



A DO-IT-YOURSELF PLAYBOOK

THE QUICK & DIRTY HIRING GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



A person is walking up a wooden staircase. They are wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with thin vertical stripes and blue jeans. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand. The staircase has a metal railing on the right side. The background is slightly blurred, focusing on the person and the stairs.

Introduction

One of the keys to running a successful business is having the right team in place. But landing great people is easier said than done, especially when you're competing against big competitors with deep pockets and platoons of recruiters.

In fact, the top 10% of candidates have often landed their next role after searching for just 10 days, while the average time to hire for most companies is around 29 days!¹ To drive your company's growth, you need a plan that gives you a shot at bringing in top candidates.

So what are the steps needed to put an efficient, productive recruiting process in place?

In the following pages, you'll get a hiring playbook full of tips and tools that will help you recruit with the big guys.

¹ LinkedIn data

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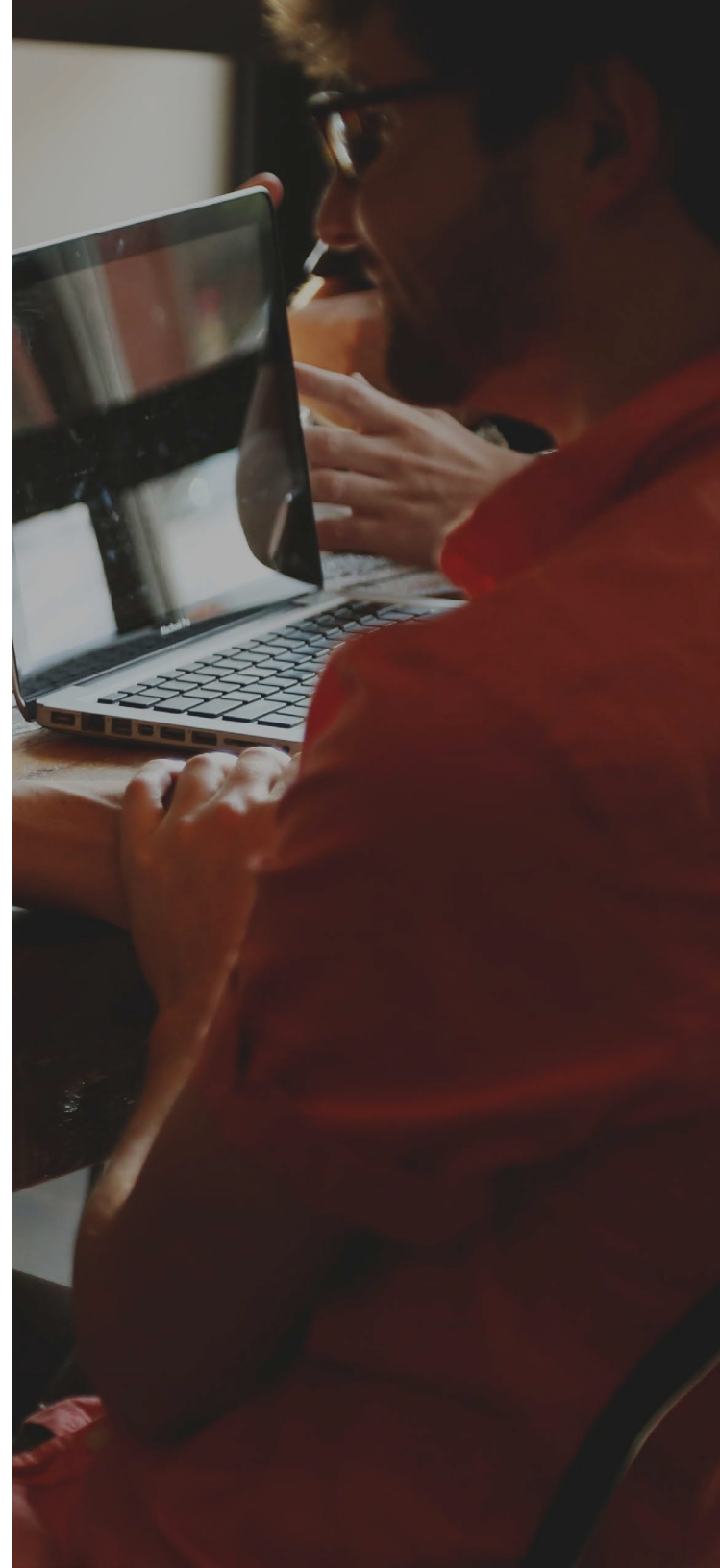
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SUMMARY

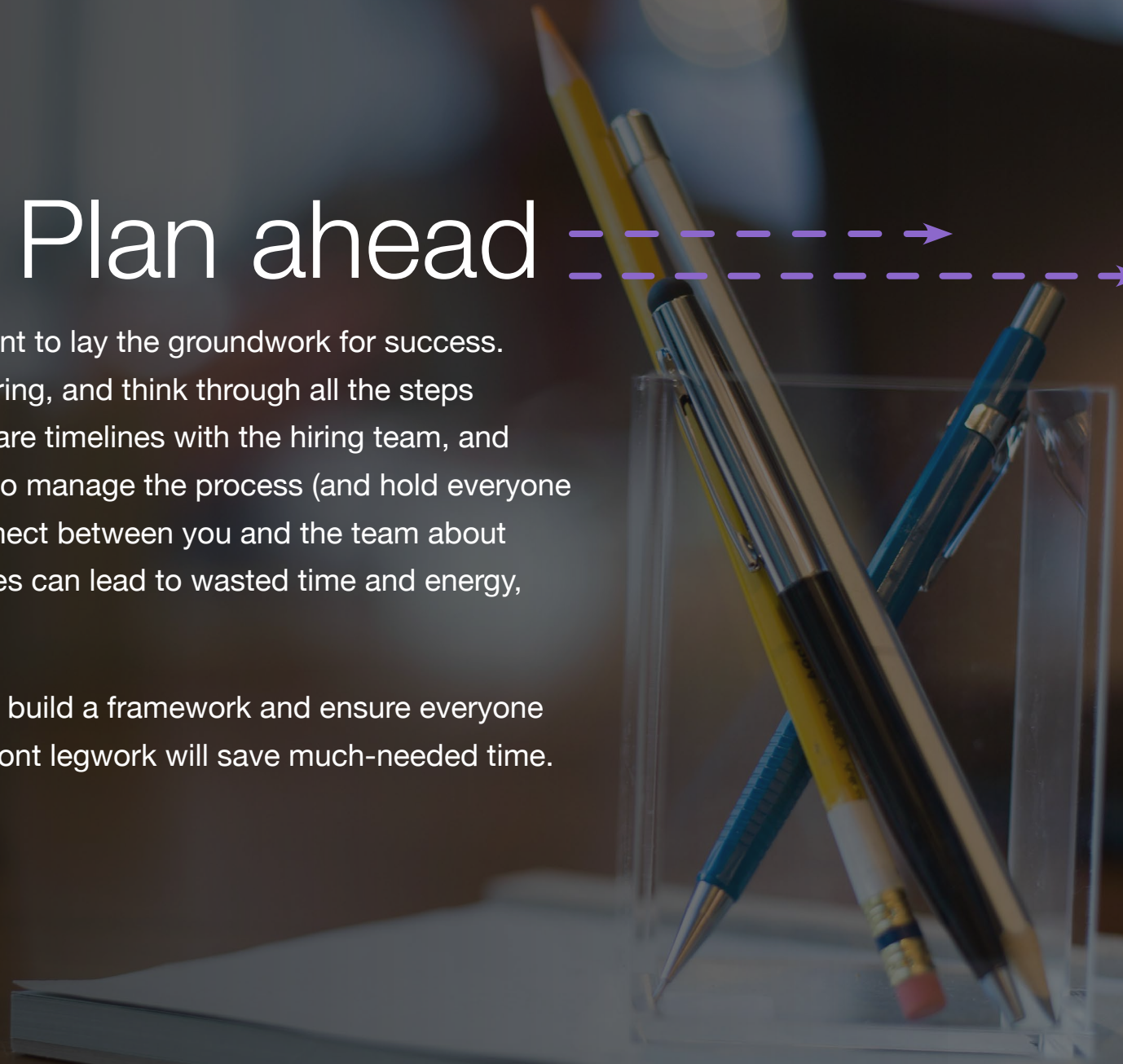
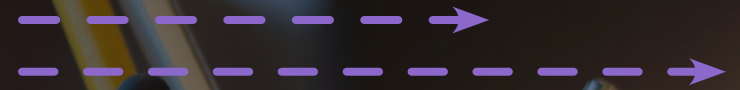
Let's wrap up. 31



