



Sagency

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

HIRING WITH SCIENCE

HIRING WITH SCIENCE

Heads or tails? Do you feel comfortable making important business decisions by flipping a coin?

Too many companies today are gambling with the acquisition of their largest expense and most valuable asset: talent.

According to a three-year study of over 5,000 hiring professionals conducted by Leadership IQ, 46 percent of new hires fail within 18 months on the job. Why? Because traditional hiring methods do not provide a complete or accurate assessment of a candidate's potential.

Most decisions are made based on how well a candidate's interview goes. Unfortunately, interviews are an unreliable source for determining how well a candidate will perform in the job. John E. Hunter and Ronda F. Hunter report in "Validity and Utility of Alternative Predictors of Job Performance" that interviews are only 14 percent accurate in predicting the variance of future performance.

We all know that making the wrong hiring decision is costly. Depending on the complexity of the job, turnover costs can equal one month's to several year's salary. The higher the level, the higher the cost.

Many people also stay in jobs that don't fit them well. These employees are disengaged and drain precious resources from their companies. The Gallup organization reports that disengagement is costing US companies between \$450 billion and \$550 billion each year in lost productivity.

But it's not only about avoiding costs. Business success is dependent on talent. Effective recruitment, development,

engagement and retention strategies drive growth and profit.

Business owners, executives, human resource professionals and recruiters face constant pressure to work miracles, improve the quality of new hires, decrease the amount of time it takes to fill open positions, and create environments that drive growth and engagement.

But without the right system and tools, hiring is comparable to walking up to a craps table, placing a bet, and shaking the dice. It is exhilarating when we get it right, but it's painful and costly when we get it wrong.

At Sagency, we believe the right hiring system is part science, part art. Let's begin with the science.

HIRING WITH SCIENCE

We believe using science within a robust hiring system is the best way to predict performance, job satisfaction and retention. Our process includes the following steps:

1. Benchmark the Role
2. Assess the Whole Person
3. Explore the Gaps and Predict Performance
4. Accelerate New Hire Profitability

Benchmark the Role

Our job benchmarking process is a unique and effective solution because it assesses a specific job, not the person in the job. To do this, we "let the job talk" through an interactive process and job assessment. A job benchmark uncovers the attributes of candidates who will win in the role.

Here's how it works: one to seven internal subject matter experts define the key accountabilities for the position. When defined, they tell us why the job exists and what it takes to win in the job.

Once the key accountabilities are established, the participants complete an online job assessment from which a job report is created. Based on a unique 55-factor analysis, this report lists the job's requirements into separate talent categories: rewards/culture, behavioral traits, personal skills, and personal capacity.

Job benchmarking gives the search and selection part a focus. It sets the target to match candidates against.

Assess the Whole Person

Peter Bregman, a best-selling author and CEO of Bregman Partners, asserts that employees can't be summed up by a personality test in an article recently published by the Harvard Business Review. We agree with Bergman that personality assessments have limitations. That is why we use a multiple-science, reliable, and valid assessment that digs far deeper than just personality.

Applicants receive a link to take the talent assessment, and each candidate's assessment is matched against the job benchmark within our applicant tracking software. Hiring professionals are able to see how each candidate ranks against the benchmark. They are also able to view and weigh the more traditional qualifiers, such as past experience, cover letters, and answers to specific questions. Choosing who to interview is quick and easy with this system.

Rather than tell you about the science behind the assessment, we would like to give you the opportunity to experience it. [Take your free assessment now.](#) You will see the power of an assessment powered by brain research.

After the job has been benchmarked and candidates have been assessed, it is time to explore the gaps.

Explore the Gaps and Predict Performance

Sustainable, profitable performance is directly related to job fit. In simple terms, job fit is having the talent that the job requires. When a person's talent does not match what the job requires in a certain area, we have a gap. This gap exposes an area in need of development.

A gap report is created to visually compares candidates to the job benchmark. This makes it easy to see where candidates need further development to fully excel in the role. Interview questions are hand-selected to dig deeper into gap areas and accurately predict future performance.

Once you hire the right fit, it is time to get them up to speed quickly.

Accelerate New Hire Profitability

After you have landed the best candidate, a TriMetrix HD coaching report is provided for the new hire. Included are onboarding, coaching and management strategies based on his/her assessment and job gap report. We also debrief the new hire's report with his/her supervisor and help create customized individual development plans. Focused onboarding saves time and engages the new hire early.

