



**QUALITY OF HIRE:
7 WAYS TO GET
THE RIGHT
CANDIDATES.**

It's simplistic to say that hiring the right candidate is important. Of course it is; no one's debating that. What may not be fully appreciated, though, is the impact that hiring the right (or wrong) person can have. Just one bad hiring decision can be a significant cost to the organization – conservative estimates say investing in an employee who's wrong for the job ultimately costs the company around 1.5 times that person's total compensation. Imagine if you could improve that by even *just 10 percent* – what would the financial impact be? This guide will set you on the path to improvement.

Like all business functions these days, HR departments are now data- and metrics-driven. Hiring teams are measuring their success and optimizing their performance for efficiency – but they may be missing the most critical measure of success: **quality of hire**.

While *time to hire* and *cost of hire* – the more traditional measurements – are certainly useful metrics to track, focusing on improving these variables to the exclusion of quality misses the point: You're still costing the organization significant time and money if you're not bringing in high-quality hires. Optimizing the outcome, as opposed to just the process, is really what your team should be most concerned with.

In this guide, we'll cover the seven most effective ways to hire the right candidates for your organization. From before you even write a job description to the 90-day assessment, here's how to improve every step of the process to increase quality of hire.

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1. DEFINE SUCCESS FOR THE ROLE.

How will you know whom the “right” candidate is if you haven’t defined “right”? The very first thing to define when you or your team is tasked with filling a role is what success looks like in this position. This goes beyond outlining responsibilities; you really need to pinpoint the outcomes the hiring manager is looking to achieve in bringing this person onboard. Knowing the ultimate success metrics for this position helps you write a targeted job description, as well as quickly pre-qualify candidates.

And emphasizing outcomes over activities doesn’t just make the job description more targeted – it also makes it more compelling. No candidate – particularly top-tier talent – is intrigued by a list of run-of-the-mill responsibilities. High achievers want to know what big goals they’ll be working toward. They want things to aspire to.

Determine the ideal outcomes of the role, and be sure to include them in the job posting. This is the first step to scoring the right hire.

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2. WRITE GREAT JOB DESCRIPTIONS.

Getting job descriptions right is absolutely critical to increasing quality of hire. Great job descriptions incorporate what the marketing world calls “the sizzle and the steak.” You want the right mix of detail (steak) and selling points (sizzle) to both accurately describe the role and convey why your organization is a great place to work.

A word of caution: It’s easy to go overboard with either of these, so be careful. You want enough detail to intrigue and inform, but not so much that the job description is miles long. Similarly, you want enough pizzazz to show your brand personality and company culture, but not so much that all the “ping-pong and beers” talk crowds out the specifics on what the company does and what the role entails.

Bundle our *three pointers for writing compelling job descriptions* (to the right) into a two-paragraph introduction that you use for all job postings.

It’ll make a difference.

Three pointers for writing compelling job descriptions.

1. Be *inspiring*.

Talk about your company mission, and describe major customer problems you’re solving. Share what employees say when they’re asked, “Why do you enjoy working here?”

2. Be *different*.

Check out your competitors’ job listings. Do yours sound markedly different? Also, think about why you’re winning in the marketplace — include that! People want to work for smart companies on a path to success.

3. Be *authentic*.

Try reading the job description you’ve written out loud — would you ever talk like that? Unless it absolutely doesn’t fit your brand, use conversational language and perhaps a more casual tone. You can also try capturing your execs’ own words, as they pitch the company. They often do so in a professional, yet conversational way.

“ *Make your referral system painless and rewarding – it will improve speed of hire and cost of hire, too!* ”

3. BUILD A ROBUST REFERRAL SYSTEM.

You want to do everything you can to encourage and enable referrals; they're often great hires. Since referrals come recommended by current employees – people who are already well-versed in company culture – they are much more likely to be a strong culture fit than the average candidate. Referrals tend to perform better and stay longer than the average candidate, too.

Unfortunately, clunky and cumbersome referral processes can sometimes discourage employees from recommending their contacts. Help them help you: Make your **referral system** painless and rewarding – it will improve speed of hire and cost of hire, too!

A few ideas for bolstering your referral process:

- **Reward participation:** Allow employees to earn “points” for activities like sharing openings via their social media channels, inviting contacts to join your **talent community**, or submitting a referral. Make the points exchangeable for cash or other prizes.
- **Keep it fair and organized:** A centrally managed program eliminates overhead and confusion, and **smart software** can even automate rewards. It's also good to generate a unique tracking link for each referral that follows the person through the system, so the referring employee can earn credit even if the opportunity is forwarded to another department.
- **Make it fun:** Use **gamification elements** to increase engagement. Highlight hot jobs, and recognize top referrers with leaderboards.
- **Provide updates:** Keep employees excited and tuned-in by regularly updating them on their referrals' progress through the process. Don't let referrals fall into the dreaded “black hole.”

