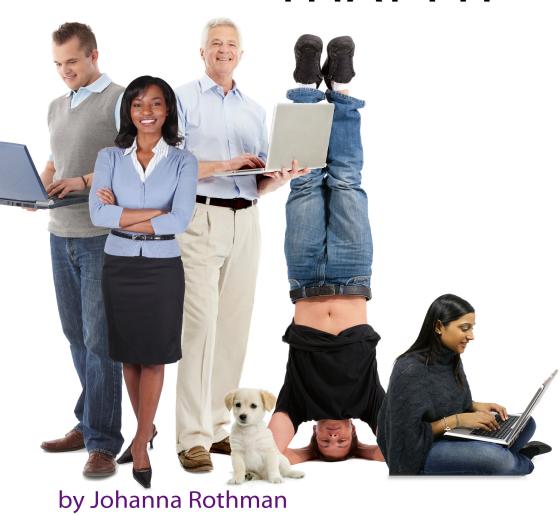# HIRING

GEEKS
THAT FIT

by Johanna Rothman

Hiring Geeks That Fit

Johanna Rothman

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my family—Mark, Shaina, and Naomi.

I thank my Hiring Technical People blog readers and commenters. Your contributions over the years have helped me clarify my thoughts and my words.

I thank Holly Bourquin for her editing. I thank Heidi Connolly for her good sense and help and for guiding me through the printing process for this book. You would not be holding it in your hands without her. Any mistakes are mine.

Preface

I first started to hire people in 1979. I was nervous about a developer and almost didn't hire him. My boss asked what the problem was. "He wants to take eight weeks off every summer!" I was so concerned.

"What's the problem with that?" my boss asked

"We have so much work to do!" Clearly, I'm the Nervous Nellie here.

"He'll return refreshed and ready to do great work. He fits with the group. Besides, I take a four-week vacation every year. So does the VP of Engineering. You should try it too, Johanna. You'd be a lot less nervous. Oh, this vacation is a salary negotiation issue. You know how to deal with those." My boss walked away whistling.

I would have made a terrible mistake and missed out an a wonderful developer. He was a great cultural fit and stayed with the group for years.

Since then, I've participated in the hiring of hundreds of technical people over the years, including developers, testers, technical writers, technical support staff, pre- and post-sales applications engineers, consultants, technical leads, and their managers. Since the first version of this book, I've consulted with hiring managers and teams to streamline their hiring approach and unwedge their hiring. I have asked about essential versus desirable skills, elimination factors, and most importantly, cultural fit.

We are correct to be concerned about whether candidates fit into our organizations. After all, it seems as if we never have enough of the right people. When the economy is strong, we think we have too few qualified candidates. When the economy is weak, we think we have too many poorly trained applicants. Why is it so difficult to match candidates to our openings?

Hiring great geeks forces us to recognize and match culture; nontechnical qualities, preferences and skills; and finally, technical skills. Knowledge workers adapt their knowledge to *your* specific situation, the context. These technical people, our great geeks, are not just the sum of their technical knowledge; they are the sum of both what they know and how they apply that knowledge to the product.

Interviewing technical people is difficult because we must assess them on how they use their technical skills to benefit the product, how they manage their work, and how they manage their relationships with other people—in our context. It is not easy.

No one is plug-and-play. You need to assess each candidate's ability to adapt. That ability to adapt knowledge and to innovate makes one developer, tester, project manager, or technical manager different from another. You don't have the same group as the company down the street. Your geek needs to be different, too. You need to be able to assess the difference among candidates.

This book will provide you the tools to help. If you are a hiring manager or part of a hiring team, this book can:

- Help you define the problems you have that hiring geeks and/or their managers will help solve.

- Help you know what you want a candidate to do.
- Help you hire people who can perform the required work well.
- Help you screen, evaluate, and hire the right people who fit your organization.
- Eliminate the wasted time and suffering that result from having to fire people who should not have been hired in the first place.
- And, save you time, money, and aggravation every time you hire.

Here's the deal: If you want to hire the right people for *your* team, this book can help you. Let's start.

Johanna Rothman

December 2012

Part 1: Manage Your Hiring Time

Does your hiring process seem like a never-ending sucking black hole of time? Hiring does take time. But it doesn't have to be painful. If you spend a little time planning, and assume you will iterate, you spend less time in total than if you spend no time planning, or if you try to plan everything up front.

It's almost impossible to get the job description right the very first time, so don't expect to. I plan to iterate on the job description after I start screening résumés. I often think say, "Oh, I missed that/I don't need that as a desirable quality, preference, or non-technical skill." So I adjust the job analysis and the job description. But I don't need to fret about getting the analysis perfect the first time. That would take too long. I need the feedback of seeing real people with real résumés to know that I'm looking for someone who exists.

