careerHUB PRESENTS

A GUIDE TO RECRUITING AND HIRING

About CareerHub

CareerHub is where talent meets opportunity in the Jewish community. Powered by Leading Edge in partnership with JPRO Network, CareerHub provides an easy, user-friendly job board for the Jewish nonprofit sector, as well as resources to help organizations connect with top talent and improve hiring practices.

leadingedge.org/careerhub

About Leading Edge

Founded in 2014, Leading Edge influences and inspires dramatic change in how Jewish organizations attract, develop, and retain top talent.

Leading Edge's flagship program areas focus on supporting and developing CEOs, strengthening partnerships between lay leaders and professionals, and helping to create leading places to work.

leadingedge.org

About JPRO Network

JPRO connects, educates, inspires, and empowers professionals working in the Jewish nonprofit sector by providing them with opportunities for learning, network building, and career development; and builds the field through convenings, advocacy, and by developing a collective knowledge base.

jpro.org

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One should always cleave to good people.”

Rabbi Elazar
Talmud Bavli,
Bava Batra 109b

Introduction

The vision of this guide is that every Jewish organization, regardless of mission, size, or location, will be able to find and hire the best people to help them succeed. It was created for hiring managers in the Jewish nonprofit sector—any professionals in Jewish organizations who are responsible for hiring other professionals.

It has become a truism that an organization's best asset is its people. But the truism is true; the only thing that can turn visions and plans into realities is talent. **Recruiting, selecting, and retaining stellar team members is one of the most critical tasks required of managers, and doing so requires real skill.** Unfortunately, few of us are taught the strategies, skills, and practices of talent acquisition before we become managers. This guide is intended to fill that gap, exploring every stage of the process of building your team—from defining the organization's staffing needs to the moment the right person accepts your offer.

This guide treats as foundational the Jewish principle that all people are created b'tzelem Elohim—in the Divine image (Genesis 1:27). Each human being has inherent and inalienable dignity, and our communities and organizations are called to recognize and reflect that. Keeping this value at the center of our work, in talent acquisition as well as in everything else we do, is not a secondary concern, a distraction, or a luxury; it is mission critical. Ensuring that our organizations maintain cultures of equity, inclusion, respect, safety, and everything else that comprises human dignity is not only important as a matter of ethics, but also vital if we want our organizations to do the best work they can. If bias leads us to overlook talented people based on their identity, our organizations and their missions will lose out. If how we treat people during recruitment makes people feel disrespected or alienated, then they will likely take their talents elsewhere.

Using this guide in small organizations: This guide lays out a robust set of practices that can help organizations attract, recruit, and hire top talent. Many of the processes and frameworks described here are both possible and vital for organizations of every size, including those with just a few employees. Other processes and suggestions presuppose a mid-size or larger staff. We know and trust that readers will adapt the practices explained here to their own organizations' needs and circumstances.

Recruiting and hiring for excellence takes courage. It requires stepping out of our comfort zones in many ways: to move past relying on the networks of people we already know; to put aside the same old interview questions that we don't even know why we always ask; to candidly evaluate the skillsets and tasks that our organizations — and we — may lack; to feel confident that excellence around us won't diminish our own standing, but will rather elevate us; and more.

But recruiting and hiring for excellence is worth it. No amount of budget, time, luck, or anything else can be a substitute for having people on your team who have the skills, the personalities, and the passion to lead your organization toward success.

Let's get started.

1

Groundwork

Cultures of Equity and Inclusion

To find and hire the best talent available, we need to ensure inequity and exclusion aren't robbing our organizations of potentially excellent candidates. To retain them once they're hired, we need to remember that when employees feel seen, supported, and included for all of who they are, they are more productive, more creative, and less likely to leave.

That's why an approach to recruiting and hiring that **seeks excellence** must work to improve the organization's culture more broadly in ways that **advance equity and inclusion** in all contexts. This approach makes good strategic sense, as well as aligns with Jewish values like *b'tzelem Elohim* (each person is made in the image of God), *kavod* (respect), and *v'ahavta l'reiakha kamokha* (love your neighbor as yourself).

Equity is how the world would be if our social identities (race, gender, etc.) no longer were predictive of the outcomes we experience or what we could achieve. Inclusion is what happens when everyone experiences a sense of belonging and wellbeing, regardless of their social identities.

In the Jewish nonprofit sector, some people may be tempted to assume that these concerns apply less to our field than to the United States as a whole. This is a mistake. As our already diverse community becomes increasingly diverse over the next few decades, our staff demographics must reflect those of the Jewish community overall so that we can best serve our constituencies and remain relevant to them.

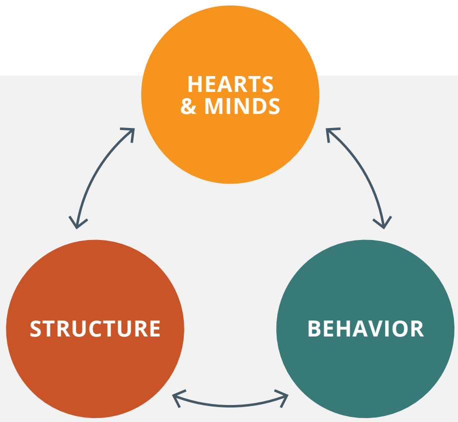
In 2019, Leading Edge's annual Employee Experience Survey received responses from over 11,400 employees at 182 organizations, including many of the most prominent institutions in the field. **Only 1 out of every 4,000 Jewish nonprofit workers surveyed is a Jew of color** (just

0.025% of total respondents). This is a dramatic underrepresentation, given that more than 1 out of every 8 American Jews is a Jew of color.

This is just one example of the ways that the Jewish communal workforce does not fully represent our community as a whole.

What, then, does it take to create a culture of equity? Robert Gass suggests in his Wheel of Change that any type of organizational change requires three interrelated and interdependent processes to occur: **Organizations must change hearts and minds, structure, and behavior.**[1]

When it comes to equity and inclusion, some of the types of changes required in each of these categories include:



HEARTS AND MINDS

- Requiring equity and inclusion training for staff and board
- Training managers on how to supervise through a lens of equity and inclusion
- Coaching on issues related to equity for staff, especially senior leaders

STRUCTURE

- Standardizing HR processes such as hiring, performance evaluations, etc.
- Creating salary bands to support pay equity across identities
- Creating checklists to reduce bias in various processes across the organization

BEHAVIOR

- Recruiting and hiring a more diverse staff
- Managing and developing staff in ways that promote equity and inclusion
- Creating materials, collateral, curriculum, etc. that are inclusive and representative of an organization's constituency

1. Robert Gass, "Wheel of Change: A Model for Personal Transformation." stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

It's important to consider carefully what order to implement the strategies mentioned above. Specifically, **start with some of the work around hearts and minds**, especially staff and board training. You may want to convene key staff and stakeholders (perhaps including board members) to identify an "equity rationale"—an official "why" for the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This group would be tasked with considering the importance of assembling a diverse team of people to do the work of the organization, in an inclusive and equitable way, to get the results the organization is looking for and then articulating this "why" in writing.[2]

When a satisfactory level of buy-in is achieved, training can begin

Training should include, among much else, an introduction to common biases that often operate in hiring processes, including affinity bias, confirmation bias, perception bias, and the halo effect.[3] By educating staff who are involved in the hiring process about these biases, they will be more likely to look out for them during the process and less likely to engage in them.

Training should also include information about how the upcoming structural and policy changes will support the goals of equity and inclusion. Rolling out these changes is distinct from educating staff about the reasons for them, and the latter is important to maximize compliance. **When team members understand that formal structures serve an important goal, they will be less likely to sidestep them or think of them as mere "bureaucracy."** Those involved in hiring should understand that hiring processes that are less standardized and leave more to the discretion of hiring managers tend to allow more room for bias to affect outcomes.