Step 1: Plan ahead

Before you start, you'll want to lay the groundwork for success. Understand why you're hiring, and think through all the steps needed at each stage. Share timelines with the hiring team, and assign a key stakeholder to manage the process (and hold everyone accountable). Any disconnect between you and the team about requirements and deadlines can lead to wasted time and energy, and missed opportunities.

The tips here will help you build a framework and ensure everyone is aligned. Doing the up-front legwork will save much-needed time.



Define the role you're hiring for

Use this framework to ensure total alignment with the hiring team.

1

Define 2–3 performance goals

Let's suppose you're hiring for a sales position. It's easy to agree that a successful hire will meet their quarterly quota, but what does success mean more holistically? Every job entails a few core performance metrics that, when met, will lead to the employee's overall success in the role (ex: meeting their quarterly quota). When meeting with your team, define what those 2–3 performance goals should be for the role.

2

Identify 2–3 tasks that support each performance goal

Think about the specific tasks the hire will need to do in order to achieve their performance goals. For example, a salesperson should be able to conduct in-depth discovery calls (the task) to maximize territory growth (the performance goal). Consider including the defined tasks in the job description, as they are essential for success in the role.

3

Agree on the qualities that will help your new hires achieve success

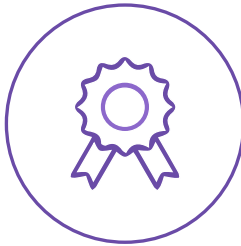
Forget about typical soft skills like problem-solving or active listening and really consider what specific skills and qualities will lead your hire to be successful in the role. Get specific. Once you've clearly defined the core traits you're looking for, it's easier (and faster) to create the job description and spot the candidates who will get the job done.

After working through the planning process with your team, this is what the ideal output might look like if you're looking to hire someone for a sales position:



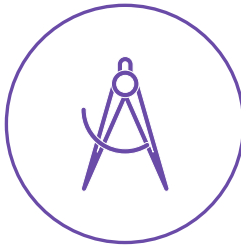
Performance goals:

1. Meet quarterly sales quota
2. Maximize territory growth



Key tasks:

1. Conduct in-depth discovery calls
2. Prioritize accounts by size and opportunity



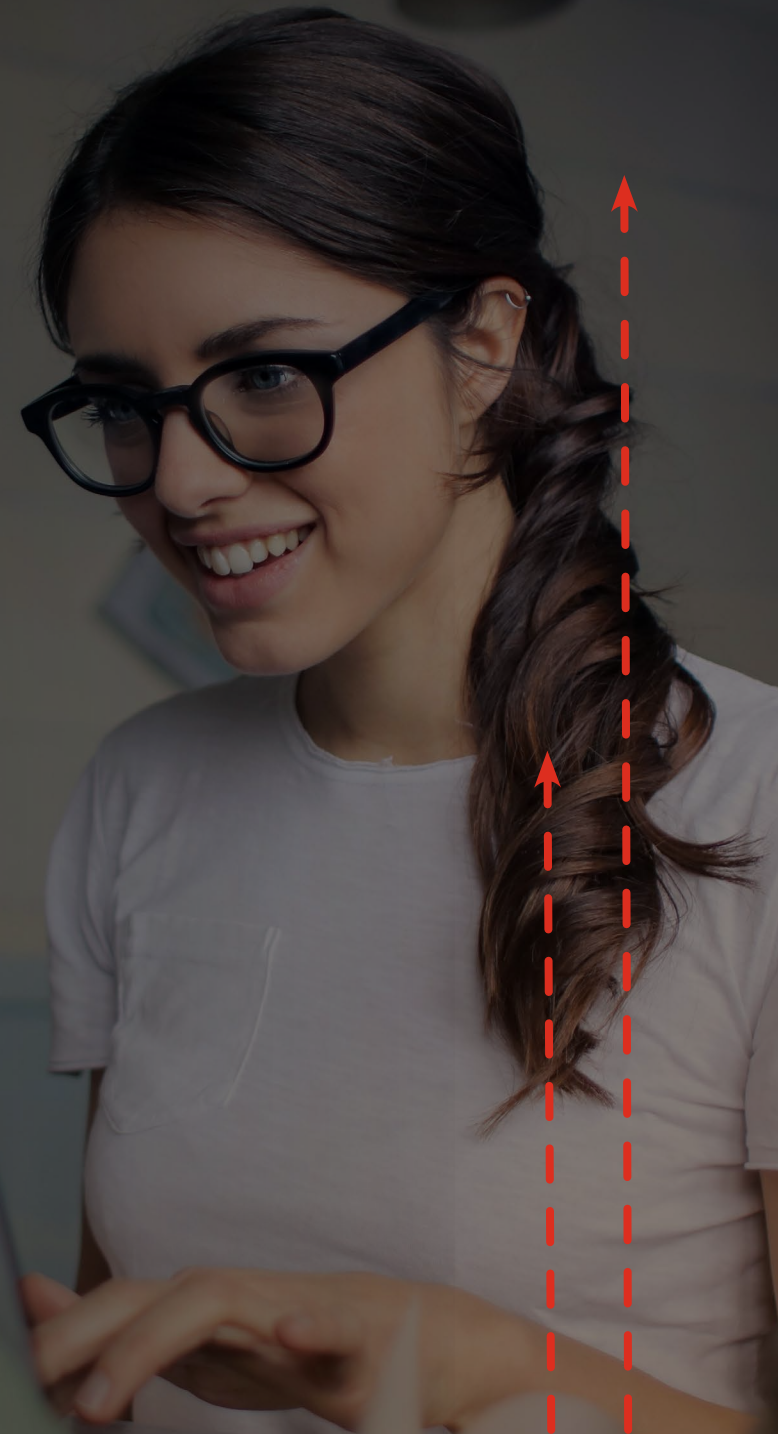
Desired skills:

1. Ability to develop a territory strategy that ensures growth
2. Capacity to absorb feedback and understand unique customer needs

Step 2: Build your brand

Brand building can be a daunting task. But the truth is, if you're diligent and make it part of your daily or weekly schedule, it's remarkably doable. It may initially require designers and marketers, but depending on the channel, it doesn't have to.

