HIRE with your HEAD
HIRE with your HEAD

third edition

Using Performance-based Hiring\textsuperscript{sm} to Build Great Teams

Lou Adler

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Since the early 1990s, I've been advising business leaders in organizations ranging from JC Penney to JP Morgan Chase on how to leverage talent to meet their business objectives. One piece of advice that is a slam dunk is this: Buy a copy of Lou Adler's *Hire with Your Head* for yourself, read it, and then buy copies for every hiring manager, every recruiter, and every human resources professional in your organization. Why? Because this book offers a systematic approach to Performance-based Hiring and that is the most important thing you'll ever do to build your team.

As much as things change in the business world from week to week and year to year, there is one fact that isn't going to change: Talent is the number one asset in every organization. That has always been true, but the value of talent is even more important in the changing economy than ever before.

Organizations in every industry are trying to increase productivity and quality and they cannot rely on technology alone to achieve those objectives. As employers cut waste, introduce new technologies, and streamline operations, they put even more pressure on individuals to “add value” on a daily basis. Every operation nowadays must be lean, flexible, and high performance. Every supervisor is under pressure to get more and better work out of fewer people. That means those few people had better be really, really good.

High performance under pressure is what the real new economy is really all about. Technology implementation will continue, organizations will become even leaner, the pace of change will get even faster, competition will be even more intense, businesses will become even more customer focused, expected response times will get shorter, and productivity expectations will grow. The whole game is moving to a higher level.
That’s why there is a growing premium on people—at all ends of the skill spectrum—who can work smarter, faster, and better. You want your people to be innovative (within guidelines), passionate (within reason), and armed with sufficient discretion to make mistakes (as long as they are not too big). In lean, restructured companies, the best employees are handling more responsibility, using greater technical skill, and applying more precious human judgment than ever before. Every individual, like every business, has his or her own value proposition to offer employers in the free market for talent, which really means simply: “Here’s what I can do.” That value proposition is strictly business. One really good person is worth a whole pile of mediocre people. Really good people “can do” real things (very well and very fast) that add real value to your bottom-line. They know it just as well as managers know it.

We’re talking about that senior executive talent who can turn around a division in 18 months. The programmer who can write two lines of code for every one that an ordinary programmer writes. The call-center operator who can dazzle every customer, gather market research on the front lines, and routinely suggest improvements in the whole system. The salesperson in the field who can sell anything to anybody and who also monitors warehouse inventory and the production schedule from his palm computer. The warehouse manager who knows everybody by name and also knows the new database inside and out. The nonphysician health professional who delivers care previously reserved only for doctors. And the soldier operating a laptop computer mounted on a tank in the midst of battle who turns around, as soon as the battle is won, and plays the role of peacekeeper.

Regardless of fluctuations in the labor market, demand for those great people is going to outpace supply for the foreseeable future. And hereafter, in the real new economy, there’s going to be a perpetual struggle in the marketplace to leverage the value of labor. How do you go about sourcing, attracting, and selecting the best people?

Business leaders, managers, and hiring professionals who fail to take a long-term strategic approach to hiring in today’s rapidly changing business world will face a perpetual staffing crisis. You may be understaffed one day and overstaffed the next; the problem
is, you won’t be intelligently staffed with the right people in the right places at the right times.

If you want to be intelligently staffed, you have to hire with your head. Seize control of your talent supply chain, just as you have with other critical resources. That means you need the kind of systematic approach Lou Adler offers in this book.

Throughout most of the industrial era and until recently, the dominant staffing model for most employers was based on long-term, full-time, on-site employment relationships. But in today’s quickly changing marketplace, where employers can never predict what is just around the corner, the old-fashioned, stable, til-retirement-do-us-part employer-employee relationship just doesn’t fit. The key to continued success for companies today is the ability to adapt rapidly to new circumstances—staffing may have to expand rapidly in one skill area, or contract rapidly in another—or do both at the same time. Staffing strategy must be geared to face this reality.

People in today’s workforce want to know what you want from them today, tomorrow, next week, and next month and exactly what you have to offer them in return. Create a compelling recruiting message by answering the fundamental question people want answered: “What’s the deal?” To be effective in today’s labor market, you need to be communicating that message through an aggressive and year-round effort to a wide range of well-chosen candidate sources. Why? If you attract an applicant pool that is sufficiently large, you can be very, very selective when it comes to the ultimate hiring. You must be prepared to implement a rigorous selection process that is all about collecting proof that potential hires have the skills they need to get up to speed and start contributing right away.

What you’ll find in this book is a step-by-step process with detailed instructions for taking a logical, systematic approach to getting the right new-hire in the right place at the right time every time. We all owe Lou Adler our thanks for the third edition of this gem.

Bruce Tulgan
Author of Winning the Talent Wars and founder of RainmakerThinking, Inc.
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Preface

I became a line manager for a Fortune 100 company in my mid-20s. Within days, and with no interview training, I was sent on a corporate recruiting trip to a few of the top MBA schools in the country. The vice president of human resources (HR) called me before leaving and gave me three minutes of advice on how to interview. What he said still sticks in my mind today. It was wrong, but it was the only training I had, and it seemed reasonable at the time.