2. "Equity Rationale: Why You Need One, and How to Get Started." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/article/equity-rationale-why-you-need-one-and-how-to-get-started/

3. Affinity bias is the tendency to be drawn to people who share our identity or identities. Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek information that confirms our existing assumptions or beliefs. Perception bias is what we often think of when we imagine bias. It is the tendency to form stereotypes or assumptions about certain groups of people that make it impossible to objectively assess members of that group. The halo effect is the tendency, when we meet someone we like, to see that person as only good and overlook any negatives.

Organizations should also prioritize changing systems and structures before seeking to diversify an organization's staff, board, and/or constituents

Organizations often try to begin this process with diversification, but when the work around hearts, minds, and systems hasn't been sufficiently engaged beforehand, organizations will often either struggle to recruit staff, board members, or constituents, or experience significant turnover among new hires from underrepresented backgrounds.

Additionally, once the internal culture-change work has been put in motion and the organization turns to recruiting and hiring a more diverse staff, it is important to ensure that the focus on these new staff members extends beyond hiring. Organizations need to have plans in place for how they will supervise, support, and retain these new staff members, including what kind of professional development opportunities will be offered; what type of mentorship is available for them; and how will they be supervised in ways that are inclusive and supportive, and allow them to reach their full potential.

These changes require a significant commitment of resources. For an equity and inclusion process to be successful within an organization, the organization needs to have a staff member who is responsible for this work, and who is tasked with dedicating a significant amount of time to it. This person also must have the positional authority within the organization to move the process forward. The process may also require engaging external consultants and trainers to help the organization assess its current status, identify a plan for how to shift the organization's culture, and train the staff and board on issues related to equity and inclusion. Creating a culture of equity and inclusion requires an authentic commitment to the process by both the organization's executive and the board—a commitment expressed not only in words, but also in time, priority, and budget.

RESOURCES: ADDRESSING BIAS

VIDEOS

Dushaw Hockett, "We all have implicit biases. So what can we do about it?" TEDx, September 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY

Vernā Myers, "Walk Toward Your Biases." TED Talk, November 2014. https://vernamyers.com/portfolio/ted-walk-toward-biases/

"Unconscious Bias Basics." Shire Professional, September 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGupqNaUTnQ

Dolly Chugh, "How to let go of being a 'good' person and become a better person." TED Talk, November 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2cixaL9H3U

"Strategies to Address Unconscious Bias." UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach. https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/strategies-address-unconscious-bias

ACTIVITY

Implicit Bias Tests by Project Implicit (through Harvard University). https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html

ARTICLES AND REPORTS

Publications Library of the Perception Institute (a leading research institution on implicit bias). https://perception.org/publications/

Linda R. Tropp and Rachel D. Godsil, "Overcoming Implicit Bias and Racial Anxiety." Psychology Today, January 2015. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sound-science-sound-policy/201501/overcoming-implicit-bias-and-racial-anxiety

BOOKS

Tiffany Jana and Matthew Freeman, Overcoming Bias. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, November 2016. https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781626567252

Dolly Chugh, The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias. Harper Business, September 2018. https://www.indiebound.org/book/9780062692146

Jennifer L. Eberhardt, Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice that Shapes What We See, Think and Do. Viking, March 2019. https://www.indiebound.org/book/9780735224933

Defining the Role

Scoping out the role is a vital step in talent acquisition—the full process of recruiting and hiring a new team member. The goal is to ensure that the hiring manager and other relevant staff are clear on the core work that the person in the role needs to do.

Let’s be real

Sometimes hiring high-quality talent can feel threatening. Top candidates may have strengths and skills that we don’t. The best hiring managers draw on their emotional intelligence to rise above this tension because they know that great talent makes for great success, innovation, and happy workplace cultures.

Create your hiring team

Whether you are in a large, mid-size, or small organization, select a small group of colleagues who will help spread the word among their networks, review resumes and applications, help with screening and interviews, and provide wisdom on candidate selection and hiring.

If possible, your team should include (1) a healthy disruptor and (2) someone with a depth of experience in talent acquisition

The healthy disruptor sees things that are “out of the box” and adds needed perspective. The recruitment “expert” helps the hiring manager to move the process forward and provides wisdom. The hiring team should also represent as much demographic diversity as possible. Not only will including these multiple perspectives help you assess a candidate’s potential for the job from various points of view, but research has also shown that including multiple decision-makers in complex processes, such as hiring, reduces the impact of implicit bias on those decisions.[4]

4. Heather McGhee, Lucy Mayo, and Angela Park, “Demos’ Racial Equity Transformation: Key Components, Process & Lessons.” https://www.demos.org/research/demos-racial-equity-transformation-key-components-process-lessons

Create a role description

Write a summary of the responsibilities of the role and the key characteristics that a person in this position will need to be successful. In order to maximize clarity and honesty within the hiring team during the drafting process, be clear in creating this role description that it is an internal document and will not be shared as part of the recruitment process.[5] The job description for external use will come later.

Once the core work of the position is clear, the hiring team should set aside time to articulate what are the “must haves” for the role and what are the “nice to haves.” As these two lists are compiled, staff should focus on the requirements of the job (i.e., what skills the person must have to do the work well) and be conscious to differentiate preferences (“I prefer that the person in this role is X”) and traditions (“We’ve always had luck in hiring Y type of person for this role”) from requirements.[6] What are the skills or qualities on which you *cannot* compromise? Which skills must be present on day one, and which skills can be learned through on-the-job training and coaching?[7]

When defining roles, don’t forget to consider emotional intelligence (EQ):

- Define the required self-awareness and self-management abilities.
- Define the required social awareness and relationship management abilities.
- Make empathy a nonnegotiable.

What other personality traits are critical for meeting your top company goals? How important is it for the candidate to be:

- An independent thinker?
- Optimistic?
- Kind?

Think carefully about other emotional and social skills the job requires. Sometimes it helps to include short descriptions of how this person would deal with specific scenarios or events.

5. Alison Green and Jerry Hauser, *Managing to Change the World*. Jossey-Bass, 2012.
6. “That’s how we’ve always done it! (A guide to using PTR [Preferences, Traditions, Requirements]).” The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/article/thats-how-weve-always-done-it-a-guide-to-using-ptr/
7. Rabbi Sara Shapiro-Plevan, Rabbi Rebecca W. Sirbu, and Allison Fine, “Gender Equity in Hiring. It is time.” *eJewish Philanthropy*, March 19, 2018. https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/gender-equity-in-hiring-it-is-time/

Equity tips for role descriptions

Be deliberate in identifying the "must haves" and "nice to haves" in ways that promote equity and inclusion:

Focus on what skills are needed to perform the core responsibilities of the job.[8] Traditional proxies, such as university degrees and years of experience in the field, tend to advantage candidates who have had more access to higher education and certain professional networks, both of which have historically excluded a variety of groups including women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities.

RESOURCE

The Management Center provides a sample role description and a worksheet for creating your own at http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/figuring-role-sample-worksheet/.

Consider the type of Jewish knowledge and experience a position requires, if any. Access to Jewish education and experiences often has not been fully available to a wide range of Jews, including Jews of color, LGBTQ Jews, women, Jews with disabilities, and others. Taking this into account, hiring managers should consider what Jewish background is critical and which Jewish knowledge can be learned on the job.

Include equity competencies.[9] Hiring managers are encouraged to consider what skills the person who is hired will need to have around equity and inclusion. Do they need an equity lens in the creation of programs or materials? Do they need to manage a team of diverse staff members? Do they need to be able to communicate effectively across diverse social identities?