Consider acting on the tactics provided on the next pages and soon enough you'll have created a strong presence online that will attract the type of candidates you're looking for.



Share what makes you unique

Three basic steps to create an online presence and drive interest in your openings.

1

Develop the career page on your website

Your career page should express what's unique about your company's culture and sell people on why it's a wonderful place to work. Explore other company career pages to get a sense of what works and go from there.

2

Take advantage of LinkedIn Company and Career Pages

Use your LinkedIn Company Page to share company news, industry articles, and thought leadership, or ask followers to weigh in on hot topics. Posts will appear on your Company Page and in the feed of each of your followers across all devices and platforms. Upgrade and add a Career Page to allow candidates to connect with your company and get an authentic view into what it's like to work at your company. Showcase personalized jobs most relevant to them or even tailor the experience based on who's visiting the page to win over top candidates.

3

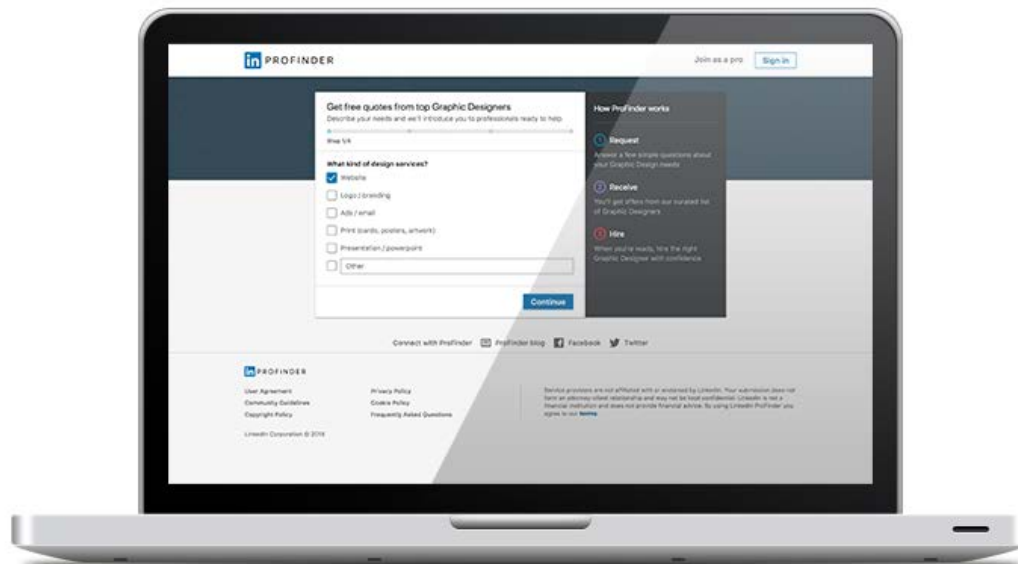
Try your hand at multichannel storytelling

In today's do-it-yourself multimedia universe, there are many ways to promote your company's brand from video, podcast, or other creative social strategies. You could create a video interviewing your engineering lead about the problems the team is trying to solve. Include a link to this video within your open engineering job posts to help candidates better understand the work and potential impact of the role in a more meaningful way. All these tactics are designed to paint a picture of your company's culture, so you can attract more of the *right* candidates.

Finding the help you need

A strong employer brand leads to a 50% reduction in cost per hire and a 28% reduction in turnover, so it's worth the investment.² But you don't have to hire an entire creative team to bring your company's story to life.

LinkedIn ProFinder is a marketplace where talented freelancers are available to help small- and mid-sized businesses get their projects done. You can find designers, marketers, developers, and other skilled experts who are ready to help you tell your brand story.



How Profinder works:

1. Request: Answer a few simple questions to create a Request for Proposal.

2. Receive: Get offers from vetted experts.

3. Hire: Select the right person and start enhancing your brand.

² LinkedIn, 2011

Step 3: Attract candidates

One way to attract great candidates is to write job descriptions designed to appeal to the caliber of people you're looking to hire. By "caliber" we don't mean the right kind of skills and experience, but the right attitude and values – people who'd be a great addition for your team.

Use the output from step one and the tips in this section to write job descriptions that will make strong candidates take notice. You may spend more up-front time on your descriptions, but you'll be glad you did when you have better applicants and a more qualified employee in the end.

Craft job descriptions that work

1

Tell job stories

Help candidates understand why your opening is the perfect opportunity with a “job story” that helps them visualize themselves in the role, often by portraying a “day in the life.” Good job stories fuel excitement for your company and motivate candidates to apply. For a marketing job description, try something like “Inspiring our customers with creative campaigns is all in a day’s work!”

Bonus: How using job stories will help you match the right candidates to the job ➞

2

Use distinct language to communicate your culture

Clearly define the attributes that distinguish your company culture and your highest performers from everyone else. Then, share those attitudes in your job description. Avoid overused phrases that miss the unique (and most appealing) aspects of your culture. For example, when illustrating a collaborative environment, try something like “Our employees actually work together and share credit. In fact, glory hogs don’t last very long here.” And don’t forget to point potential candidates to the company website you’ve developed so they can learn more.

3

Emphasize action and impact

“What’s in it for me?” This is the question on every qualified candidate’s mind as they skim your job description. Make it easy for them to answer that question by framing your job description around what the lucky hire will get to do, not just what they must have in order to qualify. For a tax director for a public company, try something like “Use your CPA and extensive international tax background to shape our global tax strategy.”

Start with a template

Writing into a blank page can be daunting. So build a template to use as your baseline, then revise it and add to it based on the findings from your planning session.

1. Start with an overall summary. Remember that you're not just describing the requirements of the job, you're also painting a picture of what it would be like to have the job so that the right candidates are inspired to apply.
2. The responsibilities section is a balancing act. You want to be detailed enough that candidates understand your expectations, but short enough that they get a sense of the job at a glance. So keep it as short as you can without leaving anything important out.
3. For the requirements, be sure to talk to the person who will be managing the new hire. Separate the "must haves" from the "nice to haves."
4. Draft an About Us paragraph. You're looking for someone who wants to work in an environment and culture like the one you've built, so be clear about what you value, what you offer, and why people like being a part of your team.