And on that note ...

4. CREATE A POSITIVE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE.

You want brand fans out there in the market. You want top talent to recognize you as a top employer. How do you achieve that? One major factor is having an excellent candidate experience.

Storyboard It

Walk through the entire candidate journey, plot every major point, and at each one, consider: How can we “wow” them here? It’s easy to focus on the interview phase (and we’ll get to that), but there are so many other important touch points that are opportunities to set a positive tone. Here are the big ones you should be sure you’ve carefully crafted:

- Website (specifically, your careers page or talent community)
- Application
- Phone screen
- Onsite interview
- Offer
- Decline
- Survey
- Onboarding

How can you make the experience at each of these stages enjoyable? Great candidates are in-demand, and will certainly be exposed to an exceptional candidate experience at top employers. Make sure you’re hitting the bar, and as much as possible, make sure they’ll have positive things to say about their experience with your company, regardless of if you hire them.

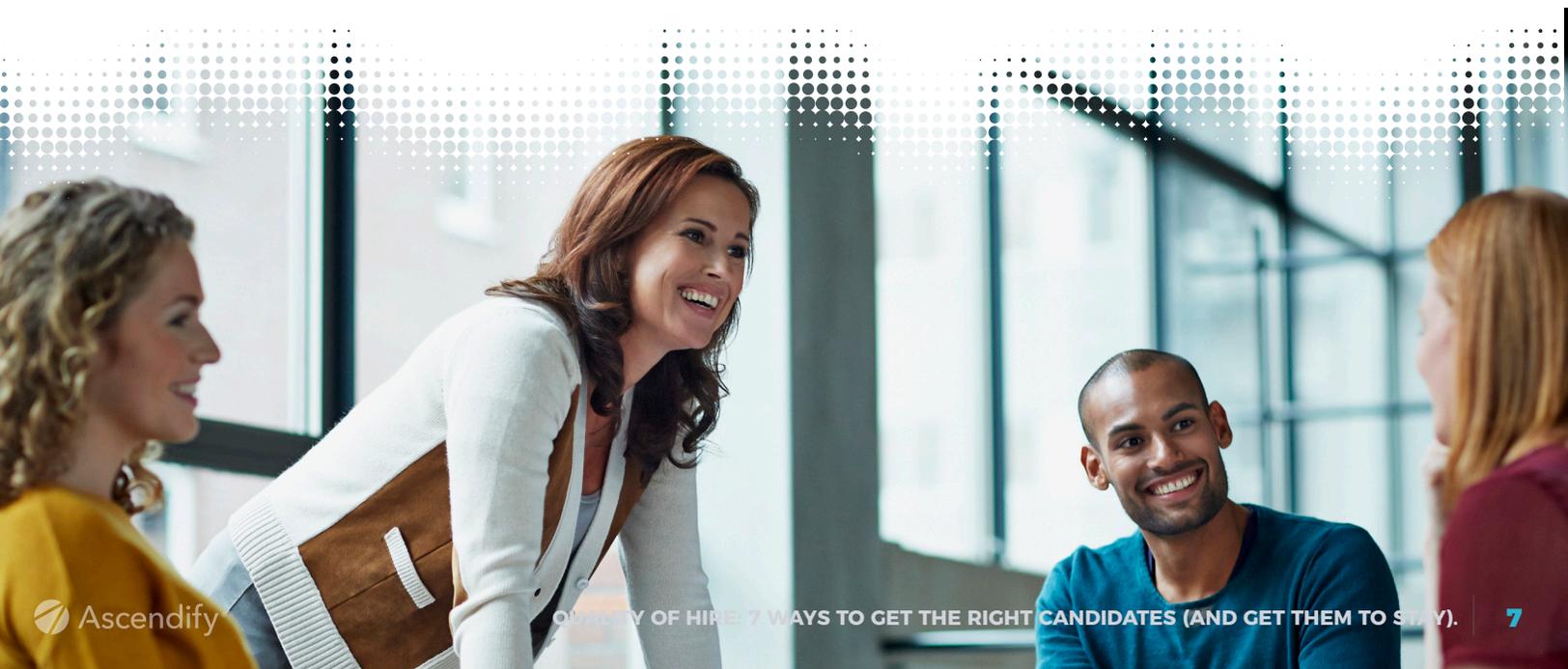


Build an Engaging Careers Page or Talent Community

This is your home base for the candidate experience, and it should be packed with helpful, insightful info. Ideas for things to include:

