

Are You Making These Five Recruiting Mistakes?



KICHOCHEO

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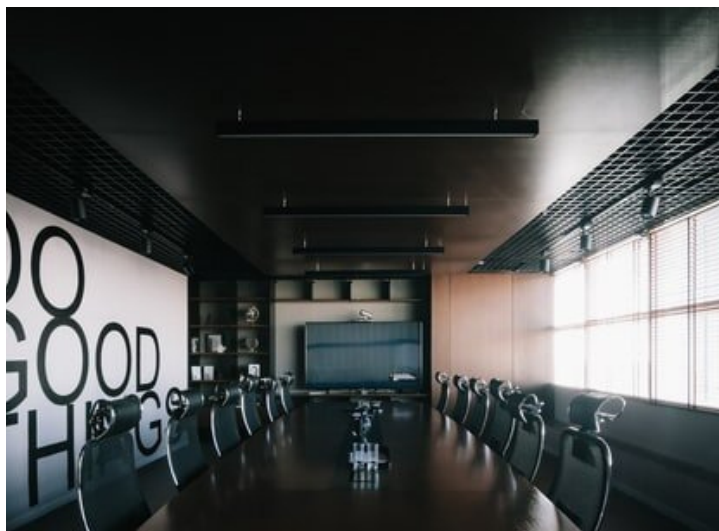
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Mistake #1

HIRING TO FILL AN IMMEDIATE NEED

As an entrepreneur, you need to get things done, and as a startup you often have a small team. Everyone needs to pull their full weight and more. So when you have the funds and decide that you can afford to hire a new person, you tend to focus on the role that needs to be filled immediately and you may limit its skills requirements to immediate needs. Instead, you need to hire with a view of where you want to be in 12-18 months.

While this might seem like a complicated and lengthy exercise that will slow you down, in reality it can be carried out in a few hours with your team, and it will save you hours down the line.

Instead:

- Identify the 5 big things you need to accomplish in the next 18-24 months.
- Conduct a skills gap analysis. In chapter 1 of Village Capital's [Talent Playbook](#), the 'Building the Team' exercise provides a framework for a Skills Gap analysis, which includes these questions:
- Find out which skills exist internally? Which skills do you need to hire for? By when?
- Identify what success would look like in the new position.

Mistake #2

RELYING ON THE 'BEER TEST'

Yes, it is important to interact well with your team members. Yes, in a startup you are likely to spend more than eight hours a day with your colleagues—so you will naturally gravitate towards those who you feel comfortable with. But is beer drinking really the best gauge of fit? We know that 'the beer test' is just an image, but let's go forward with that analogy. There are two problems with that beer drinking test: First, some people will prefer a middle of the day walking meeting; others have to devote every hour outside of work to taking care of family members and can't afford to have a beer with the team. Does it make them less than stellar performers? Secondly: There are more reliable ways to assess the ability to work well together other than relying on your gut feeling.

Instead:

- Focus on values—not culture. Review your current stated values with your team, and examine how behaviors, story telling and performance rewards match those values.
- Highlight your values clearly in your job description and make sure that your selection process takes them into consideration.
- Agree in advance with the hiring team about some behavioral interview questions and about which elements in the answer would truly reflect your values.
- Check out these articles for a deeper dive: [The End of Culture Fit](#), Forbes 2017. [Why Startups Should Stop Hiring for Culture Fit and Start Hiring for Culture Add](#), Chicagoinno 2019

Mistake #3

UNDERESTIMATING YOUR APPEAL

You have so much to offer: the excitement of building a new product or service, the dynamism of an innovative fast moving organization, the opportunity to learn fast and to gain additional responsibilities over a short period of time, the sense of mission of being a social impact company.

The people who will appreciate what you have to offer are more likely to be a good fit for your values and your stage of growth. So don't underestimate your company's attractiveness!

Remember:

- DO: Look in the right places; know what you are looking for. Know how to recognize it and to screen for it.
- DON'T: Try and lure the wrong person into your company by promising what you can't offer.
- DO: Be creative. While you must consider legal, regulatory and tax implications of various benefits, could you offer alternative benefits at lower costs and high value such as flexible hours or commuting benefits?
- DON'T: Forget that the opportunity to learn fast and contribute to the rapid growth of an impactful company cannot be understated.

