Rethinking Recruitment

TIPS FOR TOP-GRADING TALENT



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Tips for top-grading talent

In a sea of similar opportunities, how does yours get noticed?

This question has resigned many to just ‘soldier on’ with a less than ideal number of people. Are you sick of wasting time and money on placing job advertisements with no uptake, or conversely, you’re drowned in applications from people that are entirely unsuitable? If you answered YES to either of these - we feel your pain.

But putting your head in the sand, or relying on hope, is not a strategy!

If you have a robust recruitment process in play, with a strong track record of success, this document is not for you. If on the hand, you find the entire recruitment conversation daunting or disheartening then read on...

If I were an ideal applicant would this role capture my interest?

LET'S WORK ON THAT!



The evergreen elements

While recruitment has become an entirely different beast in the modern environment some things don't really change, like the end-to-end process.

Now that's clear, let's PAUSE for a moment, put on your sales and marketing hat.

Ask yourself this question as we work through the next section:

THE EVERGREEN ELEMENTS:

- Advertise the job
- Evaluate the applicants
- Phone screening calls of evaluated applicants
- Short listing of candidates
- Conduct face-to-face interviews
- Offering the role to the successful candidate



The Job Advertisement

As the name suggests this is an AD so crafting a compelling message is important if we want to get a strong pool of applicants to choose from.

From Chat GPT to the job posting sites, there are hundreds of examples you can source to give you inspiration on how this could look. We suggest you keep the job ad clear and concise, remembering this is one of many applicants will be scrolling through

The following are recommended elements of your job post:

Why join us?
Compelling statement to capture attention

What will I do?
Core role functions

What will I get in return?
Your employer value proposition

Am I a good fit?
Core competencies, certifications and compliance elements

The call to action
A final pitch to apply (asking for a CV and cover letter)

With this format your target audience will have what they need to make an informed initial choice and little more... perfect!

The Screening Task

The screening task is essentially an application form. WAIT. Are they still a thing? In our opinion they definitely should be.

Here's why:

- It ensures all essential information is acquired
- It adds a layer of complexity/effort that weeds out uncommitted applicants
- It provides a less confronting way to ask challenging questions e.g. criminal history
- It offers an opportunity to ask a top-grading question (for shortlisting purposes)

HELPFUL HINTS

GO DIGITAL

It's easier for you to collect and collate the information. While also being easier for them to submit the information.

MINIMISE DOUBLE-HANDLING

If an applicant has a full work history in their resume, give them the ability to skip that step.

Questions to strongly consider as a part of your screening task:

- Are you legally entitled to work in New Zealand?
- Do you have any criminal convictions or pending court action?
- Do you give us permission to carry out a police check?
- Do you have a valid NZ driver licence? What class(es)?
- What relevant qualifications do you have? SKIP - Detailed coverage provided in my CV
- What relevant experience do you have? SKIP - Detailed coverage provided in my CV
- Can you provide details for 2 or more referees?
- Are you happy for us to contact your current employer (if you make it to the final selection phase)?
- Do you have any medical condition(s) that may be aggravated by, or adversely impact your ability to meet, the expectations of this position?

Finish with an open text question - one that lends it to the next vital point you need to consider in your recruitment process - does what we're asking allow an ideal applicant to show out from the pack?

E.g. What made you choose this industry as a career path?

What prompted you to apply for the role when you read the job advertisement?

What key challenges and/or experiences are you looking for in your next role?

The Screening Calls

With some applicants now showing out, some opting out, and others simply just ‘out’, you should have a manageable number of “phase 3” candidates.

Calls should not exceed 15 mins and revolve around 3 simple questions with 2 key finishers:



Why us?

Why this role?

Why our business?



Why you?

What unique attributes do you bring?

What makes you the obvious choice?



Why now?

Why the change?

Why do you see this as the next logical step for you?



What questions do you have at this stage?



Outline the process and critical timelines from here

The most common complaint from job seekers is the lack of clarity around what happens next and when. This is from unsuccessful and successful candidates alike. Remember early impressions last, good and bad. It’s reasonable to expect timely communication. **Deliver it!**

TIPS FOR TOP-GRADING TALENT

The Short Listing

Put emotion and personal preference to one side and assess with a leaders lens:

Do they have the requisite skills, certifications and clearances to deliver in the role?

Do they appear to be a fit with our existing team and broader workplace culture?