Here's how I spend my time on each of these:

Preparation (Time: 2 hours per open job)

1. Define the requirements for the job:

    a. Define your hiring strategy, identifying why you're looking for people (30 minutes).

    b. Analyze the job, defining the kind of candidate you need (30 minutes).

    c. Write the job description, so candidates can filter themselves in or out (30 minutes).

2. Write and place the job advertisement (30 minutes).

Sourcing (Time: Start at 3 hours per candidate)

1. Select your sourcing mechanisms—that is, the techniques you'll use to attract suitable candidates. Work with your HR staff to implement those techniques (10 minutes).

2. Recruiting time if you use social media, attend job fairs, or other networking events (varies).

3. Filter résumés, reviewing each to determine whether you want to phone-screen the candidate (30 seconds per résumé).

Interviewing (Time: 3 hours per candidate)

1. Define your phone-screen script to qualify candidates for an in-person interview (10 minutes).

2. Conduct the phone-screen for each candidate that has made it past your résumé review, to determine whether you want to interview the candidate in person (10-45 minutes).

3. Schedule the in-person interviews. Select a team of interviewers and plan who will ask which questions when (60 minutes).

4. Conduct a follow-up meeting with interview-team members to hear their perspective on the candidate (15 minutes per candidate).

Offer a position (Time: 2 hours per offer)

1. Check references (60 minutes).
2. Extend the offer (60 minutes).

Plan to spend about one day per candidate plus the time you'll spend on sourcing activities and résumé review. If you're spending more than one day on each candidate, review your preparation work. Don't waste time on things you can preplan or organize. Define the job so everyone who's recruiting on your behalf understands the open position. In addition, if you're spending more than a few weeks recruiting for any one open position, reorganize your sourcing mechanisms to recruit more effectively.

Some of the advice in this book may conflict with your organization's hiring policies and practices. If you're not sure whether something I've suggested is appropriate for your organization, your corporate culture, or even your geographic location, check with professionals in your company's Human Resources Department, or with your corporate lawyer. If in doubt, follow their advice.

1 Develop Your Hiring Strategy

> "I wish I'd never hired Zeus. I know he's excellent at his technical work, but he's so difficult. He intimidates people, hurling words when he's displeased. What a mistake." –Statement from a dissatisfied manager

Hiring mistakes do happen—and we can avoid them. The decision to hire an employee is one of the most critical decisions a manager can make.

You, your team, and the organization will live with the long-term consequences of your hiring decision. With a little bit of planning, organization, and teamwork, you can hire right the first time.

1.1 Hire for Attitude—Hire for Cultural Fit

You've heard the phrase "hire for attitude." It's a great phrase, and it's almost true. It's only true if the attitude you are hiring for fits your culture. Hiring for culture is key to solving many of your hiring problems. So consider it first.

Your corporate culture (SCH10) has three primary components:

- What people can discuss
- What the organization rewards
- How people treat each other

There are other nuances of corporate culture. For more subtleties on corporate culture, see HOF10. For hiring purposes, you want to know if a candidate can work in your culture—if a candidate can discuss or not what others can or cannot discuss. Can a candidate live with your explicit and implicit reward structure? Does the candidate share the same approach to how people treat each other, with respect to meeting participation, language usage, brainstorming, and more?

Successful candidates will adapt to your culture easily. Unsuccessful candidates will never quite fit. They will be like our colleague Zeus, at the beginning of this chapter, not quite fitting in. Zeus was not a mistake from a technical perspective, but a cultural fit perspective. And, yes, Zeus was a real geek, a real person in a real organization.

Cultural fit will trump all technical skills. Every time. It doesn't matter how technically great a person is. If a candidate's cultural preferences do not match your organization, that person will not fit. Do not bother hiring that person. That candidate will not succeed as an employee. Know your organization and know your team.

1.2 Identify the problems you need to address with a hiring strategy

Some hiring managers begin the hiring process by compiling a wish list of technical skills, such as two years of C++, three years of project management, must have game company experience, and so on. Unfortunately, a laundry list of skills listing constrains your thinking, so you don't actually solve the problem you need to solve with a new hire. And, a laundry list of skills can discourage an otherwise qualified candidate from applying for your position.

Instead, define a hiring strategy to start your problem solving. A new hire will help you solve the problems you now have. To know how a new hire will help, you need to understand your problem characteristics and their solutions. That's your hiring strategy.

1.2.1 You need additional people

If you need to hire more people to do the same kinds of projects, put extra emphasis on each candidate's technical skills, if you can find enough candidates. If you can't find technically skilled candidates, then look for candidates who fit into the existing culture or who have demonstrated an ability to adapt and learn—and plan to train your new hires.

