

# Attracting Talent in a Changing World

Identify, source, and recruit  
the right skills for your business



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## Introduction

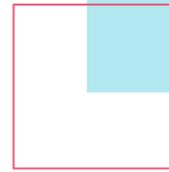
The Covid-19 global pandemic has created significant challenges in how companies attract, recruit, onboard and retain key talent, particularly in light of new hybrid working models. At present, 90% of employers are reporting skills shortages (Howard P, Manpower Group, 2022). In addition, the rise in new ways of working has generated more choices for employees as to when and how they will work, making the talent environment a lot more competitive.

For the first time in history, the demographic composition of the workplace includes many generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y, Z) bringing a broad range of skill sets, motivations and knowledge and an increased focus on diversity, equality and inclusion. The introduction of gender pay gap legislation in Ireland means companies must put in place structures and processes to attract, develop and retain a gender balanced workforce.

In addition, companies have to work on standing out from the crowd with a strong employer brand and pivot to more streamlined and efficient ways to recruit top talent.

**How do employers begin to address some of the challenges around employee recruitment, engagement, and retention? Here are some questions to consider:**

- › What resources do we have and what do we need for our future growth?
- › In what ways do we need to elevate our employer brand for the current market?
- › How can we improve the stages of our recruitment process (defining roles, attracting applicants, managing the application and selection process, and making the appointment) through technology?



## Context & Overview

Organisations are responding to one of the most tumultuous times in history. Covid-19 and the resulting shift in employee expectations have fundamentally altered the balance in recruitment and resourcing across every industry regardless of company size, sector and stage of growth. In this guide, we define recruitment and resourcing as the way in which companies plan, attract, onboard, retain and engage employees in the workplace. The guide outlines steps you can take to achieve the optimum workforce aligned to your business strategy and culture. To grow your business successfully, you need to leverage appropriate resources to drive your strategic objectives. This starts with selecting and attracting people with the right set of skills, talents and behaviours aligned to your business strategy and culture. You may encounter challenges such as having no formal hiring process or HR team, no defined recruitment strategy and not enough time to recruit the right people.

This guide offers some structure when hiring for growth and will highlight the nuances of hiring in a post-pandemic environment.

This guide is informed by a deep knowledge of best practice in recruitment and resourcing as well as the latest trends and business theory. It is also informed by deep expertise in the challenges SMEs face and how they operate their recruitment processes. It will be useful to companies of any size or stage of maturity, but it has been written with particular reference to an SME audience.

**The guide offers some structure when hiring for growth and will help you consider your company's approach to recruitment, with a particular focus on:**

- › Creating a recruitment strategy
- › Developing your Employee Value Proposition to attract and retain talent
- › Creating job adverts and specifications
- › Managing the selection and assessment process
- › Onboarding, engaging and retaining talent

- › How can we best onboard new employees within a hybrid working environment? What parts of the onboarding process can be digitised and what elements should occur face-to-face?
- › Once we onboard new talent, how can we make people feel engaged and part of our company culture?

Enterprise Ireland works with a broad range of clients who need to address many of these challenges. This guide, developed in collaboration with [Occupop](#), aims to support you to build awareness, understanding and best practice so that you can identify your company's skills needs, attract the right talent, manage the application and selection process and onboard and engage employees in a post-Covid era.

In addition to the guide, Enterprise Ireland offers a range of supports our client companies can avail of as they seek to improve their recruitment and resourcing practices. These supports include one-to-one guidance from our People & Management Specialists, access to external HR consultants, eLearning solutions and Leadership & Management Development Programmes. To find out more, please speak with your Enterprise Ireland Development Advisor.

**Mariam Dadabhay**  
People & Management Specialist  
Enterprise Ireland





## How to Create a Recruitment Strategy

According to Forbes the [Harvard Business Review](#), 80% of employee turnover can be attributed to poor hiring decisions. In addition, 79% of employers claim they find it difficult to attract the talent they need (Manpower Group, 2022).

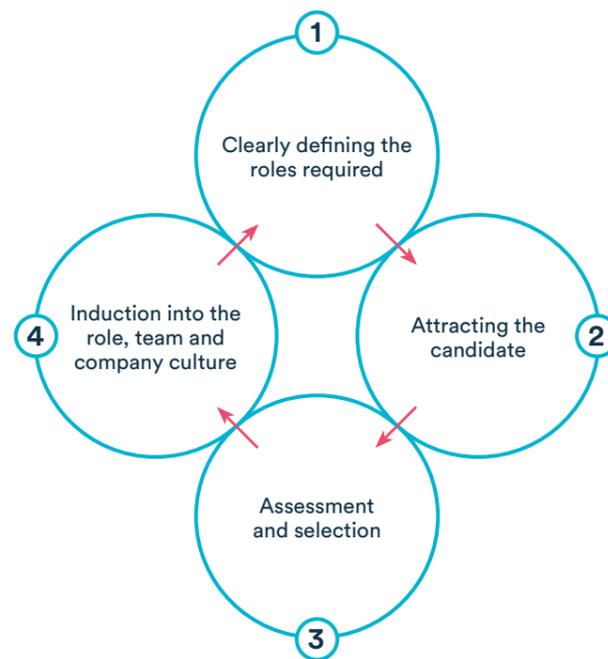
A recruitment strategy is a clear roadmap that outlines your hiring plan. The plan should define the roles your company plans to recruit for, when and where those job opportunities will be posted, and the evaluation strategies through which you'll identify quality candidates. Initially, your business strategy will help you identify what resourcing gaps you need to fill.

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- › Is your organisational structure appropriate for your future needs? What new roles are required?
- › What are you hoping to achieve by bringing new skills into your business?
- › How do the skills and competencies of your current staff align with your strategy and culture and where are the gaps?
- › How will your hiring plan help you to achieve your overall business strategy?

The four stages of an effective recruitment strategy are outlined in the diagram below:



## Defining the Role

Clearly defining the role starts with identifying what gaps are evident across your company to meet your business objectives. It is important that you are clear about where the role sits within your organisational structure, specifically who the role reports to, what roles report into it and what its inter-relationships are within the business. The first step to creating an effective job description is to perform a job analysis.

A job analysis refers to a process of collecting information about a specific job, including an overview of the role, skills requirements, responsibilities and deliverables. You can collect data to write the description from current employees and the hiring manager. Once you have identified your roles, a well written job description is one of the best ways to attract candidates and should contain the job title, experience and skills required for the position and some further information about your company, culture and benefits. Craft a headline that is catchy but also clear and easily searchable. Your headline should clearly advertise the job title using industry standard language. It is also recommended that the headline stays between 5 and 80 characters in order to rank well with search engines and, therefore, be easily discoverable by your target candidates.

**Tips for crafting the body of your job description:**

- › Clear, concise and readable on any device
- › Outline your company culture and the benefits that make your company culture unique
- › Keep the facts and requirements for the position clear and straightforward
- › List your must-have requirements in order of importance
- › Don't include too many "preferred" skills as

- › this may discourage candidates
- › Ensure the language matches the style and tone of your brand
- › Use gender-neutral language to ensure the language matches the style and tone of your brand

The job description template in **Appendix 1** outlines the sections required to write a clear job description, including how to future proof the role. Clearly defining the vacant role will lead to more suitable applicants, more objective decision-making and increase the likelihood of longer term hires. It's also good practice to have the job description reviewed by someone who has already worked in that role.