A human analytics approach helps companies put the right people in the right seats on the bus. By using our system, you can leverage assessments to give your people fulfilling and growth-oriented employment. Fulfilled employees contribute in ways that grow sustainability, impact, and profitability.

THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW

We've explained the science behind our analytic approach. Now, let us help you improve the art of the interview. We

believe our interview techniques added to the scientific job matching process is the best method of predicting future performance.

Research suggests that most interviews do not provide enough quality data points to predict success. We recommend the following techniques for obtaining a comprehensive picture of a candidate's personality and work history:

1. Let the candidate lead
2. Practice active inquiry
3. Listen for how they use strengths in different contexts
4. Listen for how they will contain/close gaps

Let the candidate lead

At Sagency, we use an interview similar to the "topgrading interview" found in Geoff Smart's book [Who: The A Method for Hiring](#). The candidate is asked to walk through each of his/her past three to five jobs with the following questions:

- » What were you hired to do? What results were you expected to achieve?
- » What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- » What were some of the low points during that job? If you could have one do-over what would it be?
- » Who was your supervisor? What will (s)he say about your performance in this role? What would (s)he say about your strengths and areas for improvement?
- » Why/how did you leave that job?

We find these questions provide just enough structure to spark and maintain a robust conversation. This interview is conversational. It limits a candidate's ability to answer questions with what they think the interviewer(s) want to hear.

For instance, many interviewers make the mistake of asking

questions like this: "Are you more detail-oriented or people-oriented?" Even the most honest of candidates may default to saying, "I'm a balance of both." Or, they will choose one based on the role they are seeking at your company. Many times interview questions tee up candidates to provide the "right answer." We call this leading the witness.

Our suggested questions allow candidates to talk about themselves while you gather important data. It lets you diagnose their mix of people-orientation and detail-orientation based on their examples. Their stories provide real life context for what you see in their assessment. You are able to gather important data points from their performance in past roles.

Practice active inquiry

We recommend you practice active inquiry for follow-up questions. Active inquiry is the act of inquiring or of seeking information with additional questioning.

Active inquiry is not interrogation. It's more about being curious and asking questions to learn more. Questions often come in the form of follow-up to a candidate's story.

For example, "Tell me more about that. What do you mean? Please share an example of that. What did you do? What happened next? What did that look like? What was your role? What were the results? If you could do it over, what would you do? How did your direct reports respond?" This type of inquiry can generate passion or more information. It is important to dig deep when you sense there is passion or more to the story.

Beyond asking great questions, an important aspect of active inquiry is to listen carefully. Be patient. Get a finer degree of understanding by watching for shifts in body language and other inconsistencies. You don't want to come off as an interrogator, but you do want to uncover inconsistencies.

Listen for how they use strengths in different contexts

With our scientific job matching system, you will see a gap report before the interview that compares the candidate's assessment to the job benchmark.

The gap report allows you to quickly see the candidate's behavioral, motivational and competency strengths, and how each relates to the job. When listening and asking follow-up questions, try to see how the person uses personal strengths in different situations. You want to see evidence of strengths in action for achieving real results.

Listen for how they will contain/close gaps

We all want to put people in positions to succeed. Paying attention to gap areas helps us do that. Almost every candidate will have at least some gaps, which are simply opportunities for improvement. They are areas where improvement is needed to meet the demands of the role. A gap analysis helps identify how a person must develop to attain the competencies the position requires.

You may decide certain gaps are not deal breakers. This means the person can do the job well, even with the gap. Great. Find out if and how the individual will be able to contain those gaps. With containment, work is designed so the weaknesses don't come into play. If gaps can be successfully contained, that is good. If not, you will need to assess if the person can grow in a way that closes the gap(s).

Before the interview, isolate a few gap areas that will likely limit the performance or fulfillment of the candidate. You will need to assess whether the candidate has the capacity and motivation to close those gaps. Find out if and how they are currently working on the particular competency. You must be sure the organization can provide the coaching and development activities required for growth in gap areas. As a leader, you are responsible for the wellbeing

of your people and your organization. Developing a solid strategy to close or contain any existing gaps is critical to success.