Consider whether you need junior-level people, senior-level people, or people who are experienced technical leaders. If you're hiring many people at one time, make sure you don't base your decision to eliminate candidates solely on the fact that they seem

to have too little or too much experience. Junior-level candidates can grow along with your organization, and can be the leaders in a few years. Senior-level candidates can bring significant problem-solving expertise into your organization.

1.2.2 Your work is changing focus

If your team is transitioning to a different kind of work, you may need to add people who are different from those currently on your staff. One test manager told me, "My folks are great at testing the product from a black-box perspective. However, that's all we do. With this new product, I need to modify the testing to include performance and reliability testing, something people on my staff know nothing about. They don't have the technical background to know how to perform this kind of testing."

This problem is especially challenging if you cannot add staff, but must lose current staff to make room for people who are qualified to perform the new assignments. In this case, pay special attention to the required functional skills for the job.

1.2.3 Your technology is changing

When you're recruiting because your company must make the transition to another technology, consider a candidate's problem-solving skills, adaptability, and cultural fit for the new organization. Don't focus on the person's current technical skills, since you'll need to train your staff in new skills anyway. Do focus on the candidate's ability to learn quickly. For example, if staff members in the new technology use a different programming

language from the language used in the old environment, it's easier to assess suitability among candidates who've already learned multiple languages, rather than selecting people who have worked in only one language.

One option to consider when moving to a new technology is whether to hire someone with significant expertise in the new technology to mentor both your current staff and new hires. Keep in mind that in order for this technical mentoring to be successful, the expert will need to build rapport with the team quickly.

If you're adding new technology and still supporting the old technology, don't hire a new team to work on the new products and keep the existing staff working on the old products. The existing team may want to work with the new technology and may become frustrated that new people will have all the fun work. If you break the work up into new (read, "exciting") and old (read, "boring," "technical support," "housekeeping") work, you'll create more headaches than you solve. If you want to retain your current staff members, ask them what work they want, and hire to backfill their current roles so they can move on to do the new work.

1.2.4 You're on the cutting edge of technology

Sometimes, when you're on the cutting edge, you don't know what you need. Here, a good strategy is to place emphasis on a candidate's adaptability, cultural fit, and ability to work in teams. Consider the experience level and the technical leadership abilities of the candidates. Think in terms of what work, call it "X," must be done in your cutting-edge project. That way,

even if you don't know the specific required skills, you can ask candidates to describe their experience doing "X."

Years ago, before configuration management systems were common, I needed to hire a release engineer, someone with expertise in builds, branches, and what we now call configuration management. Since I didn't know precisely what skills would be required, I looked for a candidate who could communicate well with system developers, and who had demonstrated an ability to organize complicated work and run smoke tests. I suspected I didn't need someone with years of experience, but someone who was a great problem-solver. The candidate I hired had only two years of experience, but he'd worked as a programmer throughout high school and college. He was a great release engineer, and now is a highly qualified configuration manager.

1.2.5 You're creating a brand-new group

If you have a newly formed group or are adding people to a group that has not been together very long, the people you add should enhance the group's ability to work together and mesh. They should not prevent group members from working well together. Hiring a personality who doesn't fit will prevent your team from doing the work. An established group, whose members are confident of their abilities, can handle different personalities and challenges to the current work.

In order to be successful, a new group needs to build confidence and develop ways for individual members to work together. You'll want the most experienced people you can afford, because you need people who can manage their work while developing healthy, working relationships with coworkers. For this group,

you need people who are experienced in both technical and communications skills. As your group matures, you can hire less experienced staff.

1.2.6 You need to change what your group can deliver

Maybe you have a great group of developers and it's time to add some testers. Maybe you've got writers, and you need some editors. Maybe you've got manual testers, and it's time to add some automation to the mix. Whatever the case, if you're looking for people to fill a gap, you'll want to consider functional skills, but don't forget to assess each candidate's cultural fit.

Adding people with different skills to your team tests the original team's maturity and adaptability. Your challenge is to overcome the "second-round effect" in which new people join an established team but are not perceived as full partners. Look for people who, in addition to possessing required technical skills, can learn fast and adapt to the team's culture.

I once worked with a manager who brought ten new people into what had been a tight-knit four-person group. He had hired the new members on the basis of specific skills (user-interface development, testing, and so on), but he did not consider cultural fit—how well they would fit into the existing team. After sixteen months, it was obvious, even to an outsider, who the original members were and who'd been hired later. The fourteen-member team couldn't make the project succeed until both the original team and the new members changed their behavior and adapted to each other. If the manager either had hired more adaptable people for the original group or had focused

his second-round hiring on people with better communications skills, the team would have meshed much sooner.