## Attracting the Candidate

**Create and Communicate an Employee Value Proposition**

Showcasing your employer brand on different channels is key to talent attraction. According to a [LinkedIn Employer Brand report](#), an effective employer brand can reduce cost-to-hire by 50% and bring in 50% more qualified candidates.

To attract the right talent into your organisation, developing and communicating an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is essential.

Building a strong EVP helps potential candidates understand why they should work for your company. A large proportion of the job market tends to be passive i.e., potential candidates are not actively looking for roles or considering your company. Having a strong EVP ensures you can attract both the active and passive talent pool.

When creating your EVP, it is important to reflect and outline your offer under the five key areas (**Compensation; Benefits; Career; Work Environment; Culture**). More importantly, think about what your unique or differential proposition to candidates in the current marketplace is and how that aligns with the chosen demographic you are seeking.

An effective EVP can aid attraction and retention across all areas of your recruitment strategy, including internal candidates, employee referrals and external sourcing. It is therefore critical that your employer brand is well-defined, competitive and marketed effectively. If done well, you could increase the number of applications you get from potential employees who seek to work with you over your competition.



## Employee Value Proposition : The five essentials:



### Compensation

Salary satisfaction, Fair compensation & benefits, Pay increases, Bonus system, Promotions, Evaluation system



### Benefits

Annual leave, Flexible working, Career transition policies, Family friendly policies, Educational options



### Career

Career pathways, Succession opportunities, Evaluation & feedback, Mentoring



### Work

Clear roles, Autonomy, Trust, Recognition, Diversity & inclusion, Well-being



### Culture

Values, Behaviours, Leadership support, Social responsibility, Technology

Once you have identified the roles you require and created your EVP, there are various ways you can portray your brand and advertise depending on your sector, industry, the types of roles you require and your budget. You may choose to advertise on your own platform or via job boards or a third-party recruitment agency.

## How can I advertise my key roles?

### Social Media Channels

Data from the [Social Media Strategies Summit](#) showed that 78% of recruiters have hired through a social network, such as LinkedIn. Social media also has the advantage of low-cost job advertisements that can be tailored to attract your ideal candidate. If you advertise where your audience is, you are more likely to attract the candidate you are looking for. For example, a significant number of job seekers use Facebook to search for job opportunities.

### Employee Referral Programmes

An employee referral programme is a recruiting strategy in which employers encourage current employees, through rewards, to refer qualified candidates for jobs in their organisation. According to a study conducted by [Undercover Recruiter](#):

- › Employee referrals have the highest applicant-to-hire conversion rate – only 7% apply, but this accounts for 40% of all hires
- › Applicants hired from a referral can start the job much faster than applicants found via job boards and career sites (after 29 days compared with 39 days via job boards and 55 via career sites)

- › 46% of hires who are referred by others have greater job satisfaction and stay longer at companies

### Online Job Boards

A significant number of job seekers review online job boards to look for their next position. Depending on your hiring needs, you can use either niche or global job boards. Niche job boards identify candidates with a very specific set of skills or qualifications. These can include boards such as [Engineering.ie](#) which focus on a particular job sector, or [IrishJobs.ie](#) and [Jobs.ie](#) which narrow candidates down by location. These job boards typically require you to commit to a monthly or annual contract and can be expensive. If you want to reach a wider audience and prefer to have more control over your budget, you can opt for boards like [Indeed](#) or [Glassdoor](#) which operate a Pay Per Click model and have a very wide reach.

### Company Website Careers Page

According to LinkedIn's 2022 Global Talent Report, [The Reinvention of Company Culture](#), 59% of job seekers go to a company's website before applying for an open position. They are researching the company's culture and values (66%), its perks and benefits (54%), and its mission and vision (50%). According to [Glassdoor](#), 90% of job seekers rely on the perspective of current employees when learning about an employer. An attractive careers page that supplies all of this information will help candidates feel more confident and enthusiastic about applying to your company and ultimately accepting your job offer.

### Video Testimonials

Many companies create employee video testimonials on their careers pages to drive candidate engagement. The genuine voice of your employees will help prospective candidates ascertain if the company is a good fit for them as well as getting a glimpse into the culture of your company. You can also create social media campaigns promoting a job advert along with a testimonial from one of the current team members. This is a great way to create rich content that will drive candidate engagement.

### External Recruitment Services

External recruitment agencies can help you to attract candidates, manage responses, screen, shortlist or run assessment centres. If contracting with an agency, they must have a good understanding of your organisation and its requirements in order to find you the best candidates.

### What information can employers ask external recruitment agencies before choosing one?

- › The expertise, of both the company and the recruitment consultant who will work with you in sourcing candidates within your sector
- › What networks do they have to source suitable candidates?
- › How do they stay in touch with the sector – do they understand current recruitment trends, salary benchmarks?
- › What level of seniority do they usually recruit at?
- › What is their success rate with candidates – in relation to both percentage of placements and length of time an employee stays with a company?

### What is their normal process for candidate search?

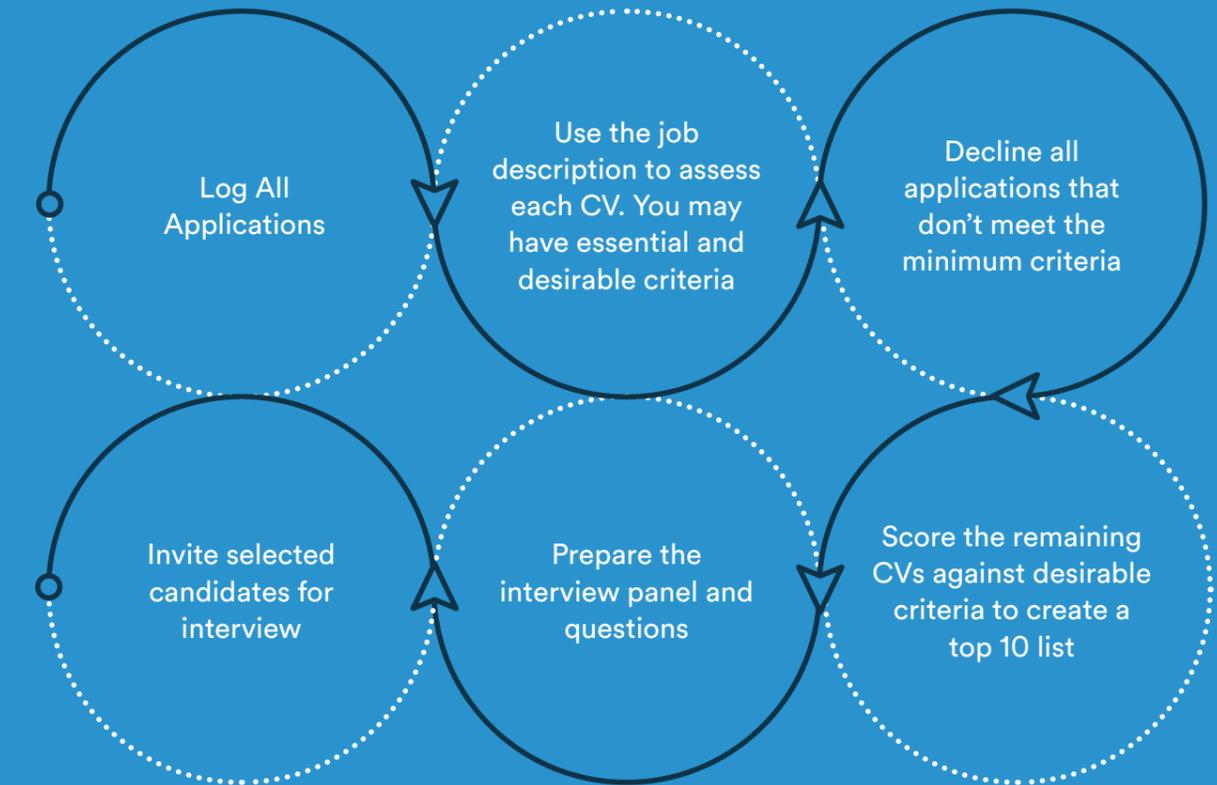
- › How do they assess candidates?
- › What is included in the service – psychometrics, background checks, reference checking?
- › How will they help you refine the job description?
- › Will they provide advice on the salary / compensation package?
- › What is the fee structure?
- › Are amounts negotiable?
- › Is phasing negotiable?