- Your best company pitch
- Your organization's mission
- Team pictures and videos
- Some notes or employee blogs on company culture
- Office location – and cool stuff nearby
- Job listings and descriptions at one click (not buried behind multiple pages)
- Candidate FAQs
- **Engaging content** (company news, thought leadership pieces, industry articles)
- **A way to express interest** – don't lose candidates who are interested in your organization but don't see the right opening; allow them to submit their info to be included in your talent network and considered for future opportunities
- **A way to stay in touch** – give people a way to opt in to communications, so your team can reach out in the future with targeted nurture campaigns and new openings

Be sure to drive folks back to your talent community in social media, offsite job postings, and even email signatures. By doing so, you'll build a database of high-quality, engaged candidates that you can tap into when relevant positions open. This shortens the hiring process and decreases the chance a competitor will snatch them up first.





5. MAKE SMARTER ASSESSMENTS.

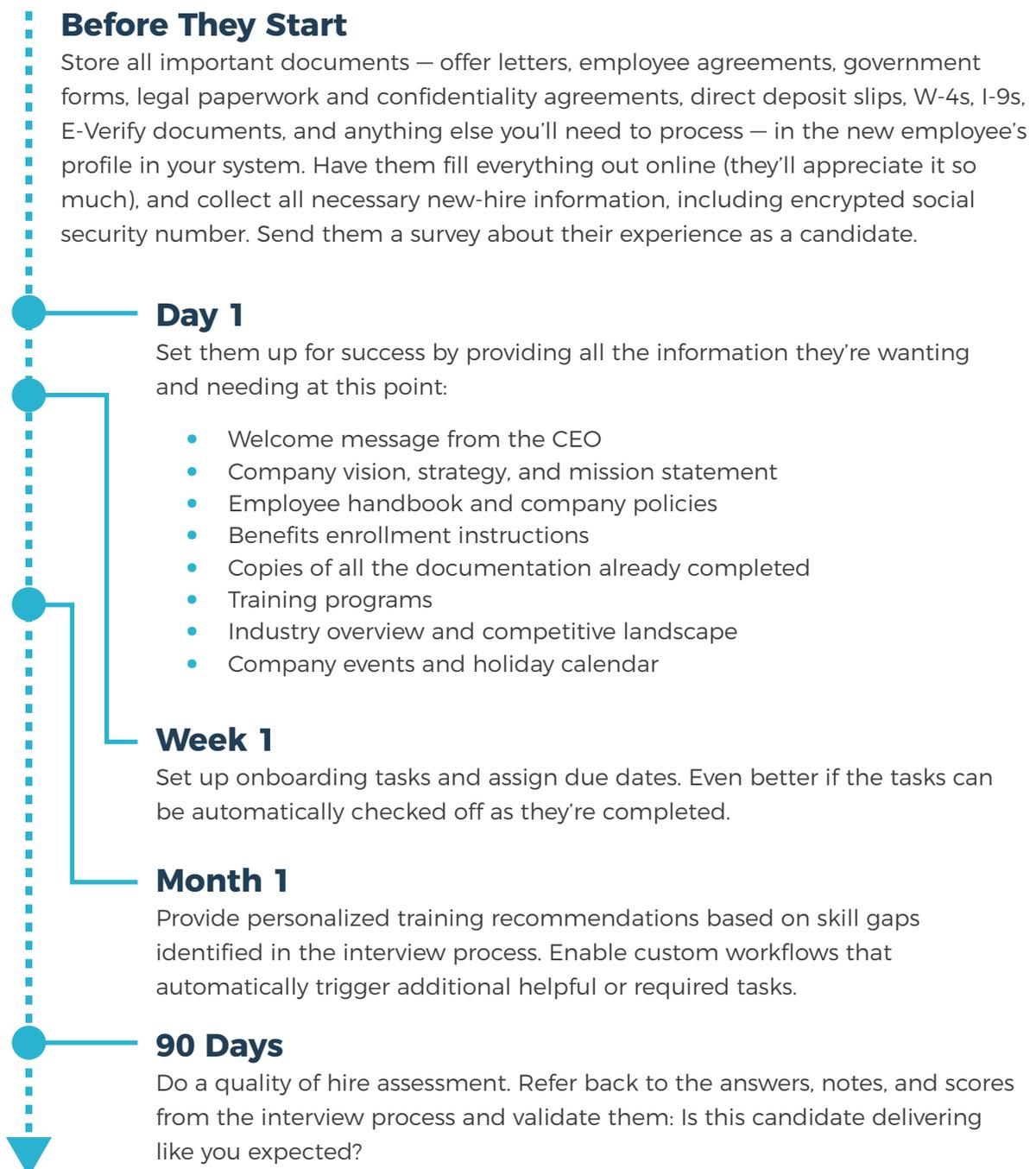
Assessing a candidate involves evaluating three basic areas: competency, culture fit, and track record. To that end, there are a few things you can do to be sure all interviewing parties are making smart decisions:

