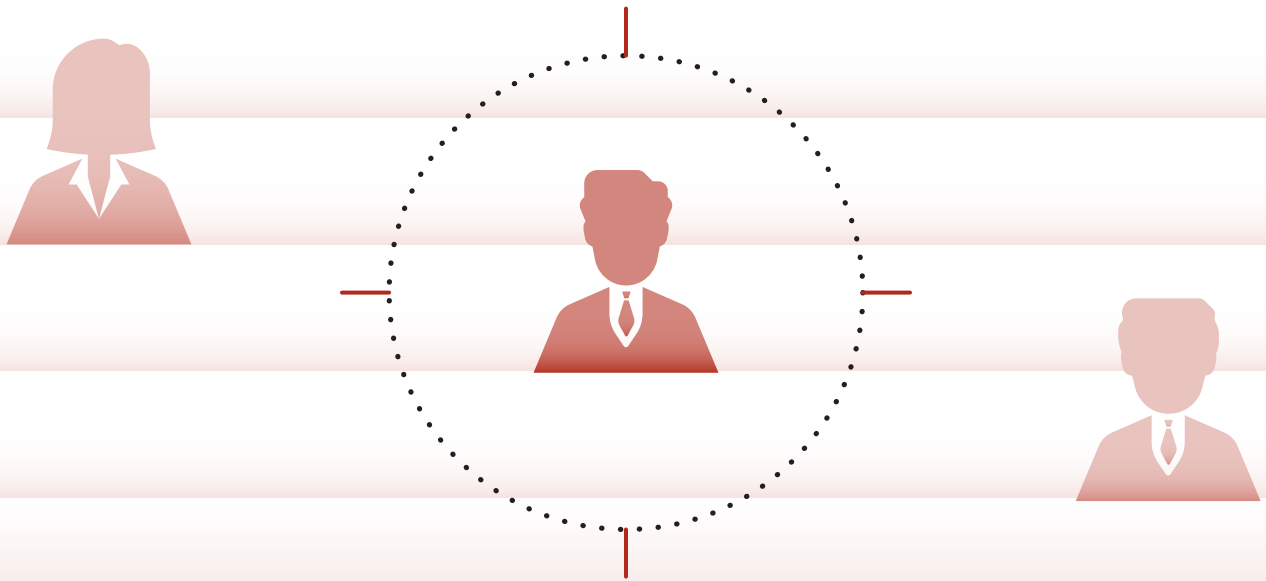


# 29 Tips For Hiring Better & Hiring Less

The definitive guide to identifying & keeping rock stars and spotting bad hires.



## You'll learn:

- 1 7 Signs You've Identified a Top Candidate
- 2 Don't Hire That Candidate!!! 10 Red Flags to Recognize
- 3 4 Signs You Have Made a Bad Hiring Decision
- 4 How To Deal With A Bad Hire - 4 Steps
- 5 How to React When You Think an Employee Is Going to Quit – 4 Steps

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97.1% of candidates and clients rate our professionalism and industry knowledge as 'Above Average' or 'Outstanding.'

We've pulled together the thinking and experiences of all our recruiters to compile this list of 29 tips to help you identify and retain top talent.

Our recruiters come from corporate backgrounds and each has a strong knowledge of their industry sector—but our real strength is our understanding of people. Part of it is innate; part of it comes from the sheer volume of people we meet with—each of our recruiters meets with or assesses up to 1,000 candidates per year.

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**"Motivation comes from working on things we care about.  
It also comes from working with people we care about."**

**- Sheryl Sandberg**

# Introduction:

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## Hiring is challenging.

There's a reason why so many organizations are having difficulty finding the right candidate. It's not a perfect science. Challenges will always exist.

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## Hiring mistakes are common, and they are costly.

Every hiring mistake costs you time, resources, money, and places additional strain on your existing employees. You need to minimize these mistakes to hire better.

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## When you hire better, you will hire less.

Finding the right person for the right job makes it more likely they will stay long term.

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## Recruiting doesn't stop when you find the right person.

It shifts your focus to retention. Most instances of employee turnover are preventable. Don't overlook the importance of keeping your top talent engaged and satisfied.

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## Great employees are not easy to replace.

You can't afford to let your guard down or you could lose a top talent. When you lose a top employee, you start from the beginning again. You not only lose an employee, you lose their knowledge, insights, and impact they have on the company, culture, and customers.