### Succession Planning

It's also important to note the internal talent pool within your company when recruiting. Providing opportunities for career progression through internal promotion and career pathways helps with succession planning and retention.

## Create a Candidate Short-List

If you choose to advertise a role publicly, it can lead to a large pool of applications. To manage the application process, the diagram below should help you to create a shortlist of candidates to assess before making a final offer:



Once the shortlist is complete, you can decide on an interview and assessment process



## How to Assess Candidates

There are many ways to assess potential candidates whether you are hiring for onsite, remote or hybrid working. According to LinkedIn's 2022 [Global Talent Trends Report](#), traditional interviews fail at: assessing behavioural skills (63%), understanding candidate weaknesses (57%) and removing bias of interviewers (42%).

To ensure a comprehensive assessment process, it's important to consider what type of interview you wish to conduct and whether you plan to use other types of assessments as a supporting tool.

If the traditional interview is the preferred option, below are some best practice steps to the interview process:

### The Traditional Interview Process - Step by Step Guide

1. Map out the interview process, functional and behavioural competencies required for the role and questions, as well as the criteria you are hiring against. A full list of recommended interview questions can be found in **Appendix 2**
2. Organise the interview panel and circulate the interview schedule, questions and the job criteria in advance of the interview
3. Shortlist the candidates you want to progress and schedule a 15-minute screening call. The screening call is a very important time-saver and can be carried out by the direct line manager or HR. This is when you clarify some basic information with the candidate and ensure that they are fully aware of the job details

4. Schedule a second-round interview with the line manager, an independent panel member and HR. This interview should be an in-depth review of the candidate's experience and a discussion about their skills relevant to the job. It's also an opportunity for the candidate to learn more about the job itself. Take some notes and scoring to compare candidates' evidence and to provide feedback. You may include a technical test, psychometric test, or set up a task or project as part of the interview assessment
5. Depending on the seniority of the position you may wish to conduct a final interview with the CEO and other senior members of your organisation. This interview typically is an opportunity for the leadership team to discuss the long-term strategy of the company and the career path for the job in question. It's important that the opportunity and company are presented well in this stage to ensure the candidate is fully aligned with the company and the job
6. Aim to complete your hiring process within 3 weeks. Anything longer than that may result in candidate drop off

The "STAR" interview method is used particularly when interviewing and assessing for behavioural competencies. The STAR (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult) helps the interviewer to ascertain evidence of certain behaviours they require against a scoring criterion. The method provides a format for candidates to prepare and deliver their answers based on real life examples of where they demonstrated the behaviour before. Tips on how to format your interview using this approach can be found in **Appendix 3**.

In addition to the interview, there are a vast number of digital assessments to help assess technical aptitude, personality traits and behavioural skills. These are discussed in the next section:

### Psychometric Testing and Gamification

Psychometric testing, online surveys and gamification are new technologies that allow employers to understand the key technical and behavioural competencies of their potential candidates. They can be used in addition to a formal interview or as part of a short-listing process. Psychometric tests range from assessing behaviours, personality, emotional intelligence and IQ. It's important to contact a recognised psychometric provider to ensure you choose the right test for your role and culture. Using psychometric testing as part of the assessment process can help you to:

- › Understand how the candidate will behave in the workplace
- › Identify leadership potential in job applicants
- › Test candidates' emotional intelligence and fit with your company culture
- › Assess candidates' technical capability to perform the role tasks and deliver key performance metrics

Gamification can be used in recruitment for evaluating candidates' aptitude for jobs through the use of online games. For example, Unilever uses neuroscience-based games to measure candidates' inherent traits, with recorded interviews analysed by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Siemens uses its game Plantsville to place candidates in an on-the-job simulation to assess how the person will actually

perform in the day job. Also, pairing AI with an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) helps you analyse your recruiting trends and make smarter decisions. Many screening technologies will assess the CV against the job description and provide a relevant score based on suitability, for example Applicant Tracking Software.

### Mobile Recruiting

There is an expectation by job seekers to be able to search, review and apply for roles via their mobile phone. It's important to ensure that your website displays correctly on all mobile devices as well as computers. QR codes are becoming increasingly popular within recruitment advertising as they allow candidates to scan the QR code and apply directly for the job.

While the CV is still the most popular method of job application there are now many new technologies that allow candidates to apply without a CV. Instead, they may send their LinkedIn or Facebook Profile, or even a video resume of themselves. It is not unusual for companies to ask qualified candidates to upload an interview response video of themselves related to the role.



## How to get Selection Right

Once the applications have been filtered and interview and assessment methods finalised, it's important to make a job offer promptly to give yourself an edge over larger, less agile companies. Providing prompt feedback to unsuccessful applicants is important to maintain a good reputation. **Appendix 4** describes how to make a job offer and manage counter offers.

### Induction into the Role, Team and Culture

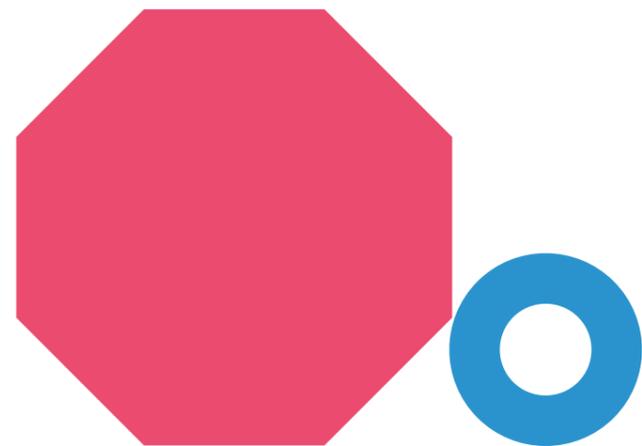
Have a short- medium- and long-term induction plan for your new hire including mentoring schemes or shadowing existing employees. A detailed induction into the role, team and company culture will allow new hires to settle into the business. Whether your new hire will work onsite or in a hybrid or remote fashion, your onboarding plan should include ways to ensure the new team member feels welcomed, supported and confident in their role and part of the team.