8. "Hiring Superstars." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/tools/hiring/

9. Heather McGhee, Lucy Mayo, and Angela Park, "Demos' Racial Equity Transformation: Key Components, Process & Lessons." https://www.demos.org/research/demos-racial-equity-transformation-key-components-process-lessons

Set the compensation range

The compensation range for each role needs to match your budget and bear some relationship to the market rate for the desired skillset and responsibilities. But it is also important to avoid making salary decisions for each role in isolation from the others. Clarity and transparency about compensation across an organization can help to prevent salary inequity, alleviate employee jealousy or feelings that pay is arbitrary, and boost job satisfaction. Research by Leading Edge, PayScale, and others has shown that transparency around compensation philosophy can have a profound impact on employee engagement, as well as advancing equity and attracting more of the right applicants.

One way to achieve this is by implementing **salary bands** across your organization. Salary bands are ranges of pay amounts used to provide structure for salary decisions and salary conversations. Salary bands promote equity and encourage fairness by providing a clear maximum and minimum for each role in an organization.

> When salary bands are shared openly, employees will have a better sense of where their role stands in relation to those above or below them, leading to fewer assumptions and less jealousy."
>
> **A Guide for Building Equitable Salary Bands**
> Leading Edge

Give the role a title

Create a functional job title that will appeal to candidates while clearly and accurately communicating the principal duties and status of the role. Because job titles vary in meaning between organizations, consider what the title will signify and represent both within your organization and in the context of the wider field from which you'll be recruiting. Research comparable job descriptions and titles in other adjacent fields as well.

RESOURCE

A Guide for Building Equitable Salary Bands. Leading Edge, 2020. (Forthcoming as of this writing; check https://leadingedge.org/resources in the coming months.)

Job Description and Announcement

Write a job description

Using the role description developed previously, create a job description for the position. This may be your first chance to forge a connection with the high-quality talent you want to attract. Strive for clarity, accuracy, and positivity.

The job description should include, at a minimum:

- A summary of the position
- A brief introduction to the organization, its mission, and its current work
- A description of the key responsibilities of the position, with the core responsibilities listed first
- A list of qualifications, also with the core qualifications listed first
- A salary range
- Information on how a candidate can apply for the position

This job description will be a long-form version that can be posted on job boards and sent as an attachment when reaching out to potential candidates or people who might be connected to candidates. You should also create **a brief, enticing job announcement**—a concise, attractive description of what the role is and what kind of candidate would be a good fit for the role.[10] This can be posted on social media or emailed, with a link to the original job description.

Once both the job description and announcement have been written, the hiring manager should share both with a demographically diverse group of people to scan for red flags or "coded" language that might convey bias or make certain groups of people less likely to apply for the position.[11]

10. "Hiring Superstars." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/tools/hiring/
11. "Hiring Superstars." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/tools/hiring/

Some examples of language that might encourage or discourage certain groups include:

Gendered language. Studies have found that job descriptions with words such as "dominant," "ambitious," and "decisive" (among others) tend to be coded as male and may discourage some candidates who don't identify as male, while words like "collaborative," "supportive," and "nurturing" tend to be coded as female and may discourage some candidates who don't identify as such.[12] Online tools like Kat Matfield's "Gender Decoder for Job Ads" [13] can analyze a job description for gender-coded language and offer alternatives.

Subtle cues in descriptions of the organization's work. When describing an organization and its impact, it is important to consider the subtle messages that can be conveyed by what groups are and are not included in the description. For example, if a job description for a domestic violence organization talks about violence within male-female relationships but doesn't mention intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ community, LGBTQ candidates may be less drawn to the position. Similarly, if a Jewish social justice organization talks about "allying with communities of color," this conveys a subtle message that there are no people or communities of color within the Jewish community—which is false and risks alienating candidates of color, especially Jews of Color.

Jargon. Descriptions that include jargon from a particular field may discourage candidates who meet all of the qualifications for the position but might not have previous experience in that exact field.[14] In the context of Jewish nonprofits, this concern can also include using Hebrew or Yiddish phrases in descriptions of roles that don't require knowledge of these languages or terms. It risks making people feel excluded who could have done the job well. In addition to equity, avoiding jargon also helps with clarity and effective communication. You don't want robots, you want people—so write like a person.

12. Danielle Gaucher, Justin Friesen, and Aaron C. Kay, "Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 2011, Vol. 101, No. 1, pp. 109-128. http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/static/documents/Gaucher-Friesen-Kay-JPSP-Gendered-Wording-in-Job-ads.pdf

13. http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/

14. Maxwell Huppert, "5 Must-Do's for Writing Inclusive Job Descriptions." LinkedIn *TalentBlog*, April 9, 2018. https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/job-descriptions/2018/5-must-dos-for-writing-inclusive-job-descriptions

Here are two examples of real job announcements:

State Health Care Now is seeking a full-time State Policy Director to lead our state advocacy activities, primarily by building and maintaining alliances among key actors throughout the state. The ideal candidate will have a proven ability to foster coordination and cooperation among diverse—and even competing—groups. He or she[15] *will be committed to getting results in a fast-paced environment and able to handle a heavy workload without dropping the ball. This position is an opportunity to engage with policymakers, NGOs, industry executives, and constituents to help bring about real legislative change.*[16]

Are you a database badass? Do you want to put your spreadsheet superpowers to work to enhance and support our work in the social justice movement? We want to talk to you! The Management Center (TMC) is seeking a Data Director to support our growing team by ensuring we efficiently track progress to our ambitious goals and that data is a strength of our organization. We're looking for candidates who are meticulous about details while remembering the people and impact behind the numbers, who are excited to support the progressive and educational equity movements, and who thrive on solving problems and making systems more efficient.[17]

Here are some more tips for writing great job descriptions and announcements:

Send a message with tone. Job descriptions reflect the culture of your organization. Are humor and fun a valued part of your organizational culture? Then make the description and announcement funny. On the other hand, if gravitas and formality are the key emotional notes in your workplace, make sure the job posting exudes them.

Balance the right amount of detail. Ensure that the language is detailed enough that candidates understand the full range of responsibilities, but do not make the description so detailed that it is daunting or unreadable.

15. This example has not been altered from its original form. It's worth noting that some candidates may react negatively to seeing gendered pronouns like these in job descriptions and announcements.

16. "Job Description Sample." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/job-description-sample/

17. Originally posted at http://www.managementcenter.org/about-us/work-with-us/

Don't skip posting the salary range. As discussed above (under "Set the compensation range"), specifying salary ranges across your organization helps with equity, transparency, and morale. Posting these ranges clearly during recruitment will also prevent you from losing opportunities to interview many top candidates, who may assume that no salary listed implies a below-market rate. Posting the salary range will also save you time by discouraging candidates with unrealistic salary expectations from applying. It will then make salary negotiation easier because candidates won't feel your offer that matches the posted range is coming "out of nowhere."

Don't list more qualifications than you need. Minimizing the number of qualifications that are listed in a job description has been shown to increase the number of qualified female candidates that apply for the position. Research has demonstrated that while men often apply for a position for which they only meet 60% of the qualifications, female candidates tend not to apply for a position unless they perceive that they meet 100% of the qualifications.[18]

RESOURCES: WRITING GREAT JOB DESCRIPTIONS

CareerHub Job Description Templates. https://leadingedge.org/job-description-templates

"How to Write a Great Job Description." Lever. https://www.lever.co/blog/how-to-write-a-great-job-description/

"How to Write a Good Job Description." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/tutorial/how-to-write-a-good-job-description

"How to Write a Job Posting" and "Job Posting Template." Betterteam. https://www.betterteam.com/job-posting-template

Lars Schmidt, "How to Write a Job Posting People Actually Want to Apply To." Fast Company, March 23, 2018. https://www.fastcompany.com/40547908/how-to-write-a-job-posting-people-actually-want-to-apply-to

The Gender Equity in Hiring Project. https://geihp.wordpress.com/

Kat Matfield, "Gender Decoder for Job Ads." http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/

18. Tara Sophia Mohr, "Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified." *Harvard Business Review*, August 25, 2014. https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified

2

Recruitment

Posting the Opportunity

Check your digital first impression

When people learn about a new job, one of the first things they usually do is Google the organization. So before you post the job listing on job boards and listservs, ask the following questions:

- Is your website up to date?
- Has the careers section of your website been updated to include this posting?
- Is your "Staff" section up to date?
- Do your website and social media feeds describe your culture and mission in a clear and enticing way?
- Do your website and social media feeds say what you do in plain language that would make someone excited to work for you?
- What news, articles, reports, blog posts, social media content, and other content will people see first when they Google your organization? (You probably won't be able to change this reputational snapshot—at least, not quickly or easily—but you should understand the strengths and challenges of your current online reputation.)
- What information will potential candidates see if they check your publicly available Form 990? (Candidates for higher-level positions are especially likely to seek out Form 990 information.)