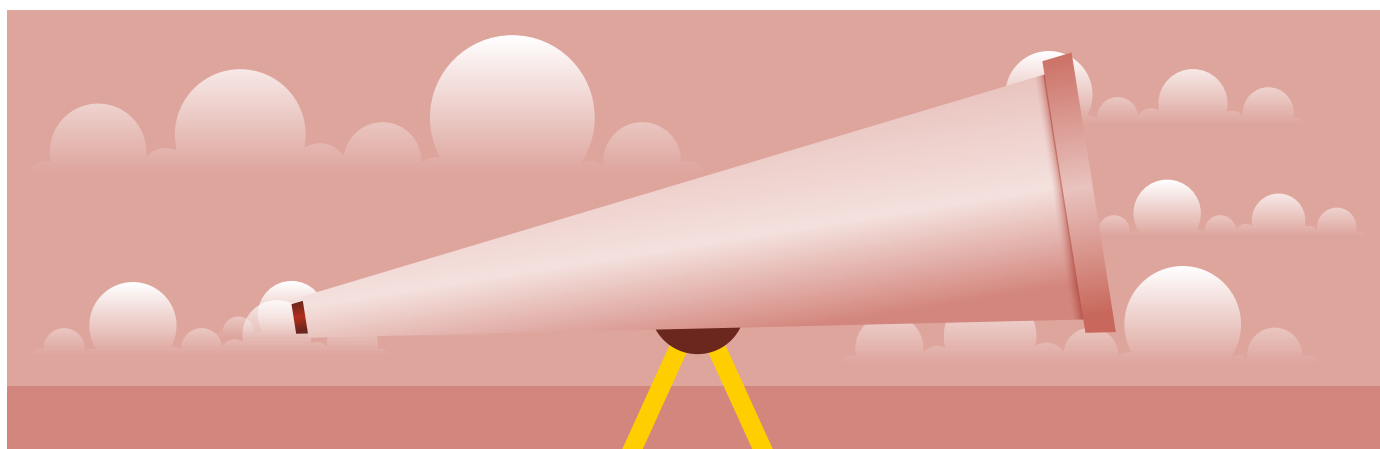
The tips in this guide are designed to help you find and keep rock star talent. Just as important, you'll learn how to spot bad hires and avoid making costly hiring mistakes.

## Section 1:

**“Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why.”**

**– Bernard M. Baruch**

## How To Identify a Top Candidate



All companies want to find that star candidate – the person who is perfect for the job. But identifying that top candidate is more challenging than most realize. For any given job ad, you could receive dozens or hundreds of applications. After sorting through those resumes, it can be difficult to separate the contenders from the pretenders. You'll have some candidates who are an obvious 'no,' and you'll have some you are on the fence about.

Then you have the candidates you'll want to interview. Some you want to learn more about, some meet all the qualifications, and perhaps others seem too good to be true. If you're fortunate, you'll have a candidate or two who are absolute must interviews.

How do you know if a candidate should be at the top of the list by looking at their resume or speaking with them briefly over the phone?

## Section 1:

# Here are 7 signs that you've identified a top candidate:

### 1. They Followed All the Application Instructions

It's common for candidates to submit incomplete applications or to fail to complete all the required steps. Applications are not just about following instructions. They prove that the candidate can pay attention to detail and is serious about the job. If a candidate cannot follow directions or take the time to complete all requirements, it may be a reflection on how they operate in the workplace.

### 2. They Ask You Great Questions

Top candidates ask great questions. They've researched the position and have a curiosity about the role, company culture, and what the company is actually like to work for compared to what they have read or heard. Top candidates use job interviews to interview you and assess their desire to work for your organization. They don't just answer your questions, they engage you in a dialogue to find commonality and assess the "fit."

### 3. They Take a Team First Approach

Top candidates ask great questions. They've researched the position and have a curiosity about the role, company culture, and what the company is actually like to work for compared to what they have read or heard. Top candidates use job interviews to interview you and assess their desire to work for your organization. They don't just answer your questions, they engage you in a dialogue to find commonality and assess the "fit."

**"Jobs requiring social skills have grown 83%."<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center (2016, Oct. 6). The State of American Jobs.  
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/10/06/the-state-of-american-jobs/>

# Section 1:

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## 4. They Embrace Change

Nothing stays the same for too long anymore. Your organization needs talent that is highly adaptive to change in the workplace. Top candidates can provide you with examples of how they were able to adapt to change quickly and grow professionally as a result. Look at the candidate's resume. You'll see signs of change. They make career moves when the right opportunity is presented. Their resume will show a natural career progression over time, and your opening will be the logical next step.

## 5. They Are Actively Looking to Grow

Top candidates have a desire to grow professionally. They not only want to evolve into new roles over time, but they also have a desire to learn, add new skills, and become a more experienced expert in their field. Top candidates continuously add new credentials, take courses to add new skills, and are actively engaged in their industry.