1.2.7 Your group must finish a project faster than originally planned

The good news is that you've got a group of people who work well together, but you need to increase throughput. Sometimes, adding people to a team is the answer to attaining a faster release, but bringing them up to speed may counteract the contribution that additional staff should eventually make.

If the team can increase their throughput productivity by assigning new people to work on parallel projects or if new members can work in parallel with the original staff on one project, and management can handle such a challenge, by all means add staff. If you make the decision to add staff, bring in candidates who fit your culture.

1.2.8 You need a few additional people right now, you won't need them forever

Sometimes, you need people *right now* on a project, but you don't want to keep them in the company long-term. In this case, you might choose to hire contractors. Analyze your immediate, mid-term, and long-term needs to decide which of your candidates should be offered a contract and which should be offered employment.

When you hire contractors, make sure they have excellent "brain-dump" skills. If you don't intend to keep someone around for a long time, you'll need that person to be conscientious about

explaining what he or she does. Especially at the end of the contract, the contractor is capable of handing off the work to other people. I interview contractors the same way I interview permanent staff, although I do give greater emphasis to such areas as their ability to complete and hand off work, and their communications skills. See more detail in Develop Interview Questions and Techniques.

1.2.9 You have to fire more of the people you hire than seems reasonable

If you find that many of your new employees are not successful at their jobs, or that you fire even 5 percent of your new hires, reassess both the content of your interview questions and how you or your interviewers ask those questions. The most effective screening involves behavior-description questions that include some combination of technical-skill and cultural-fit analysis. Do you and your interviewers have enough technical and inter-viewing expertise to ask the appropriate technical questions and assess the answers? If not, you'll need to change interviewers, and increase the interview team's level of expertise.

If you have to repeatedly fire people because their technical expertise is inadequate, you're not asking specific-enough inter-view questions. If you have to fire people because they don't fit into your group, you haven't fully identified the kinds of people that best fit your culture. If you have defined the kinds of people you need and you still must fire people because they don't fit into the organization, you're probably not using a consensus-based approach to candidate appraisal. You'll discover more about the candidate's qualifications and his or her fit with your culture

if you invite several people outside of your group to be part of your interview team. When you use a consensus-based approach to candidate appraisals, you develop more of an understanding about what your team wants. I'll discuss this more in Follow Up After the Interview.

Quick to Judge, Fast to Fire

Fred is a non-technical, quick-to-judge MIS manager. When I first talked to him, he boasted that he could interview someone and know within thirty seconds whether the person would fit into the organization. I didn't hear from Fred again until after he'd fired two people before their three-month anniversary with the company. More than a little rattled, Fred decided to ask for help with interviewing and hiring.

I suggested that Fred recruit people from the rest of his company to help him with the interviewing, and gave him guidelines to follow. He assembled a group fairly quickly that included an MIS technical staff member, the release engineer, the support manager, and a couple of developers—all people who understood the implications of MIS work and who possessed some of the expertise required for the jobs to be filled. Once assembled, the interview team decided in advance about areas and questions they wanted to ask, and Fred agreed to let them go ahead with the interviews. Fred also agreed to withhold rushing to judgment during each interview. Following each interview, the interview team met to discuss the qualifications and suitability of each candidate. This approach enabled the team to find two candidates to replace the

fired employees, producing an MIS group that remains stable and successful to this day. At last check, the new employees were still working at the company, almost three years later.

1.2.10 You want to reverse the turnover trend

If your employees choose to leave after they've worked at your company for only a year or two, maybe they were not the right candidates to hire in the first place. Unless you have defined the job as an entry-level, short-term position, you do not want people to view your company as a temporary job. If you find yourself facing excessive turnover, make sure you are hiring for cultural fit and using behavior-description questions in the interviews.

A test manager stated that she'd replaced five members of her ten-person group in one six-month period. That's a high turnover rate. I recommended that she contact the former employees to retroactively conduct exit interviews to discover why so many people had left. The exit interviews gave her the reason: She learned she had consistently hired people who were risk-takers who enjoyed solving problems in unique ways. The development organization didn't value those testers, and wanted to work with testers who planned testing in a predictable way.

The hiring problem wasn't that she was hiring people with poor technical skills; the problem was that she hadn't given enough thought to the cultural-fit problem: how to hire risk-taking testers who had enough patience to continue working

through the changes she was trying to implement. By changing her cultural-fit questions to identify how the testers tested, and by looking for people with patience for cultural change, she was able to keep turnover to a minimum.

1.2.11 You can't find more people

If finding people is difficult, maybe you're not using enough different approaches or recruiting mechanisms. If you use only one recruiting method, you run the risk of missing out on potential candidates. For example, if you only use classified ads, you'll miss people who only work with recruiters. If you only use your corporate web site or one general-purpose online job board, you'll miss people who use industry-specific sites or geographic sites.