### A Step-by-Step Guide to Set Employees Up for Success:

1. Start with an orientation that showcases your employee benefits, company policies, the values of your organisation and the various team structures
2. Have a face-to-face or virtual welcome with team members
3. Give the new hire something tangible that welcomes them on board. This could

be some company merchandise with your company logo that will help reinforce their team connection every time they use the gift

4. Ensure that you have provided all equipment that the new hire will need to complete their work
5. Carry out daily check-ins for the first week, then weekly check-ins for the following 6 weeks
6. If working remotely, ensure that managers maintain frequent contact with new hires as if they were in the office
7. Create a buddy system and pair the new hire with another member of the team who they can contact for any ad-hoc questions
8. Provide access to shared online drives where company information is stored: policies, holiday allowances, details on sick pay, benefits, team member contact information, and any other materials that might be relevant to your company
9. Introduce the new hire to key internal and external stakeholders. For example, create a social post with their picture and welcome them to the team across your social media channels
10. Create a training schedule for the first 3 weeks that educates the new employee on your company, industry, competitors, opportunities and resources



## Beyond Recruitment: Considerations for Talent Retention

Retention is a key challenge for SMEs and competition for talent is rising. There are many ways to retain your talent pool. It starts on the first day of onboarding and leads to a continuous effort to invest in your people and your culture.

### Evolution of your Culture

Building a great culture requires active intent, and every leader must demonstrate their commitment to the culture in both words and actions. To do this, leaders need to model the values and behaviours they want to incorporate into the company culture. Start by assessing where your company sits under the four core pillars of a strong work culture - Mission, Vision, Strategy and Values - and communicate these across the organisation.

1. **A Mission Statement** represents the fundamental reason for an organisation's existence and what it is here to do. A Statement defines the company's business, its objectives and its approach to reach those objectives.
2. **A Vision Statement** describes the desired future position of the company. The term vision comes from the Latin *videre*, meaning "to see," and so a vision statement reflects a vivid and inspiring description of where your company wants to be in the future. Effective visions are both tangible and immediate, giving shape and direction to your company's future and assisting in the process of setting goals.

Below are some questions you may wish to consider:

- › Have you reflected on your company's current mission and vision?
  - › Do employees internalise them enough to live by them?
3. **A Strategy** is the company's plan of action to achieve its desired future state.
    - › Is your company's future direction for growth understood, communicated, and broken down into key deliverables across the organisation?
  4. **Values** can be described as guiding principles for behaviours and decisions. Often, issues in companies arise when leaders are behaving in opposing ways to the behaviours they espouse as values.
    - › Does your company have a set of core values that are communicated and demonstrated in the behaviours of leaders? Investing in value-based workshops ensuring the whole company inputs into the values and behaviours they feel will help deliver the company strategy and vision. Ensure your company has a set of core values and behaviours aligned to everyone's role and performance.

## Diversity and Inclusion

The first step in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace is acknowledging that bias, whether conscious or unconscious, exists. It is important to recognise what these biases are and learn ways to overcome them. [The Gender Decoder](#) is a simple tool that allows you to screen for any unconscious gender bias within your job descriptions.

### In what ways can you create an inclusive recruitment process and working culture? At a minimum, ensure that:

- › your employees have clearly defined job specifications and timely performance review discussions
- › your performance measurements include development opportunities and, if appropriate, are tied to compensation benefits
- › your company has a set of core values and behaviours aligned to everyone's role and performance

In addition, you may wish to:

- › [Set up a Diversity and Inclusion Council](#) to ensure that everyone in your workplace is held accountable and actively encouraged to promote Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)
- › Implement a Diversity and Inclusion Framework. According to [Deloitte](#), creating employee networks, such as resource or outreach groups, is one of the key strategies for successful workplace D&I
- › Promote an environment that holds management accountable
- › Hold regular team catch ups and ensure they promote social connections and are not just used for business purposes

- › Use technology to promote communication and cross collaboration. This is especially important in a remote or hybrid working environment
- › Communicate a Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap for the organisation

## Training and Mentoring

Creating a talent pipeline is essential to securing the long-term growth of your business. Providing employees with training and support to develop their skills will help you guard against future talent shortages and staff attrition. Internal mentoring programmes provide new hires and existing employees with a sounding board and career progression advice to help advance their career path and bridge performance gaps.

## Invest in Wellness

Taking care of your employees will directly improve your retention rate. With stress becoming more pervasive in modern work environments, offering a wellness programme that targets mental health in addition to physical health will help you stand out and create a culture of safety and positivity for employees.

Employee Assistance Programmes are a great way to offer confidential counselling services that provide support to your employees and their families. Alternatively, offering development opportunities and financial planning resources can have huge value for employee wellbeing and employee retention. Ensure your potential hires know that your company cares about their wellbeing from the very start of the recruitment process. It may be the determining factor in a candidate choosing you over another employer.

## Succession Planning

The purpose of succession planning is to fill roles internally, improve employee retention and reduce recruitment spend. Succession planning is essential to ensure you have a strong pipeline of candidates to replace employees who may leave or retire. It's about creating career pathways to elevate employees to the next level of their careers, ensuring strong employee engagement, greater job satisfaction and success for both the employee and your company.

Succession planning relies on business leaders mapping out the future vision for the company and identifying future gaps. Succession planning isn't always about moving up, employees might want to move laterally, and this may involve upskilling and reskilling for current gaps and future skills needs. Before you get started with succession planning, it's important to consider how your current teams are composed. Consider how your teams are currently set up, where the opportunities are for professional growth and the gaps that require new skills or hires.

Apply these four steps to create a succession plan:

### 1. Define your Strategy and Goals for the Future

Succession planning depends entirely on your company and its longer-term growth plans, so understanding the goals of your company will give you a better idea of how to develop your employees in the coming years. Consider the following questions about the current and future position of your business.

- › What is the growth strategy of your business?
- › Which teams need to grow the most to support your strategy?
- › What skills are most needed for your business to achieve its goals?

- › Are these skills readily available or do they require in-house training and experience?
- › What departments or roles have workers that are approaching retirement age?
- › What roles or departments would disrupt the functioning of the company the most if a gap were to occur?
- › Do you require specific succession plans for different parts of the business where skills may be harder to source and retain?
- › Do you require different leadership skills to grow your business? If so, can you develop current managers or will you need to recruit additional leadership capability?
- › Do you have a solid pipeline of managers within your business who can develop into future leaders?

### 2. Pinpoint the Employees with Potential and Interest

Once you've determined the roles or talent gaps that need to be filled, you need to find the right employees to fill them. Data is crucial to determine which employees would fulfil the roles needed and those who would be ideal candidates for future opportunities. Through the use of psychometric testing and performance management processes, it is now possible to capture data on current employees such as education, hard and soft skills, career progression goals, interests, drivers, detractors and life goals. By using this data, you can start to match potential opportunities in-house with your current employees.

