare notes.

## You've chosen a candidate. Now what?

You've prepared, recruited, interviewed and finally, you've decided on the right candidate for your position. It's time to communicate with the candidates who've made it to your final round of consideration.



# NEXT STEPS



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## The art of saying NO

### Communicating with rejected candidates

Hiring the right staff is one of the most important things your business can do. But how you go about turning down candidates is also crucial. After all, most companies reject far more people than they hire and in today's interconnected world people can share their experiences more easily than ever.

This means that word about the type of candidate experience you offer can quickly spread. We know they're looking: 95% of jobseekers tell us that insight into company reputation is somewhat or extremely important. How you handle rejection is part of the candidate experience, and impacts your reputation.

If you can master the art of saying "no", that rejected candidate could still put in a good word for you with other jobseekers, which is even more important if you are doing high volume hiring. Or maybe they'll come and work for you later in a role that's a better fit for them.

So, just how can you increase the odds that even rejected candidates will become advocates for your company? Here are a few tips to follow when saying no.

### Don't ghost candidates

The term "ghosting", disappearing from contact without explanation, may usually be reserved for dating, but there's no doubt that it happens in the world of hiring too.

Likely we've all had that experience at one time or another; applying for a job only to wait and wait for a response that never comes.

Of course, it's easy to understand why many employers might just drop out of contact and let that serve as a "no."



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Time is short, and there are so many things to do. It can be especially tempting in high volume hiring situations.

But a [study](#) by Indeed found that waiting to hear back from a potential employer is the number-one pain point for 48% of jobseekers.

So if you're ghosting candidates, or even thinking about it, then it could be bad for your reputation.

According to a 2016 report from [Talent Board](#), candidates share negative experiences with their inner circles 66% of the time.

Put simply: adopting a "no answer means no" rejection strategy isn't a solution.

### Every candidate deserves a response

To prevent bad candidate experiences, communicate outcomes clearly.

All applicants who apply for a job and are unsuccessful should receive a clear indication that they did not get the role as soon as you know they are no longer being considered.

It can be done. Transportation giant Enterprise is dedicated to providing a positive recruitment experience to everyone who applies, and that includes a strict policy of always replying to applicants.

Why? As Marie Artim, VP of Talent Acquisition at Enterprise, [recently told us](#), "We make sure that people understand that they're important to us, even if it doesn't work out."

So, at a minimum, make sure that you have a polite email ready for those who didn't make it past the [CV stage](#) or phone screen.

Thank them for taking the time to apply, and make sure you wish them the best in their job hunt. Of course, leave the door open for them to apply to you again, if another suitable role appears.



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## Explain why the candidate didn't get the job

If you can make the message personalised, thanking the candidate for their time and interest, all the better. Building **empathy** into your rejection process will benefit both parties.

Letting someone know why they didn't get a job is news that they can use for future job searches.

If you were looking for more experience in a certain area, say so. Did the project you were hiring for fall through? Let them know. Were their deficits skill-related? Be clear about any certifications or experience that would have improved their chances.

If they appreciate your feedback, then they may share that within their circles or online, giving your reputation a boost.

Meanwhile, if you liked them and want to keep their CV on file for future openings, let them know that as well.

## How to handle combative candidates

Even after doing all you can to ease the rejection process, some candidates may still allow their emotions and disappointment to get the better of them and can become combative or difficult.

Rejection can be hard, so don't take it personally when somebody "bites back."

Remember that the person is most likely frustrated with the situation, not you, and their emotions can have them directing that frustration outward.

When dealing with a hostile rejected candidate, keep things brief and stay calm. As always, be respectful and

empathetic, but do not play into their combative behaviour. This will only heighten the situation.

When that initial emotional response fades, you will have done the candidate a favour by not allowing the situation to spiral into one of the parties saying something that could be regretted later.

## Summing up

When you recognise the rejected candidate's time and effort, they'll likely appreciate it.

And who knows where your next best candidate is coming from?