- **Do a lot of pre-qualifying:**
Work with the hiring manager to identify the absolute must-haves for the role, and use that information to **build pre-qualifying questions into the application process**. Additionally, be sure to talk through these items in phone screens, and get clarifications and context. Assessing these requirements now will help you get to the highest quality hire sooner.
- **Use an objective, structured interview process:**
Map out standardized questions for your interviewers, and give them guidance on how to evaluate answers, with examples. This minimizes bias and impulsive decisions, and protects against hiring for individual preferences or on gut feel alone.
- **Use a scorecard:**
If your ATS doesn't include **user-friendly evaluation tools**, you can create a simple "scorecard" for each interviewer to use. On it, they can rate candidates on, for example, three required competencies, two desired proficiencies, and culture fit.
- **Analyze decision-making:**
If you get a "maybe" from an interviewer, ask what would make them a "yes." If you get a "not a culture fit," ask for more details and try to get an example — find out what specifically they were assessing. If you get a "my gut says XYZ," know that gut feelings are absolutely worth paying attention to and can tell us a lot — but be sure to validate the instinct.

6. GET ONBOARDING RIGHT.

Onboarding is part of recruiting; the recruiting team owns the result of the hire until the 90-day mark. In those first 90 days, you're practically re-recruiting — you're reselling the candidate on the company and role, working to eliminate “buyer's remorse,” and ensuring they feel like they made a good decision.

For each new hire, work with the hiring manager to develop a solid 90-day plan. Here are some suggestions for each stage:



7. USE THE RIGHT TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY.

Smart, easy-to-use software is a busy recruiting team's best friend. Specifically, a solution that integrates your ATS and talent relationship management (TRM) tool is critical – separate point solutions lead to inefficient processes and poor decisions. A **modern, integrated solution** provides:



Collaboration: With the entire candidate experience encompassed in one system, you have one central hub for every step of the process. Hiring teams (and hiring managers) can easily collaborate and share feedback with just one login.



Automation: Set up workflows that automatically trigger events and tasks for candidates, new hires, recruiting team members, and hiring managers – saving everyone time and headaches.



Organization: All records and notes live in one system, and are tied to the candidate in their profile. No more hunting down files or colleagues to gather all relevant details (or worse, relying on incomplete information).



Data: Modern talent acquisition platforms support capability frameworks – structured data that allow you to create a skill profile of your top-performing employees, and assess skill levels of candidates against it.



Mobile capabilities: No solution is truly user-friendly without full mobile access. A good talent acquisition platform allows hiring managers to submit feedback between meetings, recruiting teams to manage the many moving parts of the recruiting process, and candidates to apply to open opportunities – all from their smartphones.



Intelligence: Today's top solutions also include machine intelligence that identifies the best candidates and enables side-by-side comparisons for better hiring decisions. It also improves the onboarding experience by automatically recognizing skill gaps of new employees and suggesting learning assets and leadership programs to help quickly close those gaps.

Allow technology to free up your time, streamline your processes, and pre-analyze your data. The right tools can help you implement all the other suggestions we've covered faster and more easily, getting you to a consistent high quality of hire much sooner.

Improving quality of hire can have a dramatic, positive effect on the entire organization, and is the ultimate success metric for a recruiting team. Implement these seven methods at your company, and you are bound to see your quality of hire increase.

Enjoy, and happy hiring!

About Ascendify.

Ascendify's Intelligent People Management™ platform reinvents how companies attract, develop and inspire their talent. Built for global organizations, Ascendify integrates machine learning and predictive analytics into recruiting and talent development with one seamless platform. Headquartered in San Francisco, Ascendify's customers include GE, Cisco, Panasonic, Disney, Deloitte, and Marriott.

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