### 3. Prepare Employees to Fill the New Roles

After matching interested and high performing employees with your company's potential talent gaps, you determine what skills and experience they will require for their advancement. Collaborate with employees and heads of departments to define specific goals that they should achieve, and the upskilling required to be able to move

into a new position effectively. Create a clear timeline, roadmap and plan for their advancement. Prepare the employee to fill the new role or close the skills gap with career development programmes such as:

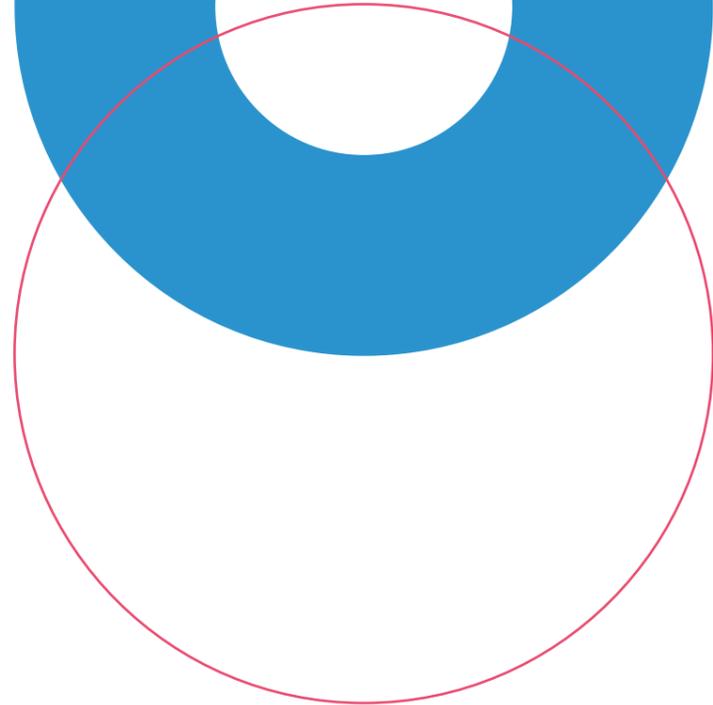
- › Additional training and development courses
- › Cross-departmental exposure
- › Stretch assignments or job rotation
- › Mentorship programmes

#### 4. Track Employees' Performance

Once your employees begin a succession plan, you can track their performance in order to determine the effectiveness of your methods. This will help you continue to adapt your development programmes as the employee gets closer to the succession, and it will also help you ensure that you have found the right fit for the position.

#### Recognition and rewards systems

Recognition for a job well done, whether it's an email to the team or a bonus scheme, can make a big impact on your employees' engagement and motivation. Every employee wants to feel appreciated for the work they do. Many companies align rewards to their performance management scheme, directly recognising key metrics achieved. In addition to reward via formal performance management schemes, recognition from peers holds unique value. Often, peers are more aware of the work of their co-workers than managers. Peer recognition can be done via surveys or a shout out via the company intranet site or LinkedIn page.



## How to Measure Success Through Metrics

Metrics in recruitment provide crucial insights into your hiring process. They can show you what is working well and what is not. It's important to know which metrics you should be tracking and when to take action. There is a range of different metrics you can measure and analyse to determine how effective your hiring process is. These include:

#### Quick quit data

How long are employees staying in your organisation? Why are they leaving? Once you know, it is easier to find a solution. Define the average tenure of employees in the organisation, then track anything that falls short of that. Patterns here can reveal vital information about your hiring and onboarding processes.

#### Turnaround times in the hiring process

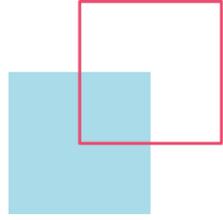
How long does it take between one stage and another in your hiring process? Where are the bottlenecks? If you find there is a significant delay between one interview stage and another, you may need to review how you can reduce this gap. The longer the gap between stages, the more likely you are to have a candidate drop off.

#### Time to Hire

These metrics measure receipt of an application to offer in number of days. If this is very high, you are likely going to lose good candidates to competitors. Interview processes need to be thorough, but they also need to work within a realistic timeframe.

#### Interview score correlation to hires

Run a diagnostic on your hiring data. One metric to look at is the correlation between interview scores and candidates hired 12 months after the fact. Map the success of the interview process against the success of those particular employees. The outcome will provide valuable insight on your interview process.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Job Description Template

**Title:** Chief Financial Officer / Senior Finance Position



### Company Profile

Provide some background information about the company to position it and make it more attractive to potential candidates. The information you provide should include what you do, why it is of value and any awards or accreditations you have received.



### Context and Role Purpose

It is useful to position the role in terms of its core purpose by setting the context and giving a high-level description of how it will fit into the company, for example:

As a key member of the Executive Management team, the Chief Financial Officer will report to the CEO and assume a strategic role in the overall management of the company. The CFO will have primary day-to-day responsibility for planning, implementing, managing and controlling all financial-related activities of the company. This will include direct responsibility for accounting, finance, forecasting, strategic planning, job costing, legal, property management, deal analysis and negotiations, investor/banking relationships.



### Responsibilities

- › Responsibilities should ideally be clear, simple and streamlined in order to attract the right kind of candidates. For the purposes of filling this role, you may include the key responsibilities but leave room for others which can then be part of the individual’s performance objectives once they start work.
- › It would be useful to include responsibilities relating to specific functions, for example HR, or for example HR or Finance, and prioritise them in order of importance to the role and/or percentage of their time the individual will spend on each category.
- › It is important that you are clear about what you want the role to deliver; once you have thought about those key responsibilities, it would then be helpful to use the right language to communicate them. The use of different action verbs will attract different levels and quality of candidates. For example, a self-starter may be attracted by the words: “develop”, “lead”, “drive”, “deliver”, “manage”, “coordinate”; whereas phrases such as “provide support”, “contribute to” and “assist senior management” could be more indicative of the administrative aspects of the role.

### Qualifications and Experience:

Be clear about the minimum of years of experience you are looking for. If some of this experience should have been in a particular industry, then it would be useful to state this.



### Competencies

- › Competencies are the knowledge, skills and attitudes you want the person to be able to demonstrate in the role. In terms of skills, it is good to have some technical and behavioural skills in the job description; consider separating these out for clarity. It may also be useful to further think about other softer skills and or behaviours that the successful candidate will need to demonstrate, especially in the context of how they align with the core values of the company.
- › Think about the current company culture (formal or informal). What values and or behaviours will the candidate need to demonstrate to fit successfully or to even be a driver of your culture? How essential is it that there is a strong cultural fit – for example, would you consider hiring a candidate who is strong technically but may not be a fit culturally? How might you screen for this at the job description and interview stage?
- › You can go further and identify those competencies which are essential (being hands-on) and those which are not essential but would be an advantage if the candidate did possess them.
- › Getting the right candidate at this stage will mean that they can hit the ground running with minimal development requirements and have the appropriate skills to deliver growth.



### Future Proofing the Role

- › In addition to the immediate skills requirements, it is important to focus also on the skills that you anticipate you’ll need

this role to deliver in 2-3 years’ time. Think about what your company will look like three years out (turnover, number of employees, growth ambitions) and try to reflect (in the current job description) what this role might need to deliver in the future.

- › Also, think about whether this role could develop further and what this would look like; is it important to you that this person can develop beyond being a Financial Manager or would you be happy for the role to remain just what it is now for the foreseeable future?



### Salary

- › The website [Payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com) will have similar roles to help you get a clearer sense of an appropriate salary level for the role. We suggest that you also take into account the key responsibilities and deliverables of this role as well as the location of your company.
- › In addition to the salary for the job (which you may or may not choose to disclose on the job description) you may also wish to state any other benefits attached to the role such as pension, health insurance, training and development opportunities.



Appendix 2 – Interview Questions



**General Questions:**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. What made you want to apply for this position?
3. Why do you want to work for our company specifically?
4. What inspired you to start a career in this industry?
5. How have your education and life experiences prepared you for your career?
6. Why did you leave your previous employer?
7. How would your previous co-workers describe you?
8. What were your responsibilities at your previous job?
9. Did your responsibilities change or grow at that job?
10. What did you like best about your previous job?
11. What did you like least?
12. If you could change one thing about your previous job, what would it be?
13. What is the most-used app on your phone?
14. How soon would you be able to start this position?
15. Do you have any questions for me?