It could be a friend or colleague of someone you never hired, but who really appreciated the courtesy you treated them with and so put in a good word for you.

We all want to be treated with respect, so put yourself in the candidate's shoes and remember that everyone you deal with is a potential ambassador for your company!

## The art of saying YES

### Extending an offer of employment

Congratulations, you've found a great candidate! It's time to let them know you're inviting them to join your team. The process of making an offer has two parts: the verbal offer and the written offer.

### Terms to include in your offer

- Company name
- Position name
- Start date
- Compensation (specify hourly, rate, yearly salary)
- Bonus or commission structure
- Pay frequency and days of payment



(e.g. bi-weekly on Fridays, or the 1st and 15th of each month, etc.)

- Any legal constraints that apply (i.e. non-competes)
- Date by which the offer should be accepted or declined
- Any agreed flexible working or hours of work

## The verbal offer

It's a good idea to arrange a time to talk via email. At the appointed time, present all of the terms of your offer. If the candidate is interested, let them know to expect a written offer letter and make clear how much time they can take to consider it, generally 24-48 hours.

## The written offer

The offer letter should only go out after a candidate has indicated interest in the verbal offer and should reiterate all of the terms exactly as they were presented in the verbal offer.

## Other things to include in the written offer letter:

- A proposed start date (and any contingencies that might affect this, such as the completion of other work with a current employer or a background check)
- The name of the manager to whom the employee will report
- A brief summary of additional compensation and benefits as well as contact information for a person at your company who can answer questions about benefits/pay
- Any agreed flexible working arrangements

## Onboarding a new employee

Onboarding is more than helping a new employee acclimate to a new work environment, it sets the stage for how an employee will function in your company in the future. The effort you make to set expectations and ensure that a new person feels connected to the company will pay dividends throughout their employment. Taking some time to plan your new team member's initial experience will help you get everyone off to a great start.

Prior to the start date, begin to think about what you'd like this employee to accomplish in the short and long term. Then make a job plan that includes goals and expectations for the first week, month and quarter. A motivated new hire will want to understand expectations and have goals to meet and exceed.

Compile the important information a new employee will need and provide as many of these details as possible in writing, so that the person can have answers at the ready when questions come up. Don't forget to include initial login details for email, network access and building access. If the employee will have a dedicated workspace, have it ready for them to get started.



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## Other onboarding ideas from Indeed recruitment experts

If you hire frequently, consider starting new employees in new hire groups. This allows new employees to start on the same day and onboard together, so they feel less alone.

Consider preparing a small “swag bag” with branded and useful items to give new employees a sense of company pride and belonging.

Set up lunches for the employee’s first week so that they can get to know the different people and teams with whom they will be interacting on a daily basis.

Assign a first week mentor who can be available to answer a range of questions and make the new employee feel at ease.

## Be ready for the next hire

Congratulations! You have chosen and onboarded a new employee. But don’t wait for the next urgent need to get ready to hire again. In between vacancies, take these steps to prepare for the next recruitment campaign.

## Monitor job trends

Periodically conduct your own “job search” by entering titles associated with your business needs. Notice how these roles are presented, which titles are commonly used and what qualifications other employers require. This data will help you create a competitive job description when the time comes.

## Nurture your brand

Look at your publicly available company materials through the eyes of a jobseeker. Does your website and social media presence project a work environment a talented employee would like to join? Augment these by claiming your [Indeed Company Page](#), where you can add information and photos that will interest jobseekers looking to learn more about your business.

## Watch for talent

Keep your CV assessment skills sharp by browsing CVs. Search millions of CVs for free on Indeed and note how candidates with the skills your business requires present themselves. This research will help you create a meaningful profile of a qualified candidate to guide your next hiring effort.

Happy hiring!



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<sup>1</sup>comScore, Unique Visitors, February 2018

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<sup>1</sup>comScore Total Visits, March 2018, <sup>2</sup>Google Analytics, Unique Visitors, September 2018