Post the job in obvious places

Your first stop, of course, is **CareerHub**.[19] To open a new employer account on CareerHub, email info@leadingedge.org. And if your organization is a JPRO affiliate, send the link to your job posting to info@jpro.org for inclusion in the JPRO newsletter.

To maximize your chances of attracting the right hire, seek many other venues as well. Other job sites to consider include:

- JewishJobs.com
- Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management Job Board [20]
- Jewish Camps Jobs Board [21]
- LinkedIn
- Indeed

Contact people in the alumni networks of Jewish fellowships such as the following to request that they forward the job announcement:

- Dorot Fellowship in Israel
- Fishel Fellowship (The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles)
- JewV'Nation Fellowship (URJ)
- Joint Distribution Committee Ralph Goldman Fellowship, Jewish Service Corps
- Ruskay Fellowship (UJA-Federation of New York)
- Schusterman Fellowship
- Selah Leadership Program (Bend the Arc)
- Wexner Foundation Field Fellowship
- Wexner Foundation Graduate Fellowship

Post the job in non-obvious places

Hiring managers should consider what mass marketing options are available beyond the venues they have usually used, and whether posting the opportunity in these new channels might help build a stronger, more diverse candidate pool. Next, managers should identify what listservs, Facebook groups, organizational newsletters, and other venues for targeted group outreach would be likely to yield potential candidates for the position and share the job announcement with those groups.

19. https://leadingedge.org/careerhub
20. https://zsjnm.huc.edu/job-board
21. https://jewishcamp.org/jobs/

RESOURCES: BUILDING A GREAT CAREERS PAGE

Nikoletta Bika, "How to attract candidates by improving your careers page." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/stories-and-insights/careers-page-attract-candidates

Model of an excellent careers page: https://www.hirevue.com/careers

Attracting Top Talent

According to data from LinkedIn, among people who recently changed organizations, the number one channel for finding a new job was employee referrals.[22] So all your organization's employees—not just the hiring team—can be important recruiters.

Indirectly, so can their friends; when people learn about the opportunity you're posting, another of the first things they will usually do (after Googling) is to ask their networks what people know or have heard about the organization. So how your team talks about their work with their family and friends will, sooner or later, impact your recruitment process.

These two factors, employee outreach and the importance of reputation, are two reasons (among many others) that organizations should work hard to create a healthy, thriving organizational culture—to become what Leading Edge calls a "leading place to work." Leading places to work share six key traits:

- Trusted leaders
- Respected employees
- Transparent compensation philosophy
- Common purpose
- Talent development
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice

To learn more about the full range of what it takes to achieve these goals, visit https://leadingedge.org/LPTW.

22. Esther Cruz, "New LinkedIn Report Reveals the Latest Job Seeking Trends." LinkedIn *TalentBlog*, June 27, 2016. https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2016/linkedin-new-report-reveals-the-latest-job-seeking-trends

Building a Talent Pool —In General

One of the most important steps to hiring well is building a robust and diverse candidate pool from which to choose. Effectively building a pool requires a significant investment of time, both during the hiring process and throughout the year.

Don't wait until you're hiring

Organizations should not wait until they have an opening to begin building a pool of candidates, but instead they should consider pool-building a year-round responsibility. Everyone in the organization should always be on the lookout for potential candidates and especially qualified individuals who belong to groups that are currently underrepresented at the organization.[23] In order to easily track these potential candidates, an organization should create a shared document in which to track names, contact information, and notes about these individuals.

Potential candidates can be grouped into three types: actives, pre-actives, and passives:

- **Actives** are determinedly looking to find a new job (whether currently employed or unemployed).
- **Pre-actives** are making the decision to leave where they work but have not yet applied to new positions.
- **Passives** are fully employed but open to hearing about opportunities.

A strong pool-building strategy involves tracking all three of these potential candidate types.[24]

23. Heather McGhee, Lucy Mayo, and Angela Park, "Demos' Racial Equity Transformation: Key Components, Process & Lessons." https://www.demos.org/research/demos-racial-equity-transformation-key-components-process-lessons

24. "Candidate Sourcing: A How-To Guide For Recruitment." Ideal. https://ideal.com/candidate-sourcing/

Develop networks of connectors

Organizations often post jobs to various job boards and listservs and assume that this is all the outreach needed to create a robust pool of talented candidates. In reality, building an outstanding talent pool means developing and maintaining a network of connectors—individuals who are not likely candidates for a position but who can connect you to potential candidates.

Importantly, in order to create robust candidate pools that are inclusive of candidates whose identity/ies are underrepresented within an organization's current staff, this network of connectors must extend beyond the typical personal and professional networks that organizations often turn to for candidates. As the saying goes, "What got you here won't get you there"—these networks have not previously led to diverse candidate pools and are unlikely to do so in the future.

Reach out

Instead, organizations should consider what additional networks they might tap into that they have not previously connected with. These might include job affinity networks, colleges and universities, conferences, fellowships, and training programs that serve underrepresented communities, such as Jews/people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities. In addition, organizations can consider sending a representative to career or job fairs at historically Black, Latino/Latinx, and Native American-serving institutions, including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Finally, organizations can develop partnerships with organizations that focus on the LGBTQ community, communities of color, or individuals with disabilities to distribute job postings to these organizations' constituents who might not be reached by an organization's traditional methods of staff recruitment.

RESOURCES: TRACKING TALENT

"Talent List Template." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/talent-list/

"Talent Pool Worksheet." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Talent-Pool-Worksheet.docx

Reach in

Don't forget the team members who are right in front of you. Who can be promoted if given the right support? Who has already proven their growth potential and commitment? Campers can become counselors, who can become full-time staffers, who can become leaders.

Regarding all these approaches, it's important to foster, grow, and steward partnerships, not only during a search but also year-round. Organizations should have a concrete plan for who is responsible for cultivating each of these relationships to ensure that they are sustained over time, and hiring managers should have access to a list of who is in this network of connectors and who is the staff liaison for each connector so that they can appropriately connect with them when a relevant position is open.

Building a Talent Pool —During the Hiring Process

Once the new job opportunity is posted, hiring managers should sit down and create a list of possible connectors for this particular position, as well as potential candidates. This list should reference the organization's ongoing list of potential candidates discussed previously, as well as tap into the network of connectors that has been developed, but it may also include additional connectors or candidates particular to the type of position open. Hiring managers should make sure that, in addition to the organization's existing network of connectors, they are also considering the following types of sources from their own networks:

- **Tier 1:** Past jobs, partnerships, the field/sector
- **Tier 2:** Colleges, universities, professional memberships, school networks
- **Tier 3:** Personal networks/communities

Once this list of connectors has been finalized, the hiring manager (or whichever staff member owns each relationship) should reach out to each source. The staff person should encourage the connector to share the names of people who they think would be the best fit for the position, regardless of whether those individuals are currently looking for a position or not. For each potential candidate shared, the manager should ask the connector whether it would be more effective for the connector to reach out to the candidate and share information about the job or for the hiring manager to do so. Then, the hiring manager should either follow up with the candidate directly, if this approach is suggested, or loop back to the connector within a week or two to ensure that they connected with the candidate and hear what the candidate's response was.