Account manager

1

OVERALL SUMMARY

We're looking for an account manager to join our team to grow new product sales by enabling customer success and identifying upsell opportunities for our key accounts.

The ideal candidate will be able to appropriately identify the customer's needs and help them succeed in using our product. This will be done by developing an appropriate level of communication with clients and internal team members to better understand and mitigate any issues the customer may face.

2

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work cross functionally within the company to communicate with all account stakeholders
- Gain a deep understanding of the customer's business and partner in their ongoing success
- Visits clients to identify opportunities for growth and manage renewal negotiations
- Manage all reporting about the health of customers' accounts

3

REQUIREMENTS

- 2–3 years previous account management experience
- Articulate and well accustomed to a client-facing role
- Rank and deliver competing priorities and tasks
- Willingness and ability to travel

4

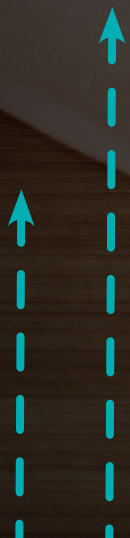
ABOUT US (Optional)

(A short description of the company itself: aspirational goals, market position, social events, perks and amenities, and favorable location if applicable.)

Bonus: Access more job templates like this to get started →

Step 4: Promote your openings

Now that you've aligned with your team on requirements, begun sharing your company's brand story, and crafted quality job descriptions, it's time to spread the word. The more people who see your job post, the more likely you are to receive a healthy number of strong applicants. Read on to discover tactics to help you amplify the reach of your job openings, no matter the size of your budget.



Expand the reach of your job postings

1

Tap into your network

Posting your open role all over social media is not the best way to drive quality applicants. Instead, personally email 25 to 50 relevant people in your network to explain the job's significance and ask if they'd be willing to share it socially. Make sure you customize each email, even if you simply include their first name and a unique opening sentence.

Not sure who to reach out to? Consider employees, fellow recruiters, and past candidates you've worked with. The more diverse the group, the better.

2

Give people something to talk about

When you mix up the style of your job descriptions, it's not only more memorable for interested candidates, but also more likely to inspire someone to share it socially. One idea is to create a David Letterman-style "Top 10 List" of funny, quirky, or passionate traits the right candidate needs for the job. This is your opportunity to let your company personality shine through.

3

Show your appreciation (a lot)

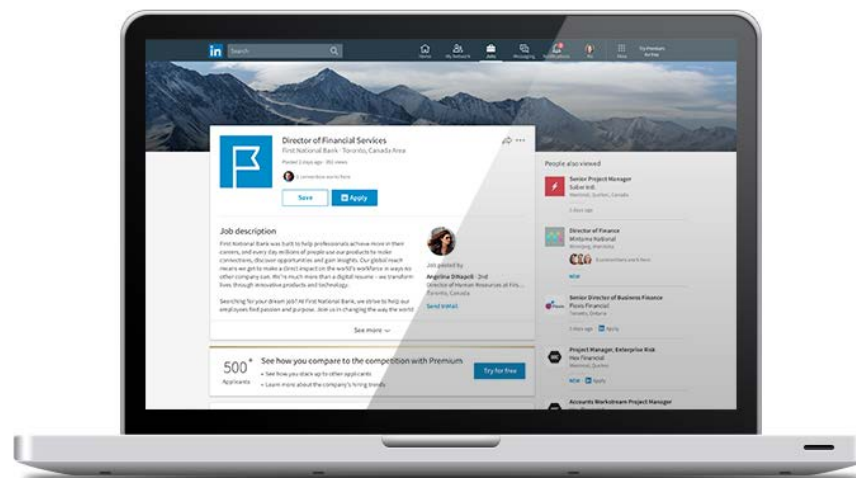
Keep a close eye on who likes, comments, or shares your job openings and make sure to say thank you. Brainstorm ways to publicly recognize employees within your company who take the time to share your open roles. Giving thanks to those who help spread the word reinforces the behavior and will show their followers your timely response and impressive follow-through.

Leverage LinkedIn to promote jobs

With LinkedIn Jobs you can reach more candidates on the world's largest professional network of over 560 million members, most of whom you can't find anywhere else. You can automatically target your open roles – in emails and across LinkedIn – to candidates with the right skills and experience.

Job Slots offer the flexibility to swap in new job posts throughout the year and make unlimited edits. Plus, customers who hire for multiple roles throughout the year tend to save money by subscribing to a Job Slot versus purchasing multiple job posts.

Bonus: [Learn more about Job Slots](#) ⓘ



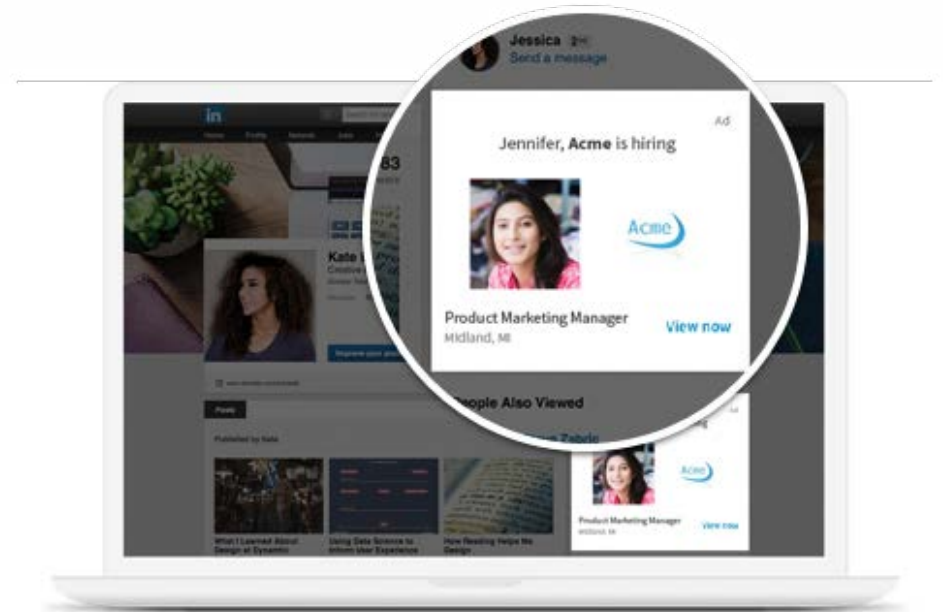
22M professionals view jobs on LinkedIn every week

Try LinkedIn's Work With Us Ads

Work With Us Ads are targeted to where members spend the most time – viewing profiles – so that you can leverage your employees' network to attract great candidates. Here's the best thing about Work With Us Ads: they are very effective at driving engagement. In fact, they get 50x higher click-through rates than typical recruitment ads.³

Work With Us ads are also easy to set up and they automatically share ads to targeted employee profiles. Plus, if your ad is showing, it's blocking out the ability of your competitors to place their ads on your employee profiles.