He said to consider only candidates who possessed the 4A attributes of success—assertive, affable, attractive, and articulate. With this benchmark and a decent resume, I could determine competency in 15 minutes. Or I thought I could. As I look back, this process was about 60 percent to 65 percent effective in predicting subsequent success. This was true for the 30 to 40 people I hired to work for me personally and for the 50 to 100 I recommended to work for others. I hired some duds, but I hired enough great people that I got promoted very quickly. Within six years, I was a business unit manager for a division of a Fortune 500 company. One thing I did learn was that hiring great talent is the key to a manager's career progression. I also found out that being a headhunter and helping other managers hire great people was a far more lucrative career.

THE BEST ARE DIFFERENT THAN THE REST

Despite the weak predictive value of the 4A interview approach, I still used it with great success as a headhunter in my early days. Because I started out as a contingency recruiter (i.e., I only got paid when a candidate was hired), it wasn’t too hard to find people who
met the superficial 4A criteria and who could last the short 90-day guarantee. At the time, most of our competitors offered only 60 days, so this was a competitive advantage. Everything changed when I became a retained recruiter and offered a one-year guarantee. Under this provision, the person had to actually be competent, not just appear so. A decent resume and the 4A criteria were no longer sufficient for judging talent. Finding the correct criteria for assessing talent was how Performance-based Hiring came into being. It took about five years to figure out the basics. Now, 20 years later, I’m still perfecting it. This book is pretty close.

As I studied the recruiting and hiring process, I found out some other interesting things. First, the most suitable or the best person rarely got the job; instead, the person with the best interviewing and presentations skills did. This is the old 4A conundrum: The most attractive, affable, articulate, and assertive person who was reasonably qualified generally got the offer. Worse, when people were hired this way, money typically became the primary decision criteria. Although these people were competent, they typically were unmotivated to do the actual work required since this wasn’t the basis of the selection criteria.

There were some other interesting things I discovered along the way about the differences between top people and everyone else:

➤ There is no correlation between interviewing and presentation skills and on-the-job performance. Judging people on how well they interview is a terrible way to assess ability.

➤ Top performers don’t use the same criteria or methods when looking for other jobs. Now that it’s so easy to find new jobs, more and more passive candidates now look online. However, these people are looking for bigger jobs or better jobs and more career opportunities. When they do look, they spend less time at it. Unfortunately, most advertising and screening methods are targeting the wrong pool of candidates—those who have ample time to look for similar jobs.

➤ The best people use more decision variables when deciding whether to accept an offer. They also drop out quickly
along the way if things seem incongruous or unprofessional. When getting an offer, they also take longer to decide, and they consult with more advisors. Unfortunately, most hiring processes are geared around the needs of the average candidate, not the best. For the average candidate, a new job is a tactical move based on short-term criteria. For the best, it’s a strategic move. This fundamental difference is rarely considered in a company’s hiring processes.

➤ The best candidates don’t typically have the exact mix of skills, experience, and education described in the job description. They make up for this with traits that can’t easily be filtered—potential, self-motivation, leadership, tenacity, and vision. So if a company advertises and filters totally on skills, the best are wrongly excluded from consideration.

➤ Boring job descriptions exacerbate the problem. Unless a company is an employer-of-choice, top people aren’t going to apply for run-of-the-mill jobs that seem the same as everyone else’s.

➤ Many top people get nervous when being interviewed. This reveals itself as poor eye contact, short or shallow answers, lack of poise, and less self-confidence. This excludes many good candidates for superficial reasons.

Companies that don’t design these differences into their hiring systems wind up seeing fewer top people and, by default, hire the wrong type of candidate. The best people really are different from the rest, not only in how they perform on the job, but also in how they look for new jobs and the criteria they use to accept one offer over another. Few companies take these fundamental differences into account.

The candidate-facing side is only half the problem though. Here are some other things I discovered about hiring managers and those on the hiring team that need fixing:

➤ Most hiring managers and other members of the selection team aren’t very good at interviewing, yet they all think they are. Each one also uses his or her own pet criteria to judge
competency. Much of it is downright illogical, a lot of it is prejudicial, and most of it is a waste of time.

Most members of the interviewing team don’t understand the real job, but they all have an important say, even if they’re unprepared or conduct superficial interviews. In these cases, a no vote is the safer decision, and no votes have more weight than yes votes. This is why some of the best candidates are bypassed. It’s also why many of the best people pull themselves out of the process, not wanting to work at companies that conduct superficial interviews.

The assessment process is in worse shape than the interviewing process. Too many interviewers make quick decisions about the candidates they’re interviewing, then they collect facts to support this initial biased assessment. Matters are made worse when all of the interviewers get together and use an up or down voting system with little debate or analysis to decide whether a person is hired or not. The lack of a formal evidence-based assessment process, comparable to how other major business decisions are made, is inexcusable.

When anyone on the interviewing team finds a candidate they think is hot, they go into immediate sales mode. They also stop listening and stop evaluating competency in a transparent attempt to excite the hot prospect on the merits of the job. This not only cheapens the job and drives many top people away, but also requires premium pricing. More times than not, the hot candidate is just an overpaid flash in the pan.

Very few people know how to deal with the current legal environment. Stupid things are said and done, causing companies to pay outrageous defense and liability fees that could have been simply avoided. Other companies overreact to the fear of these costs and establish policies and procedures that preclude them from hiring the best.

Few managers know how to negotiate salaries and make offers. Hiring the best requires a consultative process addressing a number of short- and long-term career management and personal issues. The best candidates must
balance these against competing alternatives. Few companies put their salespeople in the field without some type of extensive formal training. In most companies, comparable hiring and recruiting training seems to be