Even though interviews are not the most reliable tool, they do have a place in assessing job fit. Master the art of this type of interview. Use it in conjunction with the science of a job matching system. This will help you consistently hire the right fit, and happier, more productive employees will be the result.

ACCELERATE NEW HIRE PERFORMANCE BY CLOSING GAPS

The value of our robust job matching system does not end when you've made a hire. Job matching also makes it possible to accelerate new hire performance by closing gaps. It does this by isolating the areas where development will offer the greatest return. Job matching makes development and growth plans specific and powerful for each employee.

Even when job fit is strong, most employees do not meet every competency requirement. This is why onboarding and coaching to close gaps are important. People in the organization must grow and close gaps to remain competitive.

The same gap analysis used in hiring now becomes a tool to map out growth opportunities for new employees. The gap report or analysis assesses the behavioral attributes that contribute to the success of the position. It exposes skill gaps and attributes that need to be developed for the employee to succeed long-term. Skill gaps show opportunities for personal and professional growth and should be viewed in a positive light.

Most employees value continuous learning and appreciate an organization investing in their personal growth. Increasing their capabilities in a strength area brings joy,

fulfillment, and confidence. Building containment around a gap area brings peace of mind to the employee, the manager, and the team.

So how exactly do you close skill gaps as we onboard a new employee?

We encourage leaders/supervisors to take charge of the skill gaps by co-developing an action-oriented coaching plan. This plan should be built in alignment with the organization's orientation/onboarding program.

A manager works with the employee to isolate competencies to address with coaching. Competencies chosen should be the ones where growth will bring the greatest impact to the employee, their team and the organization.

Once the most important gap areas are isolated, the manager and employee follow these four steps:

1. Set goals for closing the gaps and maximizing strengths

The manager and new employee work in partnership to define the challenge. They use a simple template to write down specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound goals that relate to each of the isolated gap areas. Agreement here is the cornerstone to the coaching relationship. Without it, coaching will rarely be successful. Once agreement has been reached, it is time to develop an action plan that will result in success and achievement of the goals.

2. Agree on the action plan and approach

In addition to creating on-the-job learning and development opportunities, we highly recommend coaching. It offers the fastest and the highest return on investment method for closing gaps that we have seen. The action plan should include mutually agreed upon developmental goals. It should also include success measures that focus on the performance-limiting gaps.

Clarity, as well as accountability metrics, including a timetable, round out the plan.

3. Implement the solutions and approach

Engage in regular, interactive coaching on the specific gaps. Use coaching to work on skills, impart organizational knowledge, inculcate organizational values and behaviors, and ultimately close the gaps.

4. Measure progress and provide real-time feedback

To measure the progress in closing the gaps, we recommend follow-up gap analysis and real-time feedback. The initial assessment helped identify the gaps between pre-coaching performance and the ideal performance. The second assessment will confirm that the gaps have been closed.

Giving and receiving feedback is critical to the coaching relationship. For feedback to be effective, it needs to be clear, timely, specific and behavioral-based.

Gap closing is about results

The coaching process must be outcome-focused. Once initial goals are met, the coaching relationship evolves to build on value and impact created. This is critical to ensure continuous, positive, and enduring performance improvement.

As a coach, your credibility depends on our ability to help develop the skills and performance of others. Identifying performance gaps and pointing employees toward improved behaviors is not sufficient. A great coach will ensure that performance gaps are closed. You must also follow-up with employees regularly to reinforce their positive efforts, discuss and remove obstacles in their way, and to celebrate their progress at each milestone.

Coaching fosters the necessary behaviors and mindsets to

grow and improve performance over time. As the people you coach reach their full potential, they experience positive and enduring results. The value of an onboarding and coaching process like the one outlined here is immense. It ensures employee fulfillment and a faster path to productivity. Onboarding and coaching results in faster growth of the bottom line, more innovation, efficiency gains, and increased employee engagement.

DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUR SUCCESS

With Sagency's help, it is possible to improve your odds of hiring the right talent.

As we help you benchmark the job, you will determine why

the job exists and what attributes it will take to win in the role.

We provide assessments that will help you score candidates based on those attributes.

From the chosen candidate's assessment, we create a skills gap analysis that will help you maximize his or her future performance.

Don't gamble with your success. Let us help you master the art and science behind good hiring decisions today. *Get in touch with one of Sagency's consultants today at 888.877.4651 or info@sagencytalent.com.*