

Keep Your Hiring On-Track





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We frequently see clients falter at one, or many, of these crucial hiring steps. Being great at each will allow you to make better hires, quicker.

1 Get Consensus Upfront

Too many companies hit an unexpected barrier just when they are ready to make the offer.

- Is HR prepared to onboard at the suggested start date?
- Is this hire inline with other departments and operational priorities?

→ Take time upfront to make sure everyone is aligned and that you have ALL the necessary approvals.

2 Capture Key Criteria

Focus on the most important things you need to see in this hire. Write down 5-10 clear, simple criteria you can work to objectively assess in candidates.

SKILL/EXPERIENCE	PRIORITY (1-5)
Experience with B2C product management (strong PM fundamentals, experience with working with other PMs and departments on a product with >40K users)	5
Customer-centric approach (able to lead others in customer directory, journey mapping, feature prioritization, and support alignment)	4
Strategic thinker, able to understand business goals and parameters and align product decisions and roadmap	4
Strong analytical and quantitative skills with proven ability to use data and metrics to drive decision making	3
Experience and ability to work with initiative, take ownership and adapt to changing priorities	4

→ Lean on these Key Criteria to guide your sourcing, screening, interviewing and assessing.



3 Confirm Your Salary Range

- Define the specific experiences, education, skills, judgment or value needed for each role.
- You can do this on your own! Build an estimate from multiple sources - from job boards and postings, and platforms like Glassdoor, Payscale, and salary.com. (You can also purchase surveys and/or hire firms).
- Create salary bands, each with specific attributes, to give you flexibility to hire at different levels.
- Increasingly, you are legally required to publish the salary range on your job posting or/and be able to tell candidates if they ask.
- Work purposefully to make sure your current team is in, and stays in, these ranges.

JUNIOR PRODUCT MANAGER	\$75,000-\$120,000
PRODUCT MANAGER	\$100,000-\$165,000
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER	\$150,000-\$200,000

4 Pre-Huddle

After the Hiring Manager screens a candidate, get the whole interview team together BEFORE they meet with a candidate.

- The Hiring Manager should review the Key Criteria, importance of the role and expectations of a quality candidate.
- Discuss the Interview format, assessment areas and questions to be asked by each interview participant.
- Assign a Moderator for panel interviews, be mindful of time expectations and be consistent on the agenda.

→ Ensuring everyone is aligned and prepared before interviewing saves time and resources and helps to interview consistently and efficiently.





5 Interview with Purpose

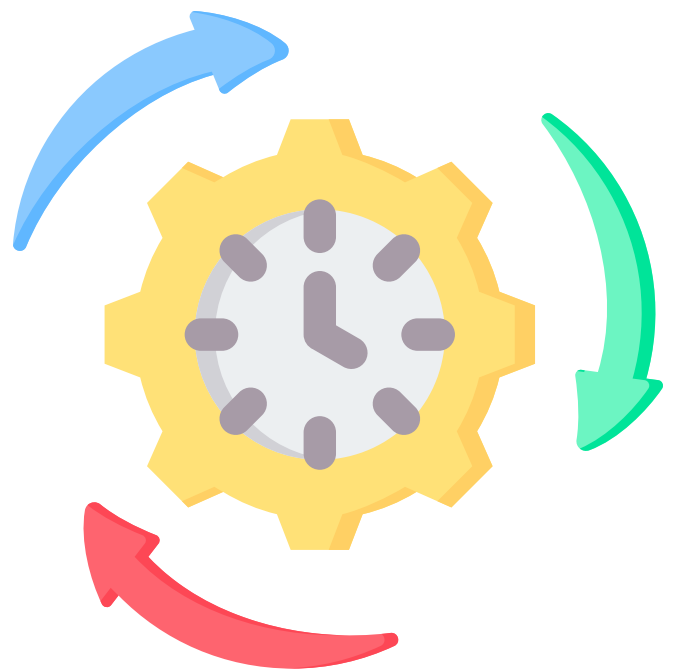
You'll need to divide and conquer to get the most accurate understanding of a candidate.

- Each interview stage should be different. Asking candidates all the same questions is not a good experience, and does not allow the depth needed to properly assess a candidate.
 - Each interviewer is on the interview team for a specific purpose, such as using their expertise to ask in-depth questions, or understanding a candidate's experience communicating across teams.
 - Each interviewer should have questions or requests of candidates to be able to accurately and thoroughly assess their potential. The best interview processes detail the range of good and poor responses.
 - Interviewers are responsible to the larger interview team to summarize the candidate's expertise, and any strengths and weaknesses in the candidate.
- Prepare to assess thoroughly, rely on others on the Interview Team to explore their areas of expertise and share learnings across the team.