RESOURCES

Nikoletta Bika, "17 effective candidate sourcing tools." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/tutorial/sourcing-tools

"Candidate Sourcing: A How-To Guide for Recruitment." Ideal. https://ideal.com/candidate-sourcing/

Kayla Kozan, "5 Tips for Sourcing Great Candidates in a Competitive Market." Ideal, April 24, 2018. https://ideal.com/sourcing-candidates-competitive-market/

A note on representative pools

Research has shown that approximately 42% of Americans[25] and 12%-15% of American Jews[26] are people of color. Also, 4.5% of Americans are LGBTQ[27] (and there's no reason to think the American Jewish population differs much in that regard), and 25% of Americans[28] and 15%-20% of American Jews[29] have a visible or invisible disability.

Given this, organizations should ideally create candidate pools that are as representative of these demographics as possible, acknowledging that candidates won't always disclose the relevant information during the process. Because it can be easy for hiring managers to fall back on saying, "We tried—there just aren't any people of color/LGBTQ people/people with disabilities who are interested in the position," organizations should consider whether they want to set a percentage of any candidate pool that must be composed of people with these identities.[30]

3

Narrowing the Field

Once a robust candidate pool has been assembled, the next step is thoroughly assessing each candidate's potential through a multi-stage process: **application review**, **phone screenings**, **interviews**, **job simulations**, **reference checks**.

Structure the Process

In each stage discussed below, we strongly recommend taking a structured approach: **Build rubrics** ahead of time for reviewing applications, screenings, and interviews; **script screening and interview questions** so that each candidate is asked the same questions in the same order; and **create job simulations** that will be used to evaluate top candidates.

Why so much formality?

Many hiring managers prefer to keep interview conversations free and unplanned, believing this will give them a better sense of a candidate's potential fit. But according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, **structured interviews—i.e., asking candidates the same questions in the same order and evaluating answers according to pre-determined criteria—are more effective.**[31] Structured interviews have both more reliability (i.e., different

31. U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide,* September 2008. https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/structured-interviews/guide.pdf

interviewers come to more consistent conclusions using a structured interview) and more validity (structured interviews are better at assessing the actual skills and traits they're intended to assess, instead of other, less-relevant factors). Structured interviews are also more effective at reducing hiring bias than free-flowing conversations.[32]

For similar reasons, job simulations should play a role in the hiring process. Research has demonstrated that **job simulations are more strongly correlated with future job performance than any other type of assessment—including interviews**.[33] They also present opportunities for minimizing bias because job simulation products can be evaluated without names attached. (One well-known example of this practice is the way many orchestras have increased the number of female musicians by conducting "blind" auditions in which evaluators can't see who is playing.[34]) Multiple people should review a job simulation using a standardized rubric, in order to avoid bias. **More on simulations below.**

If a job simulation isn't desired, another option is asking a candidate to submit an example of their previous work that is relevant to the current role. If you go this route, it's important to clarify what role the candidate had in producing that piece of work.

At each step, some members of the hiring team may be tempted to "just speed things up." But hiring the best talent is too important a task to be rushed. Therefore,

RESOURCES: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide. U.S. Office of Personnel Management, September 2008. https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/structured-interviews/guide.pdf

Nicole E. Zeller, "Keeping Score: Using a Hiring Rubric." Helbling & Associates, October 22, 2019. https://www.helblingsearch.com/blog-item-keeping-score-using-a-hiring-rubric

32. Christine Del Castillo, "How innovative companies combat unconscious hiring bias." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/stories-and-insights/combat-bias-in-hiring

33. Frank L. Schmidt and John E. Hunter, "The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings." *Psychological Bulletin*, September 1998. https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/1998-10661-006

34. Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions on Female Musicians." *The American Economic Review*, September 2000, pp. 715-741. https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.90.4.715

you should actively slow down decision-making—and encourage those conducting interviews not to form or voice strong opinions too early, especially before they've gone through a structured process to assess each candidate against pre-determined criteria.

The bottom line: Structure limits the hiring team's discretion—and that's good

In a well-structured process, hiring managers still have as much discretion as they need—but not so much wide-ranging and unexamined discretion that their whims, habits, variations in mood from day to day, subconscious biases, and other human idiosyncrasies will prevent them from identifying the candidate best able to fill the role.

What to Share with Candidates During the Process

Organizations and candidates are each assessing the other during this process. While employers evaluate whether candidates are right for the job, candidates are trying to determine whether they want to work for your organization. Finding the best match between organization and candidate depends on both parties learning what they need to know about the other.

As a baseline, each stage of interviews should include an opportunity (and enough time) for candidates to ask questions about the role and organization, and to receive thorough responses. Even beyond what candidates ask, though, organizations should consider proactively sharing several other kinds of information during the hiring process. These include:

Information about the hiring process itself. Organizations should share explicitly what their hiring process includes, what candidates can expect during the process, and how candidates can be most successful. While candidates who went to schools with strong career preparation services, candidates who have applied for jobs at similar organizations before, or candidates with extensive networks of professional peers may already know what to expect out of this process, providing this information helps to minimize the information gap about how hiring processes can disadvantage certain candidates, especially those from underrepresented groups.

> **A ready response is a joy to a person, and how good is a well-timed word."**
>
> **Proverbs 15:23**

Updates on the process. The hiring process is a future staff person's first exposure to the culture of an organization. Hiring managers want to send a clear message about the professionalism, responsiveness, and high expectations of the organization. This means that throughout the hiring process, the hiring manager should be timely in their responses to candidates. If delays arise for reasons outside of the manager's control, sharing a quick update with all candidates in the process about the changes to the timeline builds a positive image of the organization and establishes trust with the candidates.

The organization's approach to equity. Organizations should include information in the hiring process about what steps the organization has already taken toward equity and inclusivity and what further processes are planned. Sharing this information, with a stance of humility and transparency, helps to build trust with candidates, especially those from groups that may often face discrimination or exclusion, whether explicit or implicit, in the workplace.

Any significant challenges that can be expected. If there are any serious challenges that a candidate could be stepping into, such as an organizational deficit or challenging dynamic with a partner organization, hiring managers should be up front with final candidates about these so that the candidate takes the job with full knowledge of what they will take on. This builds trust with the candidate and lays a strong foundation for their relationship with the organization moving forward.

Using Rubrics

At each stage in the hiring process, candidates should be assessed based on a pre-determined rubric. This will allow multiple team members to focus their evaluations on shared criteria, while reducing the role of bias and ensuring that every pre-determined "must have" criterion will not be forgotten at any stage in which candidates are eliminated or advanced.

A good rubric lays out a set of specific criteria for rating each candidate according to qualifications drawn from the role description. Each candidate should be rated separately on each criterion.

The rubric should have a clear key that explains what each rating level means for each criterion. Rubrics should also ask interviewers to provide "evidence" for each rating in terms of direct observations from the interview that back up the interviewer's rating decision. Interviewers should be encouraged to challenge any conclusions they have come to for which they are unable to provide "evidence" because this is where bias often arises.

Whenever multiple members of the hiring team are involved in advancing or eliminating candidates, they should fill out rubrics independently before debriefing together to discuss their impressions.

Having independent rubrics in hand before these discussions begin gives interviewers an opportunity to check themselves for biases or unwarranted assumptions, especially if their rubric ratings of a candidate significantly differ.[35]

**RESOURCE:
CREATING RUBRICS**

"Hiring Rubric Starter Kit." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/hiring-rubric-starter-kit/

"How to create an interview evaluation form (+ free template)." Hire by Google, May 2, 2019. https://hire.google.com/articles/interview-evaluation-form/

35. "Mitigate Bias in Hiring With a Simple Rubric." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/article/mitigate-bias-in-hiring-with-a-simple-rubric/

Application Review

Many of the candidates who submit a cover letter and resume to be considered will not be the right fit for the position. So how can managers assess this accurately, and do so in a way that minimizes the impact of bias on their decisions?