For more details on how to build and use your recruiting network, see Source Candidates. Also, check to see that you're not inadvertently discriminating against people who are different from you. Review Résumés describes ways to check for your prejudices.

1.2.12 You need more diversity

Sometimes, when a group has been together a long time, its members may start to think alike. The best remedy for this is to add people with different personality types or backgrounds. If you're changing the focus of your product base, you might add people who more closely reflect your customer base. Or, if the team consists of people primarily of one gender, race, or philosophical outlook, hiring people of the other gender, from

another race, or committed to other philosophies will make for a richer work environment.

Technical people tend to value technical skill and expertise more highly than personality, race, or gender. That's not to say there are no bigots or prejudiced individuals in technical groups, but in my experience, most people are more interested in what another person can do than in what the person looks like or his or her personality. Not surprisingly, we tend to neglect considering personality diversity while hiring.

How a person solves a problem or performs an assignment is influenced by his or her personality. You can use that to your advantage in matching a candidate to a job. For example, many people working in the technical field are quick to make decisions, but creative product architects may choose to ponder several designs, looking at the pros and cons before coming to a conclusion. Some testers like to plan their work; others explore a less structured path as opportunities arise. Some people prefer to talk out the issues; others prefer to think about the issues privately and then discuss them.

Look at the range of personalities on the existing team to see whether all team members have one kind of personality. The more diversity you have in personality types, the less likely you are to be blind-sided by a problem no one considered.

Sometimes, diversity can be achieved by mixing experienced workers with entry- or junior-level staff members. Such a mix would have benefited one development manager who told me, "Everyone in my group has at least ten years of valuable experience. Most are designers, but we also have three real architects. Unfortunately, I don't have enough high-level work to keep them

all busy right now. I need junior people to be my senior folks' journeymen, so I have a more natural mix of engineers."

You can hire junior-level people to perform jobs that do not require senior-level knowledge and talent. Allow for the maturity hierarchy of technology skill and knowledge to take a natural path—mix experience and knowledge levels.

1.2.13 You need more management capability

If your group has grown in size, or if you have a start-up group that must make the transition to the next level to become a more productive entity, you may need to hire more managers. The chief technology officer of an online start-up might manage a technical group of twenty software developers, testers, and operations staff members for years with only the help of technical leads in the various functional areas. If the organization decides to hire another five people, then experienced, full-time managers, not just technical leads, will be needed to make sure all of the management tasks will be accomplished correctly, on time, and within budget. In Hire Technical Managers, I provide detailed information about hiring managers.

Sometimes, you have more than one problem to solve. When that happens, rank your problems. Now you can determine the criteria against which you will hire your technical people. You can choose which types of people you need to hire first.

1.3 Determine which roles you want to fill first

When you're hiring more than one person, or hiring into a group over time, decide which capabilities are your highest priorities. Not all roles in your organization are the same. If you need a product architect, then a designer will not do.

You will need to make decisions as you build your list of first, second, third, and so on, hires. Some typical tasks are identified in the Function Role Chart, below, which suggests job titles to fill function areas:

Function to Be Performed	Possible Roles and Job Titles
Requirements Analysis	business analyst, systems engineer, analyst, requirements specialist
Development	systems architect, senior designer, junior designer, programmer, project manager, technical lead
Release Engineering	build engineer, librarian, configuration manager, operations analyst
Testing and QA	automated tester, manual tester, exploratory tester, test project manager, technical lead, metrics gatherer
Documentation	editor, writer, book designer, technical lead, production specialist, graphics artist
Support	tier–1, –2, or –3 support (first–line, mid–level, and senior–level support staff)
Usability Engineering	interaction specialist, designer
Project Management	project administrator, project manager, program manager

Function Role-Chart

Fill in the Gaps

A chief technical officer of a start-up defined his current hiring needs: "We've moved past the initial start-up phase. We have three developers—I guess I'd call them senior designers—and I've been doing the architecture. It's time to bring in a project manager and some testers, so we can 'product-ize' this beast now that we've got the funding. But, these people have to work *with* us, not against us. I'm

> not ready for formal release engineering, or formal process definition, or formal system tests, but I am ready to start automating tests of the product core. We need a technical project manager, an automation tester, and one more tester who can find the problems we developers don't see."

This CTO is trying to solve the staffing problem by filling in positions with other skills. Since his group is small, he's considering cultural fit (qualifications he says he is "not ready for"), but the driving force behind his hiring is to bring more people on-board to do different work than is done by the people he already has.