**Competency Based Questions:**

1. Tell me how you have resolved a past conflict or issue at your previous job?
2. Describe a project or task you consider your most significant career accomplishment to date?
3. What is your ideal work environment?
4. What is your personal work style?
5. In a team environment, what role do you usually take on, and can you give me an example?
6. What do you do when you are faced with an unfamiliar or challenging task?
7. Can you give us an example of how you handle tight deadlines, multiple priorities or stressful work situations?
8. What is the one skill that makes you most qualified for this position?
9. How do you take advantage of your strengths and compensate for your development needs?



**Questions on Motivation and Drive**

1. What makes you stand out among your peers?
2. What motivates you to go to work every day?
3. What is most important to you in your job?
4. What about this opportunity excites you the most?
5. What are your career goals?
6. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
7. Where do you see yourself in five or ten years?
8. What do you think this industry will look like in five years?
9. How do you stay up to date with advancements and news in our industry?
10. What industry skills would you like to learn more about or improve on?
11. Are there any other roles at our company that you are interested in?
12. Tell me about a time you took a risk to achieve a goal?
13. Tell me something about yourself that isn't on your CV?
14. What one word would you use to describe yourself?
15. What inspires you?
16. What criteria do you use to measure success?
17. What do you need to be successful at this job?
18. If you get this job, what would you hope to accomplish in the first week or month?
19. Why should we hire you?



**Ten Questions you Might be Asked by the Candidate:**

1. Describe the day-to-day activities of the job?
2. What is involved in the onboarding process?
3. What benefits do you offer?
4. What progress do you expect to see in 6 months?
5. What are the core milestones for the first 3 months?
6. Do you offer remote work?
7. What is your view on corporate social responsibility?
8. Why do you enjoy working at your company?
9. What is the culture like at your company?
10. What is the company strategy for this year?

## Appendix 3 - The STAR Answer Format



S

### Situation

Answers to STAR interview questions should first paint a picture of a problem or dilemma that the candidate ultimately solved. Interviewees can explain how the situation came about and who else was involved.



T

### Task

The “Task” component of a STAR answer elaborates on the candidate’s role in this situation. What was he/she tasked with doing in response to the situation? Who identified this task? What was the desired result of carrying out this task?



A

### Action

The “Action” in a STAR answer reveals how the candidate actually approached that task, and the steps they took to solve the problem introduced in the “Situation” stage of their answer.



R

### Result

The “Results” included in a STAR answer should explain the outcome of the candidate’s actions. Was the original problem solved? How did the candidate’s results differ from the expected results?

Essentially, the STAR method requires a candidate to explain a prior work situation anecdotally, provide details regarding the tasks required, what actions the candidate took to achieve those tasks, and the results of the situation.

Here’s a list of popular STAR interview questions. Ideally, you’ll tailor them for the specific role and candidate, but you can use these for initial inspiration.

#### Typical STAR Interview Questions

##### Sense of Judgment

These questions can help you reveal a candidate’s quality of judgment and how they make decisions under complicated circumstances.

1. Tell me about a difficult decision you’ve made in the last year
2. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low)
3. Tell me about a time when you had multiple important projects to finish and how you prioritised them
4. Can you recall an experience where you received conflicting pieces of feedback on a project. How did you address this feedback
5. Describe a time when a close colleague caused a project to suffer or fail, and how you explained this failure to the project manager

##### Handling Pressure

These questions can help you reveal how well a candidate performs under various types of pressure.

1. Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it
2. Describe a stressful situation at work and how you handled it
3. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer
4. Describe a situation where you disagreed with a superior and how this disagreement was settled
5. Tell me about a time you had to learn something you weren’t familiar with very quickly

##### Leadership Potential

These questions can help you reveal a candidate’s leadership potential, confidence, and willingness to take the initiative on projects when they have little or no direction to start with.

1. You indicated on your resume that leadership is one of your strengths. Describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities
2. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project to others effectively
3. Can you recall a time where you had to give negative feedback to a colleague
4. How did you express this feedback
5. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead
6. Describe a time you had a direct report or managed a team that was being recruited to work on other projects without your consent

## Self-Awareness

These questions can reveal how much self-awareness a candidate has of his or her strengths and, more importantly, weaknesses.

1. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with a co-worker who might not have personally liked you (or vice versa)
2. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
3. Tell me about a time you were reprimanded or criticised for your performance
4. Tell me about a project that wasn't going to meet its deadline and how you minimised or confronted the consequences
5. Tell me about a time you felt you weren't being listened to, and how you made your presence or opinion known to your colleagues

## How to Format Your Interview for the STAR Approach

To successfully incorporate STAR questions into your interview strategy, there are four steps you'll need to take



### 1. Make a list of role-specific STAR questions

Start by making a list of questions applicable to the specific candidate's prior experiences, skills, and characteristics. The list of questions above can serve as general starting points, but to really delve into a candidate's specific background in relation to the role, you'll want to tailor your questions appropriately.

For instance, "Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively" is vague and could lead the candidate to describing a work situation from five years ago, when really, you wanted to hear about a data-related marketing project from her last position alone. Make yourself clear, and reference a specific resume item: "I'd like to hear more about your experience as a Sr. Digital Marketing Manager at Company X. Could you tell me specifically about a time in that role when you delegated a project effectively?" If you're using the STAR interview method, ask questions that require situation-specific answers. For instance, if you want to know about a candidate's flexibility, you might ask, "Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them?"



### 2. Tell candidates what you're looking for in their answers

Not everyone agrees this step is necessary: some recruiters prefer not to explain that they're looking for situation-specific answers, to see how the candidate deals with answering the question however she wants. Some hiring managers see the benefit of being vague; at the very least, you'll likely get a candid answer from your candidate. But other experts, like Todd Lombardi, a college relations specialist at Kulicke & Soffa Industries Inc., believes it's important to explain what he's looking for before asking a candidate any behavioural interview questions.

When Lombardi starts a behavioural interview, he details the process, telling the candidate he's looking for specific examples, names of people, dates, and outcomes. Lombardi speaks with candidates about projects they've worked on, how their role has evolved, how they've handled deadlines or unexpected situations, and how they've coped with adversity. He asks these questions because, "Everyone's got that kind of experience."

If you don't explain what you're looking for upfront, you risk receiving an incomplete answer or confusing the candidate. If the candidate answers insufficiently, perhaps you want to offer them an opportunity to modify their answer. Say: "I'm looking for details about a specific example. You've explained the situation and tasks required, but I'd still like to know what steps you took to complete the tasks, and what results you got from the project."



### 3. Know what you're looking for

STAR interview questions are particularly helpful for determining major characteristics in your candidate or receiving more context for potential issues you see with their resume. For instance, let's say you ask, "Give me a specific example of a time when you sold your supervisor or professor on an idea or concept. How did you convince them? What was the result?"

When you ask STAR questions, you should know what you're looking for in a candidate's answer. In the question above, it shouldn't matter too much what the candidate's idea was; instead, you're looking for the candidate to display a high level of assertiveness, confidence, and good decision-making skills.

Regardless of how the candidate answers, take note of how the candidate demonstrated - or didn't demonstrate - those characteristics. They're more important than how the situation played out.

If you're not sure what you're looking for when you ask a candidate STAR questions, consider what's missing from the candidate's resume. If the candidate's resume reflects skills tied to analytics, but you're concerned that the candidate lacks the creativity necessary for the role, ask a question regarding innovation. When the candidate answers, take note of whether she mentions original ideas she offered. Consider what information you want from the candidate, and then figure out how to phrase it in an appropriate behavioural interview question.