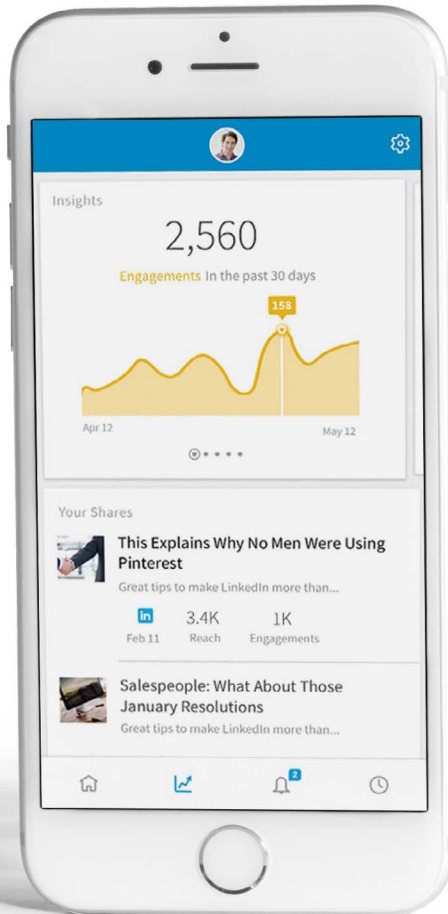
Bonus: [Learn more about Work With Us Ads](#) ➔



50x higher click-through rates than typical recruitment ads³

³ LinkedIn, 2018

Empower your employees with LinkedIn Elevate



Your employees are already connected to a diverse, qualified pool of candidates. With LinkedIn Elevate, you can make it easy for employees to share job openings (and other content) across LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook in just a few clicks.

For example, companies like Adobe, Quintiles, and Unilever who have used the product drove four times more Company Page views and six times more job views.

Bonus: [Learn more about LinkedIn Elevate](#) ➔

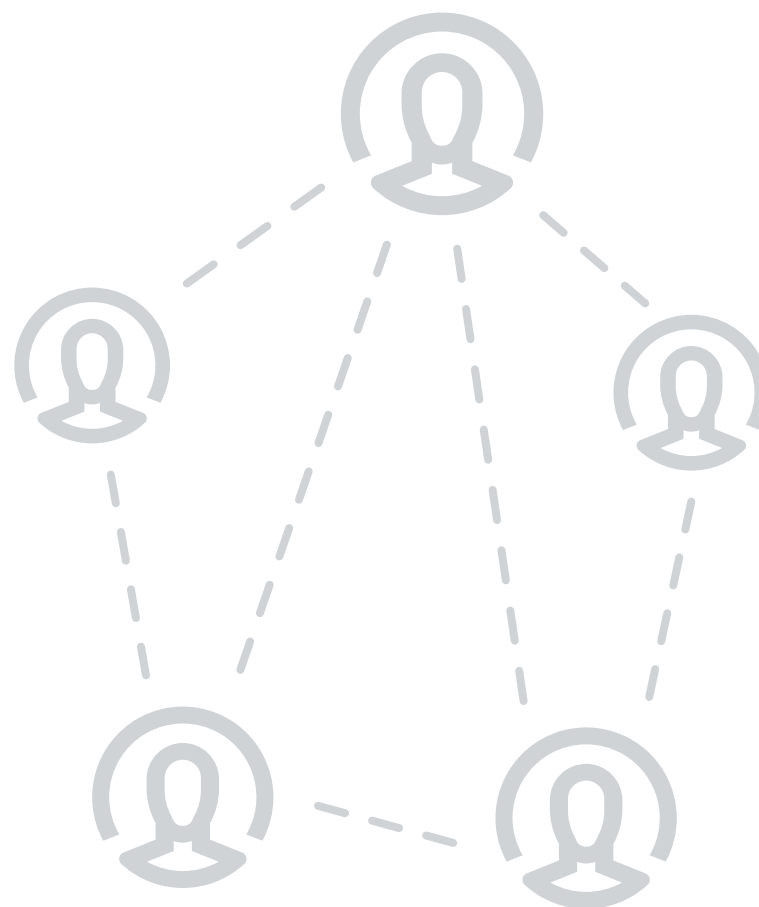
Launch an employee referral program

Tap into the network that already exists under your own roof. Most of your employees have a work history that includes former colleagues they like, respect, and admire. Let your people know about open positions and see if they can help bring in quality candidates.

INCENTIVIZE REFERRALS

Consider giving employees a reason to help source candidates like one of the following:

- Day off with pay
- Points for prizes
- Gifts/gift cards
- Recognition in a company newsletter or staff meeting
- Gift a percentage based on the referral's salary
- Flat dollar amount



Step 5: Find your match

We've covered ways to attract candidates to your doorstep. But it also makes sense to actively seek them out. And, if you don't think you have time to search for potential candidates, think again. Here are a few simple tactics with LinkedIn Recruiter that make the entire process faster, easier, and, dare we say it, even fun.



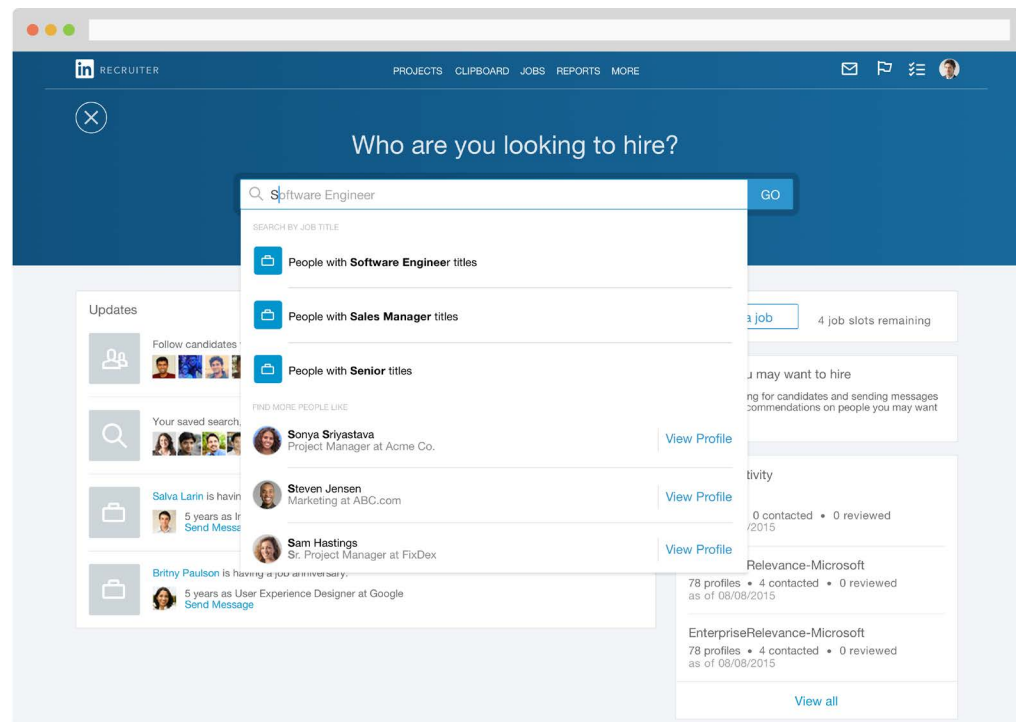
Find great candidates with LinkedIn Recruiter

1

If your ideal candidates resembles a current employee — great!