Once you've decided which roles you want to fill first, go back to take a look at your current staff members and the roles they perform. If they perform jobs that partially fill or intersect the problem areas you're trying to staff, include them on your interview team. These team members can provide good insight into how well the candidate will fulfill those roles. If these current staff members can no longer perform the jobs you need done, determine how many of which kinds of new people to hire, and decide how you're going to manage the problem of your current staff's inability to perform the needed work. For more guidance, see Move Forward.

If your hiring strategy includes hiring many people at one time, you may be lucky enough to find candidates for positions you need to fill but weren't planning on staffing until later. If this happens and you have the budget to support these additional employees now, hire them! Then, replan the work your group

will do, and update your hiring strategy.

1.4 Plan what you will do if you can't find the right people

Every profession has ups and downs with regard to hiring. During recessions, there may be many candidates from whom to choose. During boom times, the demand for people appears to outstrip the supply. That's when your hiring and management strategies are critical to your success.

You can choose one of several options when you can't find candidates to fill your positions:

- *Expand your search.* Make sure you're taking advantage of all the recruiting possibilities Source Candidates.
- *Change your hiring strategy.* Hire people who have fewer specific technical skills, but who fit the culture and are fast learners or great problem-solvers—and then train them. See Move Forward.
- *Choose which projects you're not going to do.* Alternatively, choose when you will do the projects. See Move Forward.

Take a few minutes, and develop your hiring strategy. You'll find the rest of your hiring easier to accomplish. Use the hiring strategy template to help you develop your hiring strategy:

Problem Categories & Problems to Solve	No	Yes	Problem Characteristics & Solutions
We need more people.			Technical skills, as long as enough candidates exist. If not enough candidates, focus on people's ability to learn and teamwork.
Your work is changing focus.			Functional skills and cultural fit.
Technology transition.			Problem-solving skills, skills learning new technology, adaptability, and cultural fit.
You are on the cutting edge of technology.			Adaptability, cultural fit, and ability to work in teams.
You are creating a brand-new group.			Experience working, experience applying functional skills to new product domain, experience creating a new team, and making the team successful.
We're filling in with other skills to change what we currently do.			Cultural fit, fit with team, expertise in specific functional skills, and ability to apply those skills to new product domain.
We want to finish our projects faster.			Different functional skills, teamwork, and cultural fit.
We need a few people now, but not forever.			Consider contractors with great communications skills so you won't lose their work when they're gone.
We have to fire too many of the people we hire.			Does the interviewing team know how to interview? Do they understand the requirements of the position? Use limited consensus to hire people.
Turnover is too high.			Review cultural-fit needs and verify that interview questions address cultural fit.
Recruiting more people is difficult.			Use multiple sourcing mechanisms. Make sure résumé screening filter isn't too tight.
We need more diversity in our group.			Look for diversity in background, attitude, personality, product experience, as well as race and gender. Look for different levels of experience.
We need more management capability.			Look for management skills along with cultural fit.

Hiring Strategy Template

Once you've listed your concerns, organize them in order of priority to help guide your job definition, recruiting, and hiring actions. Don't forget to explain your objective to anyone who helps you recruit or interview.

Review your checks in the Yes and No columns in the template above. Then choose which actions to take. The hiring strategy

template and all the other templates are in Appendix A. In addition, they are available in a pdf on my site, Templates, if you want to download and use them as you proceed.

Now you know the problems you need to solve because you have your hiring strategy. You can start thinking about analyzing the job or jobs.

1.5 Points to Remember

- Know why you're hiring more people. Define your problems to define your hiring strategy.
- Know what types of roles you require. Do you need more developers, more support staff, or more testers? If you had more writers, could you work differently? Are there tradeoffs you can make to fill a specific role?
- Know how you will decide on which candidates to select for which jobs. Consider consensus-based hiring as the decision-making mechanism.
- Know that you need a risk-mitigation strategy. If you can't find the people you need when you need them, define what you're going to do.
- Re-evaluate your hiring strategy periodically, based on how much hiring you've completed.

Part 6: Templates and More

I've collected all the templates in one place for your reading pleasure. And, check out the bibliography and how to stay in touch with me.

Appendix A: Templates to Use When Hiring Geeks That Fit

All the templates are here, so you can refer to them as you read. In addition, all the templates are available in a handy pdf on my site, Templates. Please do download a copy of the templates and use them.