Research has shown that hiring managers are 50% more likely to advance a candidate in the process who has a stereotypically white-sounding name than a candidate who has a stereotypical Black name—even if the candidate's qualifications and educational backgrounds are the same.[36] In addition, in-group preferences for candidates who, for example, went to the same school as the manager can also positively bias a manager toward a candidate, even if their other qualifications are sub-par.

Therefore, if an organization has the capacity to designate a staff member who is not involved in the hiring process to remove names and schools from the materials before they are reviewed by the hiring manager, this can minimize bias in the process. Another option is to invest in software that reviews cover letters and resumes automatically, which can mitigate some human biases. If neither of these is possible, hiring managers should be made aware of this research and their supervisors should ask questions about how they plan on addressing these tendencies during the hiring process.

Regardless of whether the hiring manager reviews applications with or without software, and with or without obscuring names and schools, hiring managers should assess each resume/cover letter according to a standard rubric that lays out what qualities of an application packet qualify a candidate for the next step in the process.

36. David R. Francis, "Employers' Replies to Racial Names," National Bureau of Economic Research, September 2003. https://www.nber.org/digest/sep03/w9873.html

Initial Phone Screening

After each resume and cover letter is rated, candidates who meet a basic set of criteria should be contacted for an initial phone screening. The goal of the phone screening is to collect further information that can inform a decision about which candidates move on to the interview phase. These calls are typically planned to last about 20 minutes. The phone screening should use a standardized script of questions for all candidates who are screened.

Here are some topics a phone screening might usefully cover:

- **Interest:** Does this candidate understand the overall nature of your organization and this role, and are they truly interested in exploring the possibility of taking this position?
- **Skills:** Does the candidate have the "must have" knowledge and competencies necessary to begin, as defined by the role description? Be sure to distinguish between skills that the candidate truly needs to have mastered on day one from abilities that can be taught on the job with training and practice.
- **Logistics:** Is the candidate willing to relocate? Comfortable with some amount of travel? Able to, or need to, work remotely? Able to, or need to, work in an office?
- **Salary expectations:** Without getting into negotiations, does the posted salary range overlap with the candidate's needs? (This will help you eliminate candidates with drastically different salary expectations than your organization is able to provide.)
- **Timeline:** When, in general, might the candidate be available to start, if hired? Discussing a hypothetical specific start date isn't the goal, but this is another topic where it's better to know sooner rather than later if the organization and the candidate have an unbridgeable disconnect. After each screening call, the hiring manager, or whoever conducts the screening, should fill out the rubric designed for this step in the process.

Interviews

Before they know who they'll be interviewing, the hiring team should create a set of interview questions that will explore each candidate's relevant skills, personality traits, and alignment with the role description and the organization's mission, values, and expectations. Once this is done, choose the strongest candidates from the phone screening (perhaps three to five) that you want to bring in for an interview.

The interview should be based on a standardized script of questions for all candidates. In crafting the questions, focus on specific skills, behaviors, and character traits that are necessary to excel in the position, as identified in the role description.

- In general, each question should be aimed at illuminating whether the candidate can demonstrate one of the "must haves" from the role description. Ensure that each "must have" is covered by at least one question.
- Other questions might touch on some "nice to haves," but it's best to avoid general questions that can't be tied back to the role description.
- One exception is that you may want to begin the interview with one or two "icebreaker questions" intended simply to put the candidate at ease.[37]
- Avoid cliché questions ("Where do you see yourself in five years?" "What's your greatest weakness?")—even if they're related to traits from the role description. Finding a fresher question to address the same traits will likely elicit more useful responses.

37. "Icebreaker Interview Questions." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/icebreaker-interview-questions

One solid framework for crafting questions is the **behavioral interview**, which focuses primarily on probing a candidate's prior experiences with certain types of responsibilities or situations. The rationale is that how a candidate behaved in the past will predict how they will behave in the future.[38] This approach has been found to be more predictive of actual on-the-job performance than asking questions about how the candidate *would* handle a situation hypothetically.[39]

RESOURCE: BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

Susan M. Heathfield, "How to Conduct a Behavioral Interview." The Balance Careers, June 25, 2019. https://www.thebalancecareers.com/use-a-behavioral-interview-to-select-the-best-employees-1918485

Here are some topics that interviews might usefully cover:

- The candidate's values and passions *(as directly relevant and necessary)*
- The candidate's knowledge or experience *(as directly relevant and necessary)*
- The candidate's rigor and judgment
- The candidate's approaches to collaboration and conflict
- The candidate's curiosity and interest in ongoing learning
- The candidate's level of humility
- The candidate's adaptability and approach to change
- The candidate's levels of resilience and grit
- The candidate's resourcefulness and creativity
- The candidate's ability to reflect and grow
- The candidate's ability to give and receive effective feedback
- The kinds of work environments that allow the candidate to perform at their best
- The feedback styles that empower the candidate to perform at their best
- The level of Jewish literacy that is required (or would be helpful) for the position. (Ask if the candidate is comfortable with that level and ask what assistance they might need to be successful with it.)

38. Susan M. Heathfield, "How to Conduct a Behavioral Interview." The Balance Careers, June 25, 2019. https://www.thebalancecareers.com/use-a-behavioral-interview-to-select-the-best-employees-1918485
39. "Hiring Superstars." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/tools/hiring/

RESOURCE: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

"Sample Interview Questions." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/sample-interview-questions/

"Icebreaker Interview Questions." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/icebreaker-interview-questions

Here are some sample questions you might want to consider:

- Tell me about a time when you overcame a challenge.
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with somebody that you didn't like. How did you resolve that?
- What is the toughest decision you had to make at work in the last six months? How do you know it was the right decision?
- Tell me about a mistake you made at work and how you corrected it.

The interviewer should also consider asking follow-up questions depending on how thorough the candidate is. These can be simple questions such as: What did you do next? How did it work out in the end? Do you think that was the right way to handle the situation?

Be sure to leave enough time for the candidate to ask questions and learn about the organization and the role, and actively invite them to ask those questions and/or share any other concerns they may have.

Interview logistics:

- If possible, conduct interviews face-to-face, either in person or via video chat.
- The hiring team should take notes on paper rather than on devices, to decrease distraction and increase connection.
- You may want to ask the candidate's permission to record the interview. This will give you an accurate record to check later when assessing their interview against the role description's criteria.

If the hiring team completes all initial interviews and has not identified at least one candidate that they are truly excited about, the hiring manager should return to the pool-building stage and repeat the process. If the hiring team is not even excited about a candidate during the interview process when they are putting their best foot forward, that bodes poorly for how the team will feel once the "honeymoon" phase passes and the person is fully settled into the position.

Job Simulations

In addition to asking questions during the interview, hiring managers should also conduct "job simulation" activities that ask candidates to do work similar to what they would be doing on the job, if hired. As noted earlier, job simulations are one of the most effective methods of predicting job performance.

A job simulation exercise should be designed for each of the top two to three "must haves" in the role description. These assignments should provide specific instructions with a set time period, character, and/or page length.

Some examples of job simulation activities include:

- Asking a candidate for an executive assistant position to draft an email to the organization's board chair, asking to reschedule a meeting
- Asking a candidate for a communications associate position to write both a Facebook post and a tweet in honor of an upcoming Jewish holiday, linking the holiday to the organization's mission

RESOURCES: JOB SIMULATIONS

"Job Simulation Exercises." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/job-simulation-exercises/

"How to Ask Job Candidates for Work Samples, Exercises, or Simulations." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/article/how-to-ask-job-candidates-for-work-samples-exercises-or-simulations/

"Sending an interview assignment: example email." Workable. https://resources.workable.com/interview-assignment-example-email

Additional Interviews

Depending on the role, the organization, and its structure, strong candidates may be asked to participate in additional rounds of interviews beyond the first one with various members of the staff and/or board.