Have you ever wanted to hire someone “just like Sarah from sales” and “basically 50% Devon from design”? Sometimes it’s easier to describe who you’re looking for rather than what attributes you’re looking for. Fortunately, there’s a way to do just that.

Simply enter the name of your ideal candidate (or candidates) into the search bar of LinkedIn Recruiter and it will automatically build a search based on his or her LinkedIn profile data to identify similar candidates. You can then edit the search based on fields like skills, experiences, and more to create a search that’s just right.



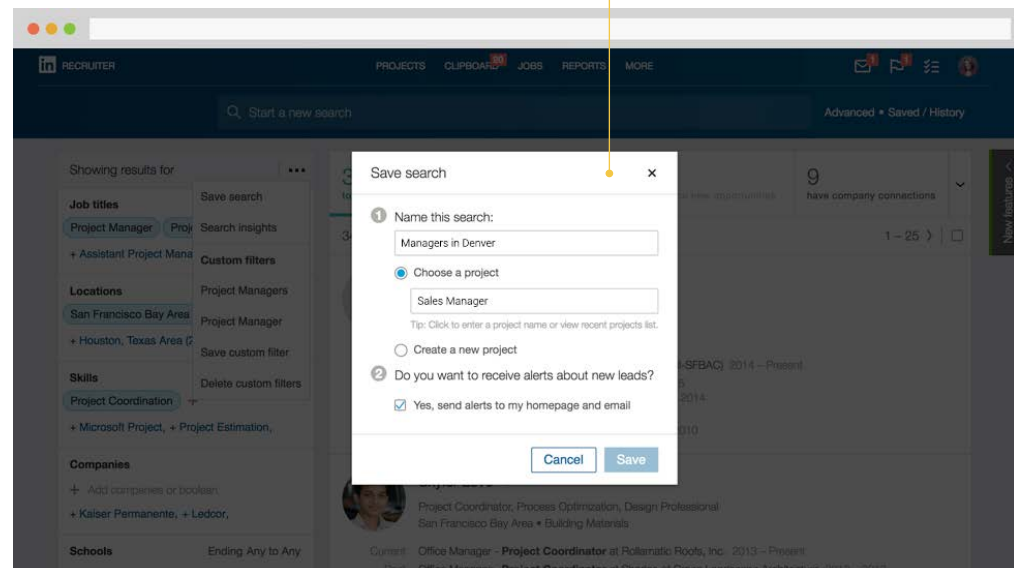
2

Save searches to save time

After you build a comprehensive search in Recruiter for a given requisition, save time by saving the search criteria. You can then name your search and choose to receive daily alerts to your Recruiter homepage and your email when new candidate matches up with your needs.

You can have up to 50 search alerts running at a time, so Recruiter is busy sourcing your next hire while you attend to other business.

Customize the names of search queries to make it easy to find in seconds



3

Shine a light on your next hire

LinkedIn Recruiter shines spotlights on people who are qualified for your search and more likely to respond to your InMail messages, apply, and accept your offer.

The Spotlights feature shows you people connected to your organization through your employees, talent brand, and even past applicants. Your LinkedIn Company Page followers, for instance, appear within the “Engaged with your talent brand” Spotlight, along with people who have liked, commented, or shared your Company Page updates or Job Posts.

Spotlights allow you to easily filter results for candidates who are likely to engage

The screenshot displays the LinkedIn Recruiter search results page. At the top, a dark blue header contains the word "Search" on the left and "Advanced • Saved / History" on the right. Below the header, a summary bar shows four key metrics: 5,517,312 total candidates, 873,728 are more likely to respond, 308,992 open to new opportunities, and 456,448 have company connections. A dropdown arrow is visible next to the last metric. Below this bar, a search bar shows "5,517,312 candidates" and a "View search insights" button. To the right of the search bar, it says "1 - 25" with a dropdown arrow. The main content area lists two candidate profiles. The first profile is for Bailey Ortega Manager, a Senior IT Project / Programme Manager at Network Rail. The second profile is for Jo Reyes, a Sr. Consultant * Sr. Project Delivery Manager * Sr. IT Project/Program Manager * Blogger * Digital Content M... at Development Heroes, Inc. A "What's New" button is visible in the bottom right corner of the interface.



Step 6: Expand your reach

Once you've found great candidates using LinkedIn Recruiter, it's time to reach out and encourage them to apply. The best way to reach people on LinkedIn is through InMail messages. But because you likely have more pressing responsibilities to attend to, you need tactics to help you send InMails quickly and effectively. Read on to discover our best tips.

Send better InMails, faster – here's how



1

Save your InMails messages as templates for later use

Once you've crafted an InMail message that you like, use "save as template" with the single click of a button within LinkedIn Recruiter. Give your new template a name and it'll be ready and waiting the next time you need it.

A quick note about InMail templates: Remember that people are often overwhelmed with communications. Taking the time to personalize your templates will increase your chances of hearing back as well as show your particular interest in the candidate.

2

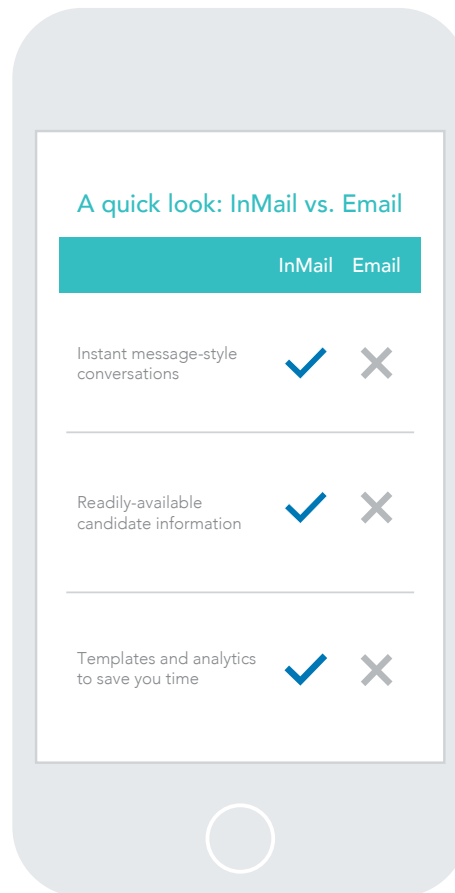
Keep it short

This is great news for busy hiring managers – InMail messages should be easy for recipients to skim. The point is to start a conversation, not give candidates all the information you have and expect them to apply right away. The best messages are conversational and shorter than 500 characters. With Recruiter, you'll get a real-time character counter to help keep your messages within the sweet spot.