6 Consistency

It's fair and less biased when each candidate is evaluated with the same criteria.

- Established interview questions, and answer outcomes, allow scale. Other interviewers can be inserted into the process, while retaining similar expected results.
 - Having the same evaluations allows us to see patterns, and more quickly and reliably make informed, objective decisions.
- Consistency in the hiring process allows you to make more predictive, unbiased and thorough assessments, and scale your recruiting efforts.



Interviewers manage to discriminate all the time without even knowing it. 'Winging it' and similar to-me effect, opens the door to bias. Treating all candidates consistently reduces biased decision-making, limiting legal risks and increasing objective decisions.



7 Skills Assessment

Work towards relevant and practical deep-dive assessments to understand a candidate's skill level and assess working compatibility.

- Choose an assessment format tailored to showcase the skills required for your job. Popular Skills Assessment formats include real-time whiteboarding, take-home assignments, and presentations.
- This assignment should be easy to administer, with a well-defined set of criteria to distinguish between strong and poor responses.

WHAT SKILL ASSESSMENT FORMAT WORKS FOR YOU?

A coding challenge is a common ask for software engineer candidates. Can candidates write clean, efficient and maintainable code in a given time frame?

Giving a candidate for Product Manager a Go To Market Case Study or prioritization exercise.

A [PechaKuhca](#), 20 slides for 20 seconds of commentary each, might be a good format for a Marketing, BizDev or Graphics Designer to assess the ability to distill complex information into a brief and engaging presentation. time management, structure and storytelling, creativity, communication skills.

- Be sensitive to assignments that closely align with your company's actual projects. Candidates, and the law in some cases, may frown on working for free. Consider compensating candidates for this type of work or give the option to do an alternative assignment.
- This assignment should be one of the last steps of the interview process.

→ Honor and hone the Skills Assessment - it's a crucial, in-depth, final time to see if a candidate has the right stuff.



8 Feedback

- Each interviewer should submit their feedback in writing (use your ATS) as soon as possible after each interview.
- All feedback submitted should be relevant to the job and Key Criteria. If the feedback does not relate to the Key Criteria you established, or to established company values it doesn't belong in the feedback.
- Watch for bias and avoid feedback on 'culture fit' or 'gut feeling'. Every observation should be able to be described in a concrete, non-abstract, manner that is relevant to performing the job.
- Try not to compare candidates. Great Hiring Managers can make a decision on any one candidate - can they do the job to be done?



→ It's easy to forget the details, and remember the nuances of multiple candidates, and minds can be changed as soon as interviewers talk to each other.

9 Debrief

Gather the entire interview team together as soon as possible after the final interview.

- Interviewers should refrain from discussing the candidate with other interviewers before providing individual feedback.
- Have the Recruiter, or a party outside the hiring decision, serve as a Moderator.
- Each interviewer should submit their feedback in writing (use your ATS) as soon as possible after each interview.
- Be prepared to move fast after the Debrief. Consider feedback and make decisions.
- Update the interview team with the status of the search.

DEBRIEF FORMAT:

Remind the team of any ground rules. For example, the Hiring Manager will make the final decision (this is not consensus) but everyone's input and perspective is important to weigh.

Start with every participant visually indicating a 'hire' or 'no hire' (thumbs up or thumbs down). They can change their mind, but it's valuable to capture their initial opinion.

One-by-one, each interviewer will share a brief (4-5 min) overview of their interview, with any pros and cons.

The least senior interviewer should start, and the hiring manager goes last (opinions can be swayed by hearing more senior interviewer opinions first).

Allow for questions and discussion.

Participants again all visually indicate a 'hire' or 'no hire' - has anyone changed their mind?

→ Follow the same Debrief format across the company to help build consistency and scale into your recruiting culture, and improve decision making.



10 Iterate

Consider each step of your process. What needs to be adjusted in the process? Did the technical assessment give the right signals? Are the interviewers the right people to assess a candidate? Are the Key Criteria appropriate and thorough?

Hito Labs is former HR and Hiring Leaders. We've found this crucial to help hiring teams navigate all the pitfalls of the interview process. We were also super frustrated with the traditional recruiting support model that incentivized getting a hire more than they were to reject candidates that would not be happy or a great fit. We are with you on the whole journey. Just [ask our clients](#).

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