While multiple rounds of interviews are common, organizations should recognize that they may not be necessary for every hire. Hiring managers with less bandwidth for an extensive hiring process should remember that job simulations are proven to be more predictive of future performance than interviews are, while interviews can reveal emotional intelligence and personality traits that job simulations don't capture. We recommend that the basic minimum hiring process include **at least one interview and one job simulation**.

> There is no thinking without feeling — and no feeling without thinking."
>
> **Karen McCown**
> "Emotional Intelligence: The Cornerstone For Positive Change"

If interviews do extend beyond one round, hiring managers should ensure that anyone who is interacting with the candidate in an interviewer capacity has reviewed these materials and has access to the standardized list of questions that has been created for each round.

Second-round (and subsequent-round) interviews are often good opportunities to delve into candidates' **emotional intelligence:** self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills, and more.[40] They're also opportunities to explore **culture fit**—whether the candidate will help your organization create the kind of team culture you intend.

40. Daniel Goleman, "What Makes a Leader?" *Harvard Business Review*, January 2004. https://hbr.org/2004/01/what-makes-a-leader

An important note on culture fit

The term “culture fit” is often used in ambiguous and subjective ways that render it hard to assess and even harder to measure. Many people think of “culture fit” as meaning whether the candidate is someone that the hiring manager/team would want to socialize with. **This “Do I want to hang out with them?” conception of culture fit tends to bias decisions toward people who identify similarly** to the hiring manager/team in terms of race, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, class, ability, etc.[41] It may also skew decisions toward extroverts, even for roles in which extroversion isn’t necessary for top performance.

To make sure that culture fit isn’t just a back door for bias, make it something specific and productive instead. Create an explicit set of personal qualities that are critical for a candidate to have in order to nurture the organization’s culture in the directions you want. Remember: Depending on how well your team culture currently meets your goals, nurturing a positive culture could mean either fitting in with the current culture or standing out and positively disrupting it. (Or it could mean both, in different ways.)

If your organization is large or mid-size, in which multiple departments or teams have distinct subcultures, be sure to take the role’s immediate subculture into account when defining the qualities the team needs.

As with all other traits in the structured interview process, assess candidates for culture fit using a rubric based on this defined set of qualities.

41. Joelle Emerson, “Want to Hire a More Diverse Set of People? Raise Your Bar.” *Medium*, May 11, 2015. https://medium.com/inclusion-insights/want-to-hire-more-diverse-people-raise-your-bar-b5d30f91cbd9

Reference Checks

Hiring managers often dread reference checks, or even neglect them. It can be difficult to get references to share truly useful information about the candidate. But reference checks are a critical due diligence step, and if they're executed with care and attention, they can help ensure that the best candidate is being hired for the position.

Here are a few ways to make checking references a useful exploration instead of a box to check.

1. **Know what you want to know.** Before contacting references, consult a list of the "must haves" from the role description. Cross off the qualities you're convinced the candidate has demonstrated to the hiring team's satisfaction through interviews and job simulations. Focus your reference checks on exploring or confirming the remaining qualities.
2. **Go beyond the contacts submitted.** While it can be useful to reach out to the references provided by the candidate (who are usually chosen because they will speak positively about the person), it is also vital to speak to other references from the candidate's previous organizations. If the hiring manager already knows others in the candidate's network, the hiring manager can call these individuals and ask them for their impressions of the candidate. The hiring manager can also ask the candidate for specific references, such as the supervisor from a particular job for which a reference wasn't originally provided. Hiring managers should speak to at least a few references for a candidate and ensure that these references represent a variety of previous work experiences.
3. **Help the reference understand the role.** As an introduction, before asking questions of the reference, describe the position you're filling and its key "must have" qualifications. Give the reference a sense of the job's responsibilities, level of seniority, and place in the organization to allow them to see the candidate in relation to the position.

4. **Frame questions that lead to useful replies.** References are often hesitant to provide any kind of "negative" information about a candidate when speaking to a potential employer. Use these strategies to make it easier for references to share helpful and honest insights into the candidate's abilities and traits:
   - **Pair positives and negatives.** In the same question, a hiring manager can ask the reference for both a positive and a negative, which may increase the chances of their sharing the latter. For example, a hiring manager could ask, "What kind of jobs would you hire this candidate for? What kinds of jobs would this candidate not be a great fit for?"
   - **Avoid yes/no questions.** Rather than asking, "Does the candidate have any learning edges or areas for improvement," a hiring manager could ask, "If you had to identify at least two learning edges for this candidate, what would they be?"
   - **Ask questions with no clear "right" answer.** Hiring managers can also ask questions that will help them assess a candidate against the "must haves" for the position, but that don't have an objective "right" answer. An example of this would be, "Some people are highly organized and precise but struggle with unexpected changes, while others are highly adaptable to changes but have less precision in their work product. Which of these sounds more like the candidate?"[42]
5. **Leave time for an open-ended conversation.** Before concluding the call, ask the reference if there is anything else that they want to share about the candidate.

RESOURCE: REFERENCE CHECKS

"Reference Checks Toolkit." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/reference-checks-toolkit/

42. Alison Green and Jerry Hauser, *Managing to Change the World*. Jossey-Bass, 2012.

4

Making an Offer

Throughout the hiring process, hiring managers and teams should remain aware that they are “selling” the position to the candidate as much as the candidate is trying to convince hiring managers and teams of their qualifications for the position. This means that throughout the process, the hiring manager needs to be able to tell a compelling story of the organization’s mission and the impact that this position has on making it possible. They also need to be able to favorably describe the organizational culture and what it’s like to work for the organization.

The final chance for a hiring manager to make this case is when they make an offer to the chosen candidate. The enthusiasm and clarity of the offer will directly impact the likelihood that it is accepted.

The hiring manager should present the offer verbally and follow up immediately with an offer letter.

Here are a few strategies for making a good offer:

- **Be prompt.** Once you've chosen your top candidate, make your job offer immediately. Every delay is another opportunity for prospects to go elsewhere or to grow less enthusiastic if they perceive that they may not be your first choice.
- **Convey enthusiasm.** The hiring manager should let the candidate know how much they want them to take this job and how excited they are about the candidate's potential at the organization. This can include touching base by phone or email while the candidate is considering the offer to answer any questions or provide any additional information they may need. Hiring managers may also want to consider having others at the organization, like a future coworker or the Executive Director/CEO, call to introduce themselves and express their enthusiasm to the candidate. While you don't want the candidate to feel inundated with communication, you do want them to feel wanted and valued.
- **Lead with a strong, clear offer.** Rather than offering the bottom of the salary range, start with a salary that is in the appropriate part of the salary range posted. Hiring managers should also be prepared, if financially possible, to negotiate somewhat to avoid losing a potential superstar staff person over a few thousand dollars. If finances are tight, you might consider what other "perks" you could offer the candidate, such as additional vacation or a particularly appealing title. Describe mentorship opportunities, flex-time policies, office amenities, and off-site events. And describe (with specificity) how future growth and performance might translate into salary increases. If your organization uses salary bands, describe what factors can lead employees to rise within the offered band or move to a higher band.
- **Offer the candidate an opportunity to connect with a staff person.** Connecting the candidate with a current staff member who is happy at work allows the candidate to ask questions about what it is like to work there and to have a more open conversation than they might feel comfortable having with the hiring manager.

- **Get a sense of what the candidate is thinking.** Ask the candidate to share their initial reaction to the offer and ask them what factors they are considering. If you sense hesitation, inquire about that so that you can provide information or adjust the offer to address any concerns the candidate might have.