## 6. They Are Honest

Great candidates understand that honesty is the most effective way to find the right role. Even the best candidates have some flaws and weaknesses. Top candidates are open about their shortcomings. They will admit areas where they will need to learn and ramp up if hired for the job. They won't lie in order to get the job. They don't want a role based on false pretenses.

## 7. They Bring Energy And Enthusiasm

Top candidates have the ability to inject new energy into your organization. You can sense their enthusiasm when you speak with them. They have a strong interest in working for and representing your company.

There is a key distinction between a top candidate and a candidate who seems too good to be true. Next, we'll offer up some very important red flags to look out for when assessing candidates during the hiring process.

# Don't Hire That Candidate!!! 10 Red Flags to Recognize



Telling the difference between a good and bad candidate can be difficult. Some great candidates are poor at interviewing and some bad candidates are excellent at interviewing. Then there is everyone who falls somewhere in the middle.

It's not easy to gain a detailed assessment of a candidate from a few interactions or an interview. This is why recruiting is so challenging. You need to be able to identify potential red flags quickly so you can avoid spending too much time moving the wrong candidate through the hiring process. Look for these red flags to avoid making a bad hiring decision:

## 1. They Have No Weaknesses – They ARE the Perfect Candidate

Everyone has weaknesses. If a candidate doesn't admit to any weaknesses, or they are simply masking them, it's a sign you may want to move on to other candidates. Candidates who are not self-aware enough to see the weaknesses in themselves tend to blame others when things don't go their way. No one wants to work with someone who feels they are always right.

## Section 2:

### 2. They Are Late For The Interview

Being late for a phone or in-person interview is a big red flag. How could you be late for a job you really want? It shows a lack of planning and commitment. It communicates that the candidate is not 100% interested in the role. It could also be a sign of what you could expect if you hire them – late for work, late on assignment deadlines, and even a lack of urgency.

**"43% of applicants have or would fake references."<sup>2</sup>**

### 3. Questionable References

Having strong references is important. All candidates know they are going to be asked for references. If a candidate cannot fulfill your request to provide good references, it could be a sign they are lying on their resume, they have poor professional relationships with their previous colleagues, or other issues may be in play. Tread carefully.

### 4. Lack of Ownership – They Play the Victim

Everyone makes mistakes on the job. The difference between a good candidate and a poor one is how they handle the situation. Bad candidates don't own the mistakes they make. Rather than finding a solution for the issue, they focus on playing the victim and placing blame elsewhere. Watch out for candidates who claim they have been hard done by their previous employers.

### 5. Lack of Interest or Passion

The goal is to hire a candidate who is excited and passionate about the role. If a candidate just seems to be going through the motions, it's a sign to steer away from them. Watch out for candidates if they have poor energy, seem ill-prepared, don't have any questions about the job, and have poor awareness about your company and its products and services.



## Section 2:

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### 6. Significant Job Hopping

Some job-hopping is to be expected. It has become more common for professionals to move around every 3–5 years, especially early on in their career. But, if the candidate holds a number of shorter-term positions, holds roles that are not directly related to their career objectives, or if they take steps back, it may be a sign the candidate has issues keeping a job, getting along with others, or gets bored easily.

Asking a candidate about their job history is the most effective way to determine why they job hopped. Many candidates have valid reasons. Here are some questions to think about:

- Are the candidate's job moves in a natural succession?
- Does the candidate move their career forward?
- Why did the candidate leave?
- Are there gaps in employment?

### 7. They Try to Leverage Other Employment Offers

It's common for candidates to get multiple job offers, especially if they are a top performer in their role. But proceed with caution if a candidate makes a point to brag about having multiple job offers. For starters, it could be a tactic to get you to hire them quicker and potentially overlook something about their candidacy. It also shows a sense of arrogance. Overconfidence could create issues within your company culture, especially if you have a close-knit group.