Hiring Strategy Template

Problem Categories & Problems to Solve	No	Yes	Problem Characteristics & Solutions
We need more people.			Technical skills, as long as enough candidates exist. If not enough candidates, focus on people's ability to learn and teamwork.
Your work is changing focus.			Functional skills and cultural fit.
Technology transition.			Problem-solving skills, skills learning new technology, adaptability, and cultural fit.
You are on the cutting edge of technology.			Adaptability, cultural fit, and ability to work in teams.
You are creating a brand-new group.			Experience working, experience applying functional skills to new product domain, experience creating a new team, and making the team successful.
We're filling in with other skills to change what we currently do.			Cultural fit, fit with team, expertise in specific functional skills, and ability to apply those skills to new product domain.
We want to finish our projects faster.			Different functional skills, teamwork, and cultural fit.
We need a few people now, but not forever.			Consider contractors with great communications skills so you won't lose their work when they're gone.
We have to fire too many of the people we hire.			Does the interviewing team know how to interview? Do they understand the requirements of the position? Use limited consensus to hire people.
Turnover is too high.			Review cultural-fit needs and verify that interview questions address cultural fit.
Recruiting more people is difficult.			Use multiple sourcing mechanisms. Make sure résumé screening filter isn't too tight.
We need more diversity in our group.			Look for diversity in background, attitude, personality, product experience, as well as race and gender. Look for different levels of experience.
We need more management capability.			Look for management skills along with cultural fit.

Hiring Strategy Template

Job Analysis Template

Defining Questions	Needs and Observations
Who interacts with this person? What roles does this person have in this job? What level is the company willing to pay for? What's the management component?	
What are the job's activities and deliverables? What periodic deliverables are required?	
What are the essential qualities, preferences, and non-technical skills? Initiative? Flexibility? Communications skills? Ability to handle projects of varying scope? Ability to work on multiple projects at one time? Influence and negotiation skills? Goal-orientation? Technical leadership and problem-solving skills? Responsibility and independence? Passion for learning? Teamwork skills? Others?	
What are the desirable qualities, preferences, and non-technical skills?	
What are the essential technical skills? Functional skills? Product-domain skills? Technology/tool skills? Industry experience? Others?	
What are the desirable technical skills?	
What is the required minimum level of education, training, or experience?	
What are the corporate cultural-fit factors? What benefits should be offered? Company growth? Cash position? Industry leadership? Entrepreneurial environment? Benefits? Company size? Others?	
What elimination factors should be considered? Travel? Availability? Salary? Others?	

Job Analysis Worksheet

Job description Template

Job Title:

Reporting-to manager's title:

Generic requirements:

Specific requirements:

Responsibilities:

Elimination factors:

Other factors:

Job DescriptionTemplate

Job Ad Template

[Company name] is looking for a [job title].
Main attractor:
Deliverables and activities:
Essential qualities, preferences, and skills:
Contact information:

Job Advertisement Template

Phone Screen Script Template

Job Position: Yes _____ Maybe _____ No_____

Candidate name: _____ Phone #:_____ Date:__

1. Let's make sure we're on the same page with respect to salary. This position is a [job title] position, with a salary range of [low] to [high]. We don't normally bring people in higher than at the mid-point. Are we on the same page?
2. Tell me something about [your job's requirement] experience. How many years of [your job's requirement] experience do you have? How many years of [your job's requirement]? How many years of [your requirement]?
3. Tell me about your work in the [your field] industry.
4. Are you using any [your requirement] in your current project? Tell me about your role in defining and using those [job skill].
5. Tell me about the team you're on now.
6. Tell me about how you [job function] on your current project.
7. Tell me about a time when you had to change the focus of your work. When was it, and what happened?
8. What's your current salary? What's your asking salary?
9. Have you had any recent interviews? Are you expecting any offers? In what salary range?
10. What's your availability to interview? To start?
11. Why are you leaving your current position?

Interview Matrix Template

This is the template for an interview matrix. You would change the times and who is interviewing for which skills. If you need more time for an audition or lunch, make that interview slot longer.

	Interviewer One	Interviewer Two	Interviewer Three	Interviewer Four	Interviewer Five	Everyone
Time	8:00–8:45	8:45–9:30	9:30–10:15	10:20–11:05	11:05–11:50	11:50–12:05
Location	location	location	location	location	location	Conference Room A
Question Areas						Meet to evaluate the candidate
essential skill 1	x				x	
essential skill 2		x	x			
essential skill 3			x		x	
essential skill 4		x		x		
essential skill 5	x			x		

Sample Interview Matrix for a Candidate

Reference Check Script Template

[Job Title] Candidate name: Date:

Reference name: Date:

Reference position: Reference phone numbers:

To report to: [manager]

1. Where and in what capacity did you work with the candidate?
2. How long did the candidate work for you?
3. How long have you known the candidate?
4. How would you describe your working relationship?
5. Describe the most recent project the candidate worked on with you. Did the candidate have trouble finishing the work?
6. What issues did you have with the candidate's work?
7. If I were the candidate's manager, what advice would you have for me?
8. How quickly did the candidate learn about the product or the product line?
9. How quickly did the candidate integrate with the rest of the team?
10. Why will or did the candidate leave?
11. Would you rehire or work with this candidate again?
12. What is the candidate's current or most recent salary?