Following Up With Nonhired Candidates

Interactions with the candidates you choose not to hire make a difference when it comes to your organization's ability to build a talent pool for the future. The organization might want to consider each nonhired candidate for some future hiring process. Additionally, nonhired candidates will talk to people in their networks about their experience throughout the application process. Therefore, it's both considerate and prudent to reach out to all candidates who were screened or interviewed, but not hired, to let them know you've decided on another candidate.

Timing

Wait to notify nonhired candidates until your chosen candidate has accepted your offer, all outstanding negotiations of terms are complete, and a start date is set.

RESOURCE: MAKING AN OFFER

"Making a Job Offer: Best Practices in Extending an Offer of Employment." Accolo. https://www.accolo.com/blog/all-resources/hiring-tools/courteous-respectful-and-confidential/

"Job Offer Letter Samples." Indeed. https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/job-offer-letter-samples

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Retention Strategies

Hiring, of course, is only the first step to success with personnel. Just as important is ensuring that an organization has the structures in place to support and retain employees over time.

Employee retention is a vast topic, but here are a few areas to consider as you begin further investigating how your organization can retain top talent:

- **Onboarding.** When a newly hired staff member comes on board, their experience with onboarding is their first taste of organizational culture as an employee. They are more likely to start off with a positive connection to the organization if their orientation is organized, in-depth, thoughtful, and paced, than if their orientation is disorganized, overwhelming, and rushed. In addition, onboarding should be sure to include any training or content related to the organization's approach to equity and inclusion that is important for all employees to know. Finally, while the specifics of how to do their job and how to take care of the day-to-day administrative tasks are important to an employee's success, onboarding should also bring new hires up to speed on the less-concrete aspects of organizational culture and some of the unspoken norms of the workplace, such as dress code, where and when people eat lunch, how much socializing is encouraged during the day, etc. These invisible cultural norms can sometimes be different from the norms that staff from underrepresented groups are used to. When these are not explicitly shared, these staff often have to figure them out themselves and encounter challenges along the way.
- **Skilled supervision.** One of the key factors in employees' satisfaction with their jobs is their relationships with their managers. Yet many managers are promoted into their positions after demonstrating success in domains different from management. Ensuring that all managers at an organization have been trained in effective supervision tools and techniques is one of the best ways to increase retention. In order to retain a workforce that represents groups that are currently underrepresented, it is also critical for supervisors to have training in issues related to equity and inclusion and how these apply to their roles as managers. And it is important that a staff's demographic diversity is represented not only in the administrative, entry level, and frontline staff, but also in the managerial and executive teams.

- **Professional development.** Staff want to be supported in deepening and broadening their skills in the field to improve their current work and prepare for future professional opportunities. Organizations that want to retain strong employees should consider how they can best invest in the professional development of those employees through fellowships, trainings, coaching, and more. Providing employees with opportunities to discuss their aspirations with their supervisors and work together to identify effective professional development opportunities is a great way to convey how much the organization values its staff members.
- **Mentoring.** Having someone to give advice, and with whom to process successes and challenges, is important for employees' satisfaction and engagement, especially those who represent a minority identity within the workplace. Organizations should proactively offer new staff, especially those from groups that are underrepresented on staff, opportunities for mentorship either within the organization or outside of it—and provide time and resources to support these relationships.
- **Smart, fair, clear performance evaluation processes.** Organizations that want to retain their best talent should also ensure that their performance evaluation systems are consistent, effective, and equitable. Superstar employees want to have their successes acknowledged and to know in what areas they can become even stronger. Providing regular opportunities for employees to receive this feedback is important to maintaining their investment in their role and the organization. These opportunities should be provided more frequently than once per year. Ensuring that evaluations provide timely, concrete, thoughtful insights for the employee—and that they do so in a standardized way that minimizes the impacts of bias—is critical for retention.

RESOURCES: ONBOARDING

"Onboarding Best Practices: A Guide for Onboarding New Staff." Leading Edge, October 2018. https://leadingedge.org/onboarding-guide

"Onboarding Checklist." The Management Center. http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/onboarding-checklist/

"Employee Handbook Best Practices: A Guide for Explaining How Things Work at Work." Leading Edge, November 2019. https://leadingedge.org/employee-handbook-guide

Endnote

In Pirkei Avot 4:20, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi compares judging the prowess of Torah scholars to evaluating batches of wine: "Don't look at the barrel," he teaches, "but rather at what's inside it."

If we simply follow our habits and instincts, it's easy to hire someone to fill open positions. But our habits and instincts can lead us astray. They can cause us to overlook eminently qualified people we didn't know we needed to recruit. They can allow us to judge people based on irrelevant distractions and biases. And every organization, of every size and mission, can do better than that.

Taking recruitment and hiring seriously is good for the people and communities who might otherwise be overlooked, good for our organizations that will end up with phenomenal talent, and good for bringing the world of work into line with the Jewish and human value of equal dignity.

As this guide demonstrates, a robust process for recruiting and hiring staff members is neither easy, quick, nor simple. But effectively building a team of amazing people deserves your time, your deliberate effort, and your ongoing engagement. As leaders and hiring managers, we must continue to develop our skills in this work, taking time to reflect on the lessons we learn in practice and keeping up to date with new research as it emerges.

We hope this guide can serve not only as a set of concrete tools and practices, but also as a conversation starter to use with colleagues, leaders, lay leaders, funders, and more. We envision a world in which every Jewish organization makes attracting top talent a constant and highest-priority concern, and we hope you, readers of this guide, will become ambassadors for that vision within and beyond your own organizations.

CHECKLIST:

Recruiting and hiring top talent in eight steps

- [ ] **Lay the groundwork.** Create a culture of equity and inclusion at your organization so that the best talent won't be missed or lost due to bias (before, during, and after the hiring process).

- [ ] **Define the role.** Gather your hiring team, write a detailed role description for internal use, and write a job description and announcement for external recruitment.

- [ ] **Announce the opportunity.** Check your digital first impression (what potential candidates will see when they Google you and find you on social media). Post the job in the obvious places—and the non-obvious places.

- [ ] **Build a pool.** Attract top talent through word of mouth by being a great place to work. Make building a potential talent pool a constant activity at your organization, not just something you do when a position is open. Develop networks of connectors who can help you find great people. Reach out to networks and groups beyond your current team's social networks, especially in underrepresented communities. Reach in to develop the talent already present in your organization.

- [ ] **Narrow the field with application review, phone screenings, interviews, and job simulations (assignments similar to the position's real work).** Use a structured process for equity, fairness, rigor, and proven effectiveness. Score each candidate at each step of the process according to predetermined rubrics. Communicate clearly with candidates throughout the process so they know what to expect at each stage.

- [ ] **Check references for the strongest candidate.** To ensure you receive truly useful information from references, know in advance what you want to know from them; look beyond the contacts submitted by the candidate; email references rather than calling them; help references understand the role for which the candidate is being considered; and frame questions that lead to useful replies instead of mere gushing.

- [ ] **Make an offer.** Be prompt, once you know whom you want. Convey your enthusiasm clearly. Lead with a strong offer in terms of salary, benefits, perks, future growth potential, and more. Offer the candidate a chance to connect with the staff. Get a sense of what factors the candidate is considering in weighing the offer. Once the offer is firmly accepted, follow up with nonhired candidates.

- [ ] **Retain your people.** Start with a strong onboarding process. Ensure the new hire will have skilled supervision. Provide meaningful, sustained professional development opportunities. Facilitate substantive mentoring. Ensure frequent, clear, fair, and constructive performance evaluation processes.

More resources from CareerHub, Leading Edge, and JPRO:

https://leadingedge.org/careerhub-resources

https://leadingedge.org/resources

https://jpro.org/research

https://jpro.org/programs

careerHUB