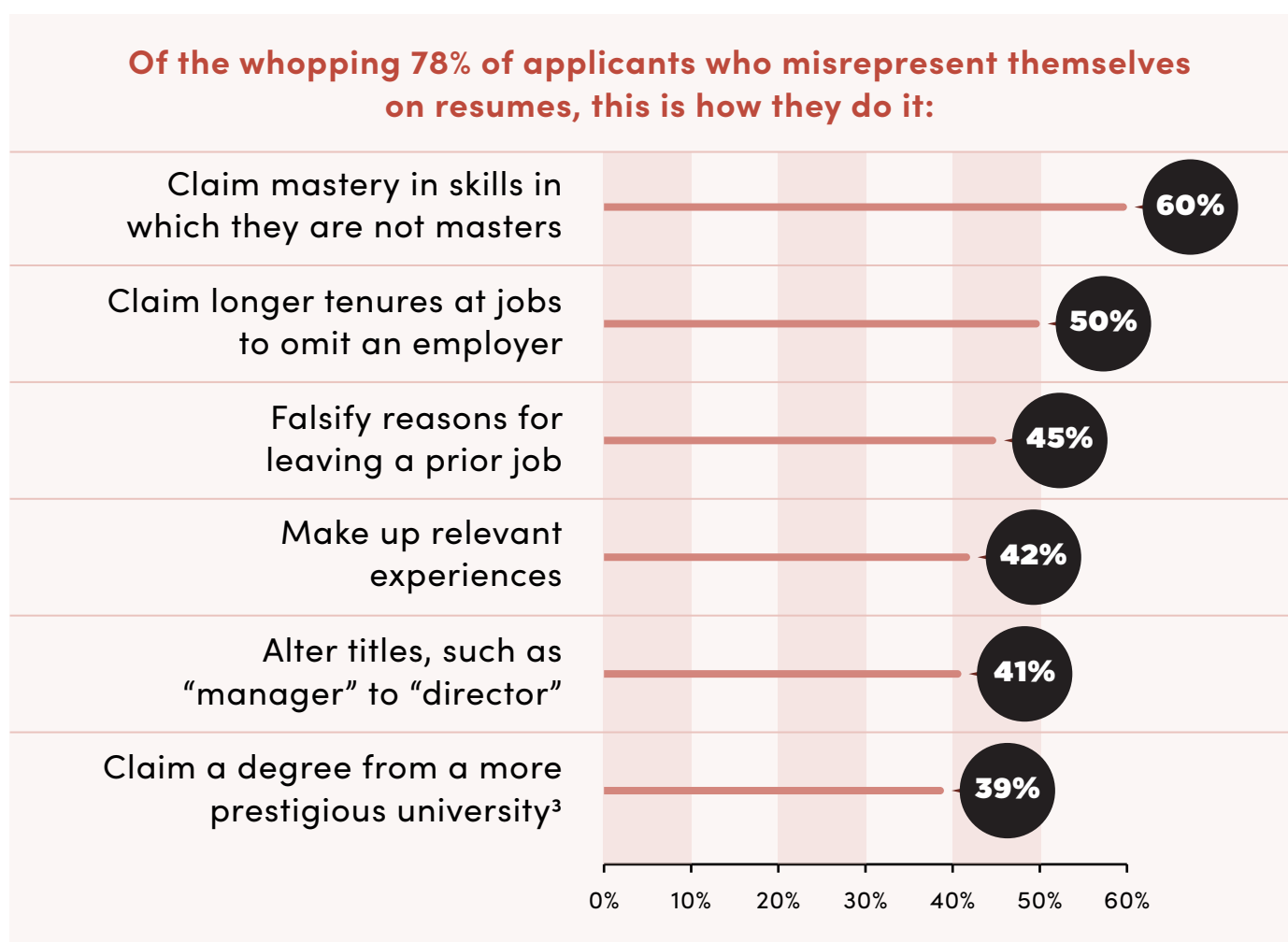
If they really did get multiple offers, they could be a candidate who is willing to leave for another role. It's fine if a candidate mentions they have another offer when prompted or when the time is right at the end of the interview process. But, if they are making it well known right away, proceed with caution.

## Section 2:

### 8. Playing the Blame Game

Any good professional will accept accountability when they make a mistake. Watch out for candidates who don't take accountability for their actions. If they are quick to blame others for shortcomings, it's a sign they don't learn from their mistakes and likely will continue similar behaviour in your company.

Candidates who play the blame game also tend to be quick to take credit for everything, even if it was a team effort. These types of candidates tend to lack self-awareness and can have a negative impact on company culture. Speak with the candidate's references to get a better sense of their credentials, experience, and how they interact with others.



<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Section 2:

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### 9. They Have Difficulty Explaining Previous Jobs and Successes

Just because someone puts it on their resume doesn't mean it's true. Asking about previous jobs and work history is common when getting to know candidates. Many candidates stretch the truth and overstate their role or impact in a previous job. Then there are others who flat out lie. If a candidate has difficulty explaining the ins and outs of their previous jobs, there should be some cause for concern. Dig deeper and ask more questions to try to get more out of the candidate. If they say something questionable, ask for clarification. You can also ask questions of references and perform an employment background check to see if what a candidate states matches up with their actual experience.