If you are considering the candidate for a management position, ask these questions:

1. How many people reported to this candidate?
2. How did the candidate conduct performance appraisals?

3. How did the candidate handle "difficult" people?

Add any specific questions you had from the interviews here.

Offer Letter Template

<[date]>

<[candidate name]> <[candidate street address]> <[candidate city, state, and zip code address]>

Dear <[candidate name]>:

I am pleased to offer you the position of <[job title]> with <[company name]>, located at <[location description]>, reporting to <[manager name and title]>.

1. Your responsibilities will be those outlined in the enclosed job description and described to you during your discussions with me.
2. You will be compensated with a <[weekly/biweekly/monthly]> salary in the amount of <[the salary]>. Other compensation shall consist of <[list of additional benefits/stock-/perks]>.
3. The Company has the following <[number]> pre-employment requirements: <[physical examination/review of documents]>, which will need to be satisfied prior to employment.
4. You are considered an "at will" employee. This means that we can terminate your employment with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either <[company name]> or yourself, except as otherwise

provided by law. Additionally, because you do not have an employment contract with us, you can terminate your employment with or without notice at any time.

5. Our offer to hire you is contingent upon your submission of satisfactory proof of your identity and your legal authorization to work in <[country name]>. If you fail to submit this proof, <[federal/state/ local]> law prohibits us from hiring you. (Check whether you need this clause if you work outside the United States.)

6. I hope you can begin work on <[day, date, time]> at <[position location]>.

If you agree with and accept the terms of this offer of employment, please sign below and return this letter to our office on or before <[day, date]>. I look forward to hearing from you and to having you join us.

Sincerely,

<[your name]> <[candidate name (signature)]> Date signed: <[date]> <[your title]> <[candidate name (printed)]>

Activities to complete once the candidate accepts your offer	Check off when task is complete
Order a badge, keys, and key cards, as needed.	
Identify suitable office space, and verify the space is clean and ready for a new employee.	
Verify the office has a desk, lamp, chair, phone, computer, and everything works.	
Order any needed furniture, office supplies, or computer equipment missing from the office.	
Order an email address, a voicemail extension, and physical mailbox.	

Orientation Checklist, Once the Candidate Accepts Your Offer

Activities to complete in preparation for Day One	Check off when task is complete
Stock the office with basic supplies such as pens, paper, pencils, wastebasket, scissors, stapler, staples, and staple remover.	
Verify email address works and computer is hooked up to the network.	
Verify the phone and email directories and location maps are available; add the employee's voicemail extension to the phone list.	
Identify the locations for all the applications and templates for the employee's work.	
Supply the employee with explanations for how to find help for the applications.	
Assign a buddy who can be available for the first month or so to answer the new hire's technical questions about how the team works and non-technical questions about staff, neighborhood, rules, and traditions peculiar to the specific environment and culture.	
Prepare a welcome letter and orientation package, including all HR forms.	

Orientation Checklist to Prepare for Day One

Activities to complete when the new hire arrives on Day 1	Check off when task is complete
Introduce the new employee to project members, executives, personnel, administrative staff.	
Show the employee instructions for calling meetings, for booking a conference room, and for other administrative procedures.	
Paperwork to collect for the new hire to fill out on Day One, to be packaged with a welcome letter and orientation packet.	
IRS, INS, and immigration forms, as applicable.	
Health, dental, and life insurance forms, as applicable.	
Benefits forms (long-term disability, short-term disability, and pension or retirement plans) as applicable.	
A nondisclosure agreement, if applicable.	
An emergency contact form.	
Direct-deposit and check-cashing forms.	
Business card forms.	
Paperwork copies to give to the new hire to keep.	
Maps, floor plans, and directions.	
Parking, public transportation, and commute information.	
Personnel and HR policies (conflict of interest policies; sickness, holiday, and vacation policies; lateness and absence policies; sexual harassment policies; conflict of interest policies; medical and personal leave policies; birthday lists).	
Any other paperwork that a new hire needs.	

Orientation Checklist on Day One

Hiring people—especially geeks—can be fun, and manageable. Maybe even easy! I welcome your comments and feedback. You can reach me at jr@jrothman.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Bibliography

I've been writing the Hiring Technical People blog since 2003. I've mentioned every topic in this book on that blog, and more—rants, raves, and notes on what were then current events. I've also written a few dozen articles about hiring which you can find on my web site, jrothman.com.

Now, here is the formal bibliography for this book.

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