Sara DeBrule, Global Marketing Recruitment Team Lead at HubSpot, recommends working to identify "the candidates who have taken the time to understand the

business challenge, and are able to position themselves as the solution.” DeBrule explains, “It’s obvious when a candidate has read up on the STAR interviewing technique because they are able to tell a linear story about the ways they are able to successfully impact [the company] in the desired way for the role.”

Even if a candidate hasn’t had the exact experience necessary for the role, the applicant should still be able to draw parallels between past experiences and how those experiences would translate to future success in the role. Ultimately, DeBrule says she aims to uncover whether a candidate focuses on results, seeks out industry knowledge and trends, has influence over her coworkers in order to work as a team player, and pursues new opportunities for growth.



#### 4. Remain open-minded

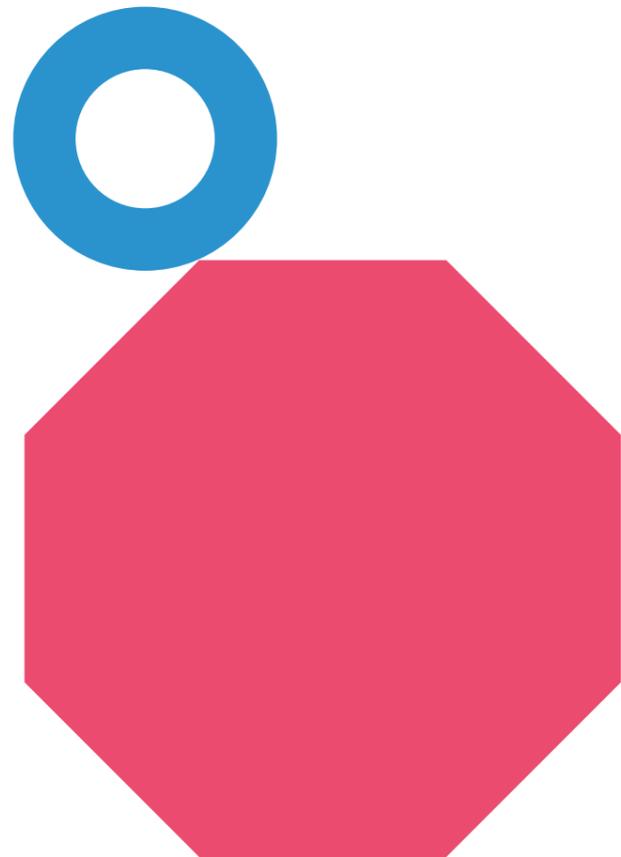
Each candidate has completely different life and work experiences, all of which contribute to unique and sometimes unexpected answers to STAR behavioural interview questions.

It’s important to remain open-minded. You want to build a team with diverse employees, each of whom bring new and different ideas and past experiences to the table. If a candidate answers differently than you expected them to, it doesn’t mean they’ve answered wrongly.

“At the end of the day, I’m trying to understand a candidate’s ability to tell their story of impact, how they’ve impacted businesses in the past, and how they’re going to impact [our company] in the future,” Sara DeBrule explains.

Remember, these STAR interview method questions should be used sparingly and wisely. Asking ten in a row will only confuse you and your candidate. Instead, you should mix behavioural interview questions with more standard interview questions, especially during a first-round interview. Allow a candidate to warm up with a few standard questions, before diving into any STAR behavioural ones.

Use some of these STAR interview questions in your next interview to ensure you’re providing as many opportunities as possible for candidates to demonstrate how they can help your company succeed. Hopefully, using behavioural interview questions to probe candidates’ past experiences will help you create candid, insightful, and useful conversations with job applicants.



## Appendix 4 - How to Handle Job Offers and Counter Offers

### Do

- › Make the offer over the phone
- › Explain the salary, benefits and terms and conditions upfront
- › Reference the interview and mention how you were impressed with the successful candidate’s specific experience or mention the training you can provide that aligns with their career goals
- › Follow up with an official email that includes a letter of offer with all the information about the position and your offer, such as the start date and the name of the department manager

### Don’t

- › Wait too long to extend an offer, as this gives the candidate time to accept an offer from somewhere else
- › Devalue candidates with a low salary offer. Pay what is fair and industry standard, be willing to negotiate when necessary, so that you can start off on the right foot
- › Expect an answer right away or give an unreasonable deadline for when they need to make their decision
- › Forget to follow up after an offer, or between an acceptance and a candidate’s first day. A tentative acceptance is not a contract

## ABCC Tips: Always Be Closing Candidates

To ensure that all the time, energy and money you spent on the recruitment process was worthwhile, you want your final job offer to be one that your top candidate can’t refuse. Follow these tips in order to make sure you will always be closing candidates (ABCC).

1. Motivate the candidate by describing the company culture and lifestyle benefits from the initial job description and interview. According to a 2015 LinkedIn [Talent Trends Report](#), the top three factors that prompt a candidate to accept a job offer are compensation, professional development and work/life balance. This means that a candidate is more likely to accept your job offer based on your entire value package rather than just the salary. By the time you make the job offer, your candidate should have a good idea about your employee culture, your opportunities for career development, your standard and unique benefits (from annual leave days to monthly employee retreats) and your office location or set-up.
2. Align the opportunity and your company values with the candidate’s values. Millennial job seekers want to feel empowered that their day-to-day work is making a real impact. Show your candidate how your company is working with the community or enhancing your industry and outline how this position will give them the opportunity to make a difference with something they care about. Additionally, if your candidate mentions how highly they value a healthy work-life balance, explain your company’s policies for paid leave or remote work. If they value creativity, discuss the problem-solving responsibilities of the position.

3. Make the candidate feel valued as a potential employee. In addition to explaining the benefits of the job, you also want to make candidates feel appreciated and wanted for their individual values. You can do this by making them feel like part of the team and putting them in contact with team members throughout the recruitment process; in fact, 94% of candidates said that being contacted by their prospective manager can make them accept a job offer faster. You can also describe certain activities that will be part of their onboarding process, such as a first day lunch with the team or a tour of the office building.
4. If your top candidate is wavering or seems unsure about the offer, don't be afraid to ask them why. You can't resolve a problem unless you know what it is, and some factors that may be holding a candidate back, such as a long commute, can be easily negotiated. For example, TaxSaver schemes with annual public transportation cards or the option to work from home.

### How to Handle Counteroffers

A counteroffer is an offer from the candidate's current employer to rival the one they have received from you, to convince them to stay. Counter offers can take many forms: a straight increase in salary, additional company benefits, a sought-after promotion or new job title, additional responsibility, a change in role, more involvement in projects of interest - or any combination of these. To prevent a counter offer from occurring it's advisable to stay in contact with your candidate between their acceptance and their first day. This will assure them that you are excited to bring them on board, and hopefully they too will be looking forward to this new, great opportunity. Start your onboarding process immediately after their acceptance by inviting them into the office to meet everyone, confirming the start date and

requesting any equipment they require. You can also invite them to any fun social events that your company is hosting to give them a taste of their new office culture. If the situation of a counter offer arises and the candidate decides to consider it, follow these steps to navigate a successful outcome:

1. Remind the candidate why they decided to look for a new job in the first place.
2. Talk about how your opportunity is in line with their career goals.
3. If you haven't already negotiated salary or benefits, this would be a good time to discuss where you can offer more and what your final offer is.
4. Reassess what they noted as their professional motivations and priorities in the interview process so that you can exhibit how this position at your company is a better opportunity for their individual needs.