### 10. Show Me the Money

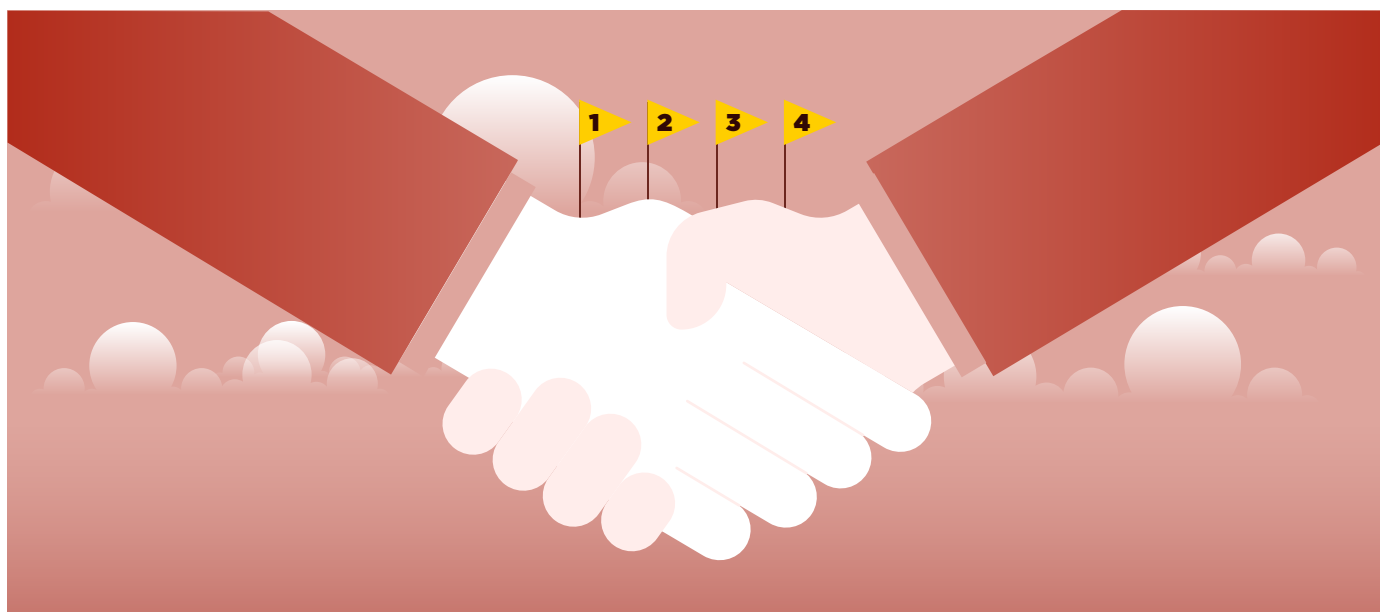
There is no doubt money is important. Most professionals are focused on making money. However, candidates who are too focused on compensation could do more harm than good. If all a candidate cares about is money, they could overlook other important aspects of their job. This is particularly important in performance-based roles where commission is paid.

Now you know some common red flags to look for. But what if you missed or chose to ignore some of these red flags? What if you find yourself with a bad hire? Next, we'll discuss some signs that you made a hiring mistake and how to deal with the situation.

## Section 3:

**"Statistics show that companies hire the "right" person only 30% of the time. One in three. That means that two out of three times the person hired is either "not right" or mediocre."<sup>4</sup>**

### **4 Signs You Have Made a Bad Hiring Decision**



You think you've found a good hire. Their resume checks all the boxes, their references check out, and you have a great interview. You agree to terms, and you set a start date. But then the new hire starts work. Things get off to a rough start, and you start to think you may have made a bad hiring decision. Did you? Perhaps you overlooked some things you shouldn't have.

Here are some of the top signs that you have made a bad hiring decision:

<sup>4</sup> Dew, H. (2012, February 29). The Impact of "Hiring the Right Person". <https://www.htijobs.com/the-impact-of-hiring-the-right-person/>

## Section 3:

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### 1. They Are Taking Longer Than Expected to Catch On

Every new hire will take some time to catch on to their new role. But, if a candidate seems to take longer than expected, it may be a sign they are not cut out for the job. Signs include:

- They don't have the skills you expected
- They lack knowledge in important areas of the job
- They seem lost in the role, not sure what to do
- They are asking questions for which they should know the answer
- They are not fitting in well with the company culture

### 2. A Poor Attitude and Complaining

A new hire brings something new to the table. However, there is a big difference between positive and constructive feedback, versus someone who complains about how things are done. Signs include:

- Continuously referencing how things were done at their old job
- They don't take feedback well
- They have a know-it-all or arrogant attitude
- There is a reluctance to learn new skills
- They don't ask for help when they need it

### 3. They Keep Making the Same Mistakes

All new employees will make mistakes as they learn their new role, key processes, and a new way of doing things. But candidates who continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly, even after being provided feedback, may have overstated their experience or are not good at taking direction. Signs include:

- They are not willing to change their ways
- They disregard reminders
- They are not meeting the requirements of the job
- They continuously fail to follow company practices and protocols
- They don't own their mistakes

## Section 3:

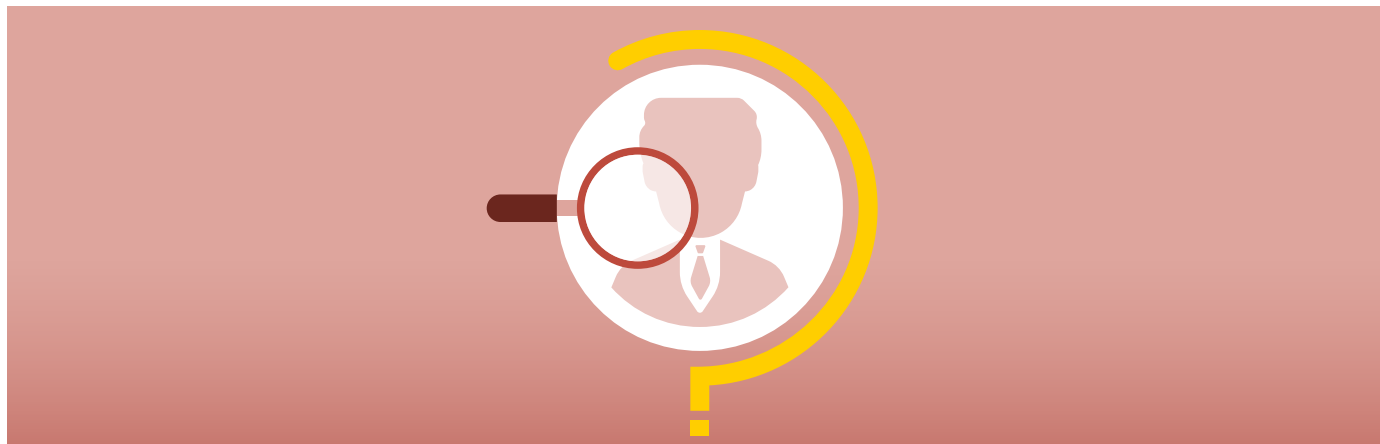
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### 4. Tardiness

New hires are generally energetic and eager to start a new job. They put in an extra effort to ramp up. But, if you notice a new employee is consistently late for work, takes long lunch breaks, leaves early or unexpectedly is taking time off, it may be a sign they are not happy with their new job. It's also a sign they could exit the company and are looking for a new role.

So, you've identified a hiring mistake was made. Now you need to take action to deal with the situation accordingly.

# You Made a Bad Hire, Now What?



If you think you've made a bad hiring decision, you need to take action quickly to fix the issue. The actions you take will depend on the issue at hand. If they lack certain skills, more training may be required. If they lack experience, perhaps another role in the company is better. If they don't fit within the culture, you may need to let the employee go and start looking for their replacement.

The reality is hiring mistakes happen. You won't hire the perfect candidate every time. In fact, you seldom will. If you've made a hiring mistake, you are not alone. According to a study by Leadership IQ, 46% of newly hired employees fail within the first 18 months on the job. Only 19% achieve success in a new role.

The question is, what to do next?

## One More Chance or Cut Bait?

Once you come to the realization you may have made a mistake, there are two general paths you can take:

### **1. Keep the employee in hopes things will turn around:**

If you see potential in the candidate, you may want to give them some more time to grow into the role. But don't give them too much leniency. If things don't improve, make the decision to let the employee go.

## Section 4:

### 2. Admit you've made a hiring mistake and make a change:

Sometimes the writing is on the wall. You need to cut your losses before the candidate can affect culture, productivity, and morale. It's a tough decision to make, but you need to do what is best for the company.

## How To Remove A Bad Hire And Make A Change

Deciding to make a change is usually the best step to take. Here are 4 tips to handle this situation:

### 1. Run the numbers:

There is a cost to every decision you make. Consider how much a bad hire could hurt your team's productivity, affect other employees, and impact the quality of work. Compare this to the cost to replace them. What makes the most sense long term? It may cost you more now to replace the bad hire, but it will benefit you long term.