Do they have the capacity to grow with the role and our business objectives?

These filters (and any others you deem essential) should have you down to a final few.

The Face-To-Face Interviews

This is undoubtedly the most challenging piece of the entire process, for all involved. While it must be done with rigour, it needn't be painful or prolonged.

Our suggestion is that you select a question or two from each of the following areas, with a spare noted down to dig a little deeper if you feel the need in certain areas.

Six generic follow-on questions to keep at the forefront of your mind are:

Tell me more...

Why do you think that is?

Do you have a specific (recent) example?

Anything else?

What would others say?

How does that (potentially) relate to this role?

These aren't exhaustive lists but give you a feel for the type of questions you could ask in each area. They can largely be covered in whatever order you deem appropriate, but ensuring each is given some coverage should provide you with a broad base of assessment from which to determine your preferred candidate.

Setting the Scene:

- What do you know about our business?
- What challenges are you looking for?
- What can your hobbies tell me that your resume can't?
- Can you walk us through your resume?
- Can you guide me through your previous employment history? (i.e. Explain why you've had so many jobs or such big gaps between some of them).

Physical Capability:

- Would you consider yourself "fit"?
- Do any physical elements of this role concern you?
- How physical have your previous roles been? What did that entail?

Culture Fit:

- What is teamwork to you?
- What are you passionate about?
- Who is your biggest inspiration and why?
- What commonly accepted view do you disagree with and why?
- What did a great day at work look like in your previous role and why?
- How would a good friend describe you?
- What is your ideal working environment?
- If you were starting a business, what would your culture be based on?
- What projects and groups of people have you managed in the past? What did you learn?

Leadership Capability:

- In your opinion, what is leadership?
- What is your leadership style/ethos?
- Describe a time when you disagreed with your boss.
- What makes you uncomfortable?
- What personality traits frustrate or annoy you?
- What projects and groups of people have you managed in the past? What did you learn?

Self management:

- Are you a morning person?
- What kind of oversight and interaction would your ideal boss provide?
- Describe a time when your boss was wrong. How did you handle the situation?
- Describe a time you got angry at work.
- What is the most important factor in a work environment for you to be successful and happy?
- Describe a time when your work was criticised.

Closing things off:

- What will you miss about your previous job?
- How would coworkers most commonly describe you?
- What is one opportunity for improvement your last boss might identify for you?
- What factors will ultimately drive your decision (if offered the role)?
- What questions do you have for us?

Learning Capability:

- Are you involved in any formal training at present?
- How do you go about continuing to develop your professional skills and knowledge?
- Describe your top three technical skills, and how you acquired them?
- What are three skills or traits you wish you had?
- How do you rely on others to make you better?
- What do you want to accomplish in the first 30 days of this job?

Skills & Experience:

- How do your skills and experiences align with this role?
- What tasks and responsibilities are most common in your current role?
- Explain what pasture management means to you?
- What preliminary checks would you make before first starting a motorbike?
- What steps would you take to determine an animal's body condition?
- [Dairy Specific] How would you treat a (suspected) case of mastitis?
- [Dairy Specific] How would you diagnose and treat a cow with lameness?
- [Dairy Specific] How would you measure Somatic Cell Count?

Hiring is guessing, firing is knowing

– GARY VAYNERCHUK



The Role Offer

This is fairly straightforward and likely the most enjoyable part. You're nearly there.

STEP 1

Provide a full employment contract with a comprehensive role description for the successful candidate to review.

Give 48hrs (or more) and settle any points of contention at this juncture.

STEP 2

Secure the signature of your preferred candidate before you speak to those who were unsuccessful or your wider team.

STEP 3

Clarify any variable elements of your onboarding process to provide all involved parties with adequate preparation time to make the induction period as seamless as possible.

Parting thought

While this is a hard-hitting statement, it's more importantly a reminder that recruitment is more art than science. Humans are complex creatures and a few pieces of paper, along with a couple of brief encounters can't give you unwavering certainty the correct choice has been made. You simply do your best with the information put in front of you and extracted from those encounters. The same goes for the applicants, as they assess the suitability of the opportunity. It's not easy, and seldom perfect.

Constantly challenge the suitability and repeatability of your process, learn from your experiences, know your target audience, remain uncompromising on your short list of non-negotiables and ensure the experience is as enjoyable as possible for all involved.

Happy hunting!