## Glossary of Terms



### Applicant tracking system (ATS):

An applicant tracking system (ATS) is software that manages the recruiting and hiring process, including job postings and hiring process, including job postings and job applications. It organizes information about job seekers and makes it searchable. As its name implies, an ATS tracks candidates through the hiring process. It helps with interview scheduling, issues notifications and alerts, and sends automated emails to candidates and employees, such as recruiters and hiring managers



### Behavioural-based interview:

Behavioural-based interviewing is a technique used in which the job candidate has the opportunity to demonstrate their potential for succeeding in the new job by providing specific examples of how they handled similar situations based on their past experience. These interviews help employers to estimate how a candidate will react to work situations in the future and therefore whether the candidate is suitable for the job



### Benefits (benefits package):

Employee benefits include perks (aside from salary) that come with a position. This can include health insurance, dental cover and gym access. The perks an employee receives are specific to the company and can differ based on an employee's position within the company



### Core competencies:

Core competencies are core qualities (rather than qualifications) which affect a candidate's suitability for a position. Different core competencies are desired by different companies and include abilities such as, but not limited to: decision making, problem solving, people skills, the ability to work with others and having writing/communication skills



### Counter offer:

A counter offer is a situation in which a company or organisation offers an employee more money or a better job in order to try to prevent them from moving to another company where they have been offered a job



### Employee referral programme:

An employee referral program is a recruiting strategy in which employers encourage current employees, through rewards, to refer qualified candidates for jobs in their organisations



### Employer branding:

Employer branding involves cultivating a workplace identity separate from other similar companies - an identity which employers can be sure will reach potential candidates and which will hopefully make the company seem desirable to the candidate.



**Employee Value Proposition (EVP)**

An Employee Value Proposition (EVP) can be defined as a set of monetary and non-monetary benefits provided by a company to its employees in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience they bring and the contributions they make to the business. A company's EVP should be unique and differentiate the company from its competition within the talent marketplace.

**Employment or recruitment agency:**  
An employment or recruitment agency is a service which works with companies to source quality candidates to fill job vacancies



**Hiring process:**

The entire process that results in a vacant position being filled, from the stage in which the need for a new employee is identified, to posting a job advertisement, to screening candidates, interviewing candidates, offering the selected candidate a job, hiring a candidate and onboarding that candidate



**Human Resource Information System (HRIS):**

A human resource information system (HRIS) is software that provides a centralised repository of employee master data that management and HR can use to carry out HR functions such as payroll, time and attendance, performance appraisals and benefits administration. The primary function of a HRIS system is to help HR and management become more efficient through the use of technology



**Human Resources (HR):**

This is the department within a company that is responsible for the company's workforce-related needs, such as sourcing, screening, recruiting and training job applicants and employees. HR may also be responsible for employee-benefits programmes, performance management and compensation and benefits



**Job board:**

A job board is an online service which individuals can use to look for jobs and on which employers can post advertisements to fill positions within their company. Examples include Irish Jobs, Monster, LinkedIn, Indeed and Glassdoor



**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

A key performance indicator is a certain factor which can be measured, and which is the designated indicator to rate the performance within a particular area of a company



**Onboarding:**

This is the process of integrating new employees into the work environment and ensuring that they are comfortable and aware of their duties and roles



**Panel interview:**

Panel interviews are interviews which are conducted by a panel of two or more interviewers



**Passive candidate:**

A passive candidate is someone who is not actively looking for a job but has the skills and experience that qualify them for your open position



**Personality tests / Psychometric testing:**

Personality tests and psychometric testing can be used to assess a candidate's personality and traits. This can help employers to learn more about a candidate and whether their personality is complementary to the position available



**Placement:**

Placement is the process by which the selected candidate is stationed into their employment position. In this stage of the hiring process, the candidate is told about their duties and responsibilities and is set to work



**Recruiting metrics:**

These are measurements which allow companies to analyse the recruitment process and monitor hiring success, in order to improve the recruitment process and reap better hiring results in the future. Examples include time to fill, time to hire, labour turnover rates



**Recruitment plan:**

This is the overall strategy that a company uses to hire new employees



**Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO):**

RPO is when a company transfers all or part of its recruitment activities to an external provider. An RPO provider can act as an extension of a company's HR or Resourcing function, sitting on site with the client providing a holistic hiring solution



**Skills gap:**

A skills gap refers to the gap between the skills and qualifications required for a position and the skills and qualifications a candidate actually has



**Sourcing:**

Sourcing is the process of searching for and identifying individuals who meet the required standards necessary in order to fill a particular position



**Talent management:**

This is the management of HR processes to attract, develop, motivate and retain employees throughout the course of their employment



**Talent pipeline:**

A company's talent pipeline is a ready pool of potential candidates who are qualified and prepared to step up and fill relevant key roles within the company as soon as they fall vacant



**Talent pool:**

A talent pool is a list of engaged candidates who have either worked or applied to work for your organisation in the past, and who have shown the required skills and desire to work for you in the future. A company can have multiple talent pools for different roles and skill sets



**Talent relationship management:**

Talent relationship management refers to the consistent process of attracting and retaining the high-quality employees that your company requires, including developing their skills, engaging them in their work, and finding ways to leverage existing talent to drive internal mobility



**Workforce planning:**

Workforce planning is a process of analysing the current workforce, determining future workforce needs, identifying the gap between the present and the future, and implementing solutions so that an organisation can accomplish its mission, goals, and strategic plan. It's about getting the right number of people with the right skills employed in the right place at the right time, at the right cost and on the right contract to deliver an organisation's short and long-term objectives



**About Enterprise Ireland**

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. We work in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, grow, innovate and win export sales in global markets. In this way, we support sustainable economic growth, regional development and secure employment.

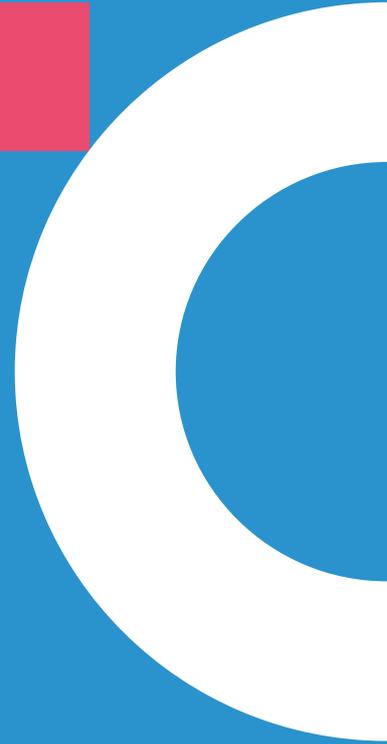
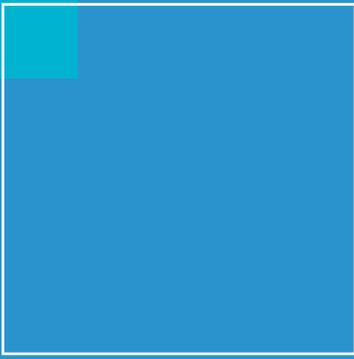


**About Occupop**

Occupop is a beautifully simple recruitment software built for small and medium businesses. We help businesses be great at hiring through our simple philosophy – to make recruitment incredibly easy and accessible to everyone at work. So, businesses can hire the best people and build the best teams.

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