3

Personalization is key

Take the time with each InMail to explain why you're reaching out and why you believe your opening is a good opportunity for the recipient. A little sincere flattery goes a long way. If you notice from their profile that you share a connection, group, interest, or educational experience, mention it up-front. Spending time on personalization is actually the most efficient way to ensure your message has a big impact.



Your Company Page followers are **81%** more likely to respond to your InMail than non-followers.⁴

Candidates who share a LinkedIn group with you are **21%** more likely to respond to your InMail.⁴

Candidates are **56%** more likely to respond when a hiring manager reaches out.⁵

⁴ LinkedIn data, 2015

⁵ LinkedIn data, 2017

First impressions matter: good, bad, and ugly subject lines



Good subject lines make a quick, personal connection

Subject line: **Hello from a fellow scuba diver**

Most people list outside interests on their LinkedIn profile. Use shared passions as icebreakers.

Subject line: **Want to come back to TenScope, Casey?**

In both examples above, tapping into an existing relationship makes you less of a stranger.



Bad subject lines look like every other recruiters'

Subject line: **You're probably happy at LinkedIn, but...**

This approach has been used a thousand times, and it rarely gets read.

Subject line: **Looking for a dynamic Director of Marketing with a broad marketing background for a great company!**

Too long, generic, and easy to ignore.

Subject line: **Career Opportunity with XYZ Co.**

Short, but says nothing distinctive to stand out.



Ugly subject lines can come across as careless

Subject line: **I couldn't reach you via phone so hoping that you check InMail**

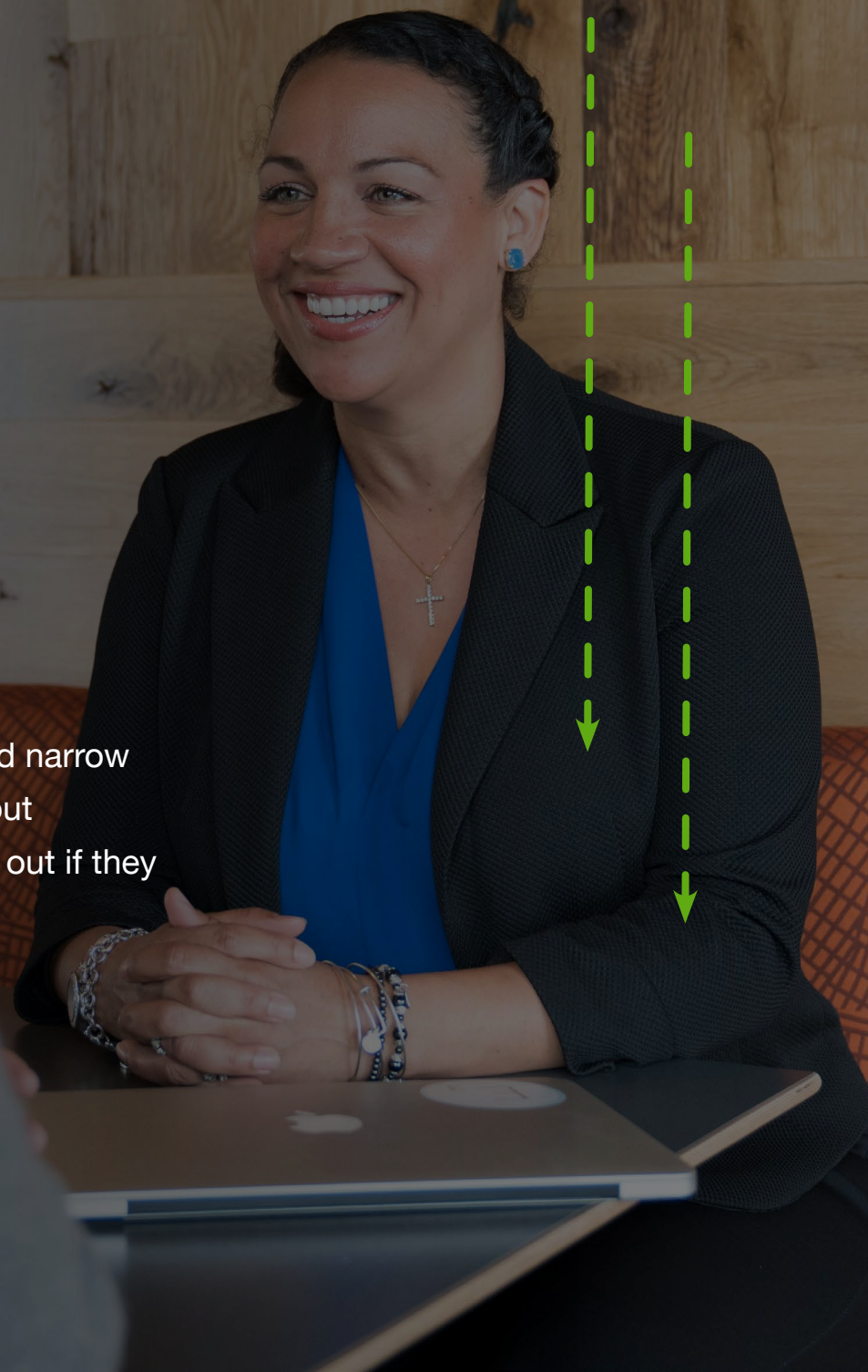
Beware the stalker vibe. Take the hint and move on to the next candidate.

Subject line: **My client is interested in filling a marketing leader role immediately**

Don't make your problem someone else's. Inspire interest, not concern.

Step 7: Interview with a purpose

You're almost there. Now it's time to hop on the phone and narrow down your applicant list. This step will really help screen out unqualified candidates. The key is to actively listen to find out if they are truly the right fit and pinpoint contradicting responses.



Questions: core qualifications

1

What are you looking for in a job?

Seems like an obvious opener, right? And it's a great place to start any phone interview for a reason. With this one it's important to pay attention to what they want, and assess whether the role and company can deliver on their particular needs.

2

What attracted you to the company?

This question allows you to determine how much research the candidate did beforehand. If the response lacks specificity, they probably didn't do their homework. It's also important to compare their answer here to the response about what they're looking for in a job. If there is a disconnect, it could mean they don't have a clear idea of their career goals.

3

How would you apply your skills to this job?

The great thing about this question is that it combines two classic interview questions: "what would you do in the first 90 days?" and "why are you the best person for the job?". This can help shed light on how well their skill set maps to the position. If the answer is too high level or conceptual, ask for specifics.

Questions: screen for culture add

- 1**
Can you share a story about anything that speaks to your values as a person?

There's a lot you can learn from this question, as it will prompt responses that often include a list of values. Beneath that thought, pay close attention to whether the words align with your core values as an organization. The closer a potential employee's values align with your company values, the higher the likelihood that they will succeed in the role and in your company.
- 2**
What's one thing you like about your current or last manager? One thing you would change?

People respond to different forms of motivation and have different sensitivities. You know who the candidate's manager will be and can quickly assess, based on the response, whether the manager's style will align with the candidate's sensibilities or if they're likely to clash.
- 3**
What are the most interesting things about you that are not found on your resume?