**"Average cost per hire for companies is \$4,129."<sup>5</sup>**

### 2. The sooner the better:

The sooner you make the change, the better. Even though you may find yourself short one person, you will be one step closer to finding a better-suited person for the role. If the person was not suited for the job, it's unlikely they were having the type of impact you had hoped for.

<sup>5</sup> SHRM (2016, Nov.). 2016 Human Capital Benchmarking Report. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-to-day/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2016-Human-Capital-Report.pdf>



## Section 4:

### 3. Be honest:

It's very important to be honest with the employee about the situation. Talk about what's working and what isn't. The employee may have a similar feeling and recognize the common issues. Maybe the job wasn't what the employee thought it would be and they are unhappy in the role. Perhaps there is a possible solution. Consider options to fix the situation. Maybe a different role within the company makes more sense? Sometimes it's not that you made a bad hire, it was more of a mis-hire and the employee could be successful in another role.

### 4. Prepare an exit plan:

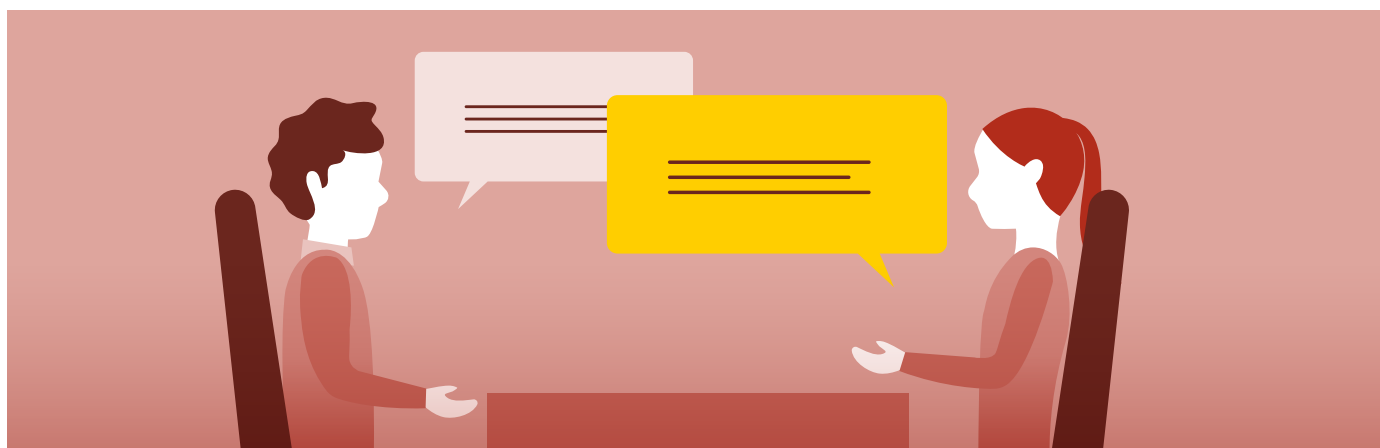
Work with the employee to exit them out of the company as amicably as possible. Speak with HR about your options, offer to provide support and have a clear directive for how severance, last date of work, and other things will be handled.

**"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."**

**- Sheryl Sandberg**

Fixing a hiring mistake can take a lot of effort. You can avoid having to hire often and risking making a hiring mistake by focusing on keeping your top talent happy and engaged. Unfortunately, you can't keep everyone happy all the time. Next, we'll discuss actions to take when you think there's a risk you could lose a top employee.

# How to React When You Think an Employee Is Going to Quit



Employees quit. It's part of the work world. But when one of your top performers starts to act differently and you suspect they may be thinking about quitting, it can be unnerving. Surely, you don't want to lose a top employee. You may be able to rectify the situation. It's important to address the situation before it's too late.

## 1. Get Ahead of It – Know the Signs of an Employee That Is Considering Quitting:

One of the keys to keeping your employees is to recognize when they may be disinterested, less engaged, and considering leaving. Common signs an employee is thinking about quitting include:

- Less interest in their job
- Being quieter and less forthcoming
- A drop in productivity
- Less energy
- An increase in sick days and time off requests
- Less interaction with their boss and coworkers

## Section 5:

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Notice some of these signs? It may be time to have a conversation with your employee. Check in on them to make sure things are okay. But what do you say?

### 2. Think Before Acting

How you approach the employee matters. Gather as much information as possible about the situation. Don't confront them outright about looking for other jobs or thinking about quitting. What if it isn't true? You could strain your relationship with the employee. There are many issues that could affect an employee's actions, demeanor, and performance. Have a conversation about how things are going, what they are working on, and if there's anything they are struggling with.