Mistake #4

LIMITING YOUR SEARCH

Do I need to explain why looking exclusively through your networks will soon lead you to build a company where it is unlikely that team members will let you know when you, the Emperor, have no clothes on?

Hiring principally from your network without actively sourcing from more diverse sources will reinforce the chances of a “Yes” culture, with unidentified blind spots. It will lower your chances to reach additional sources of knowledge, investors, customers and talent.

Instead:

- Reach out to job boards, schools and networks that are unfamiliar to you and your team.
- If you are looking for tech talent try reaching out to organizations like: NCWIT and AnitaBorg.
- If you are looking for experienced female talent, check out networks like RebootAccel.
- Make sure your team spends some time networking with peers in specialized events and on listservs, where people with different profiles and similar interests are active.

Mistake #5

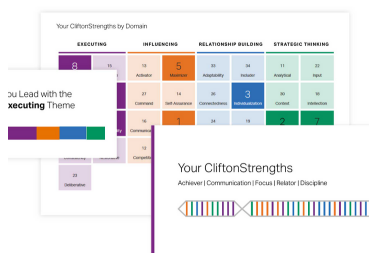
OVER-FOCUSING ON 'TOP TALENT'

This might seem counterintuitive but hear me out: A lot of companies seek “top talent.” Using that term is lazy. It’s often a catch-all that really doesn’t mean much, except maybe to signal that you are looking for talent in places with a pedigree, such as Stanford, MIT or other top MBA programs. You might also equate “top” talent with top GPAs, especially when recruiting for a position with high analytical skills requirements. Yet high scores will never tell the whole story. Screening for high GPA scores could also bypass high achievers who either selected their classes to be challenged rather than to achieve high scores, or who face socio-economic barriers and had to juggle college, work and commute, or even family responsibilities. You don’t want to ignore such qualified candidates through your screening process.

Instead:

- Define what “top talent” means for your company and your specific stage of growth.
- Here are some reliable predictors of performance: past behavior, conscientiousness, cognitive ability and emotional intelligence.
- Get clear about your values and the skills you need for growth. Looking beyond your network will help you find Your Top Talent.
- Look beyond your network to find your Top Talent.

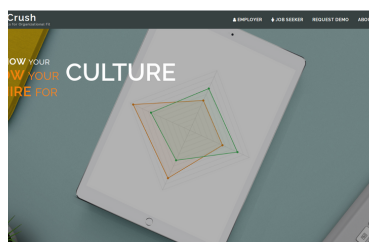
Top Tools & Resources



StrengthsFinder (CliftonStrengths)

Strengthsfinder—now known as CliftonStrengths—was developed by Gallup and is based on thousands of data points worldwide.

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/strengthsfinder.aspx>



CultureCrush

A questionnaire to help you learn about values -- both from a company perspective and a job-seeker's perspective.

<https://www.culturecrush.me/app/home>



Infinity Road HR

Infinity Road HR provides personalized and proactive HR services for startups and emerging companies.

<http://www.infinityroadhr.com/>



Village Capital Talent Playbook

The playbook is designed for startup leaders and provides nine exercises to help build teams.

<http://talent.vilcap.com/playbook/>

About Kichocheo

Kichocheo specializes in start-ups and social impact organizations. We help organizations attract and recruit talent who will thrive in their roles.

Our goal is to recruit the best team members for your organization's stage of growth. We do this by building a solid foundation, using a proven value assessment and a forward-looking skills gap analysis. We embed and embrace diversity in all aspects of the selection process. Candidates are evaluated within the context of the team they'll be working with. We build your executive team's capacity for future recruiting by delivering easily adaptable methods and templates.



Our founder, Florence Navarro, is a global citizen, helping organizations of all sizes—from small nonprofits to start-ups to multi-nationals—grow and achieve their goals. Florence boasts a storied career of more than two decades supporting entrepreneurs around the world to launch and grow their companies, including a stint at the International Finance Corporation, where she worked in Latin American and the Caribbean, Indonesia, Philippines, Egypt, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

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