Obviously, the main question is whether or not a candidate can do the work required of them. But what makes them tick above and beyond their professional skill set can be extremely illuminating. Also, this question forces the candidate to talk about themselves and clarifies what they are proud to highlight about themselves.

Questions: leadership assessments

1

Tell me about the last time something significant didn't go according to plan at work? What was your role? What was the outcome?

Everyone who's had a job knows that despite the best laid plans, things sometimes go off the rails. And people can have different reactions to a crisis. Not everyone needs to be the one to step up, but a willingness to adjust and accept changing circumstances and find a solution is always helpful when things take a turn for the worse.

2

Tell me about a time when you needed to make a firm decision without firm data to back up the decision. How did you handle it?

While not everyone is destined for a leadership role, the ability to make decisions and take responsibility for one's actions are a critical component of most any job. Eliciting a response to this question can show the comfort level a candidate has with their own abilities.

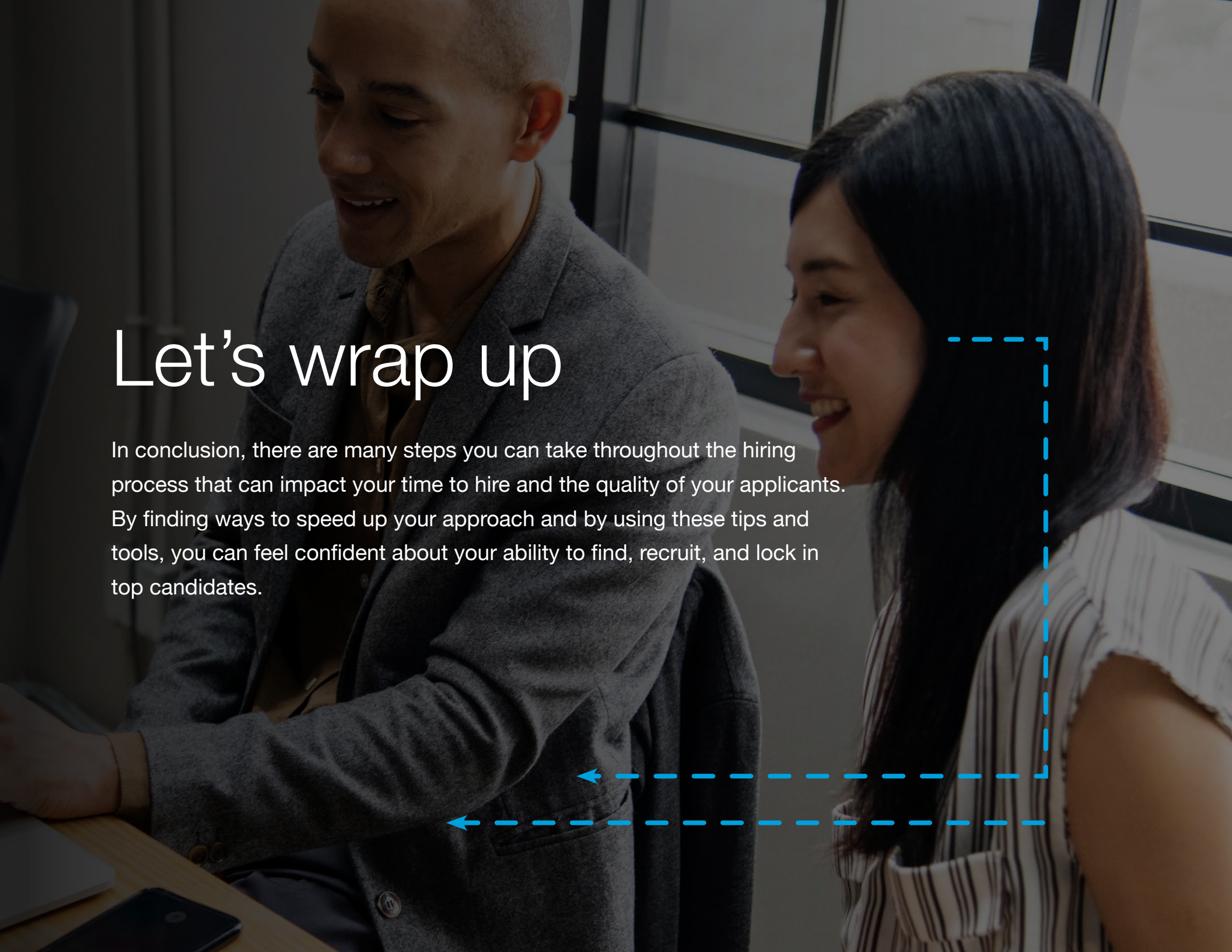
3

Tell me about a particularly challenging cross functional team project that you were involved in. What was your role and why was it difficult? How did you overcome your challenges?

Navigating the complexities of working across stakeholders can be extremely challenging. Discovering how people manage relationships, partner with stakeholders, and resolve conflicts in a group dynamic will give you insight into their leadership mindset. Do they take the reins to keep the project on track or sit back waiting for someone else to take action? It's also a great way to see if their approach to collaboration will work with your team.

Let's wrap up

In conclusion, there are many steps you can take throughout the hiring process that can impact your time to hire and the quality of your applicants. By finding ways to speed up your approach and by using these tips and tools, you can feel confident about your ability to find, recruit, and lock in top candidates.



Quick takeaways

STEP 1: PLANNING CLARIFIES NEEDS

Take time to figure out:

- Your key measures of success
- The must haves versus the nice to haves

STEP 2: BRANDING IS ESSENTIAL

Tell your story:

- Use your LinkedIn Company and Career Pages to make a strong first impression
- Leverage multiple channels
- Get creative
- Don't be afraid to outsource tasks (made easy by ProFinder)

STEP 3: GIVE THEM A REASON TO BELIEVE

Write effective job descriptions:

- Sell your company
- Be clear about what's in it for the candidate
- Get started with job description templates

STEP 4: GET THE MESSAGE OUT THERE

Promote the role:

- Tap into personal and professional networks
- Create referral programs
- Use LinkedIn Job Slots and Work With Us Ads

STEP 5: SEEK OUT THE BEST CANDIDATES

Leverage LinkedIn Recruiter tools to:

- Save time with Search alerts
- Identify candidates most likely to respond to your outreach

STEP 6: COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

Develop effective messages:

- Leverage InMail templates to save time
- Personalize for each candidate
- Keep it short and sweet

STEP 7: MAKE YOUR INTERVIEWS COUNT

Ask the right questions to:

- Confirm core qualifications
- Assess culture add
- Explore leadership potential

LinkedIn Talent Solutions

We've shared the down and dirty tactics that can make all difference when it comes to finding and hiring great candidates. And there's more where that came from.

We offer a full range of recruiting solutions to help organizations of all sizes find, attract, and engage the best candidates. Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With 560+ million members worldwide, including 75% of the US workforce, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.

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