### 3. Have an Honest Conversation

Having an open and honest conversation with the employee is the best approach. Ask them about what is going on. If they are having a personal issue, give them the space to deal with it. Be understanding and show your support.

If the employee has an issue with the company and it's a reason why they are considering exiting the company, then expand your conversation about it. If they bring up a specific concern, dig into it, have a deeper conversation, and look for ways to rectify the situation before things worsen.

### 4. Ask Them Why They Are Considering Leaving and Address Their Concerns

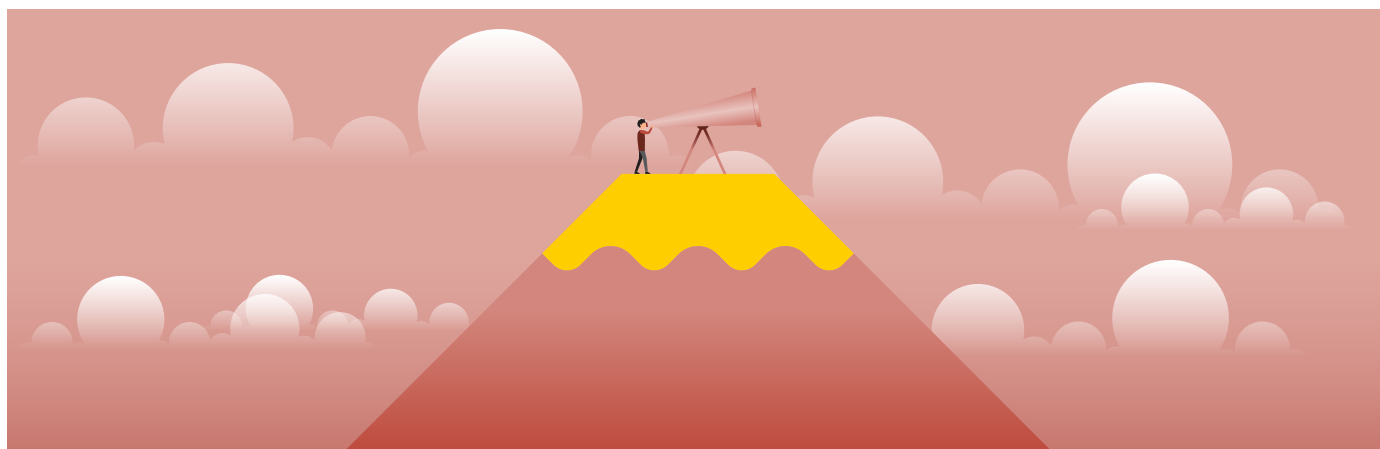
If an employee makes it clear they are thinking about leaving, make an effort to address the issues. Try to get a detailed understanding of the reasons why your employee wants to leave. Is it about salary? Career opportunity? Issues with coworkers? See if there's a solution all parties can be happy with.

## Section 5:

**"One of the #1 reasons why people quit is better career advancement opportunities elsewhere."<sup>6</sup>**

Come to grips with the understanding that you may not be able to do anything. If a candidate has decided they are leaving, start making arrangements to fill the role. Start the recruiting process and look for signs of a candidate that would be a good replacement.

## Conclusion/Call to Action



## Closing Thoughts

Hiring is challenging. There is always room for improvement. Even as your recruiting process evolves, mistakes will happen and they can be costly. When you identify red flags, get better at identifying unqualified candidates, and eliminate bad hires, you'll hire better and hire less. When you hire less, you'll have more time and resources to focus on retention. Great employees are hard to come by. Once you hire one, it's much easier to retain than replace them.

## Section 5:

# How to Start Hiring Better and Hiring Less

- 1 Great employees are not easy to replace.
- 2 Hiring is challenging, and it's not easy to get it right.
- 3 You need a strong hiring process to identify top candidates and see red flags.
- 4 Recruiting is not a perfect science. Bad hires happen. Be prepared to manage the situation quickly to fix the mistake.
- 5 Recruiting never ends. Focus on retention to keep your top employees happy.
- 6 Retaining your top employees is the key to hiring less.
- 7 Employees quit. Be ready to take swift action to start looking for a replacement.

## Hire Better, Hire Less, Retain More

Ready to hire top talent?

Call us today at 1 (855) 899-4700 or send us an email to [info@iqpartners.com](mailto:info@iqpartners.com)

IQ PARTNERS is Canada's leading Executive Search and Recruitment firm. We help companies hire better, hire less, and retain more. We have specialists in a number of industries and we operate at the mid-to-senior management level.

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## Section 5:

### 5 star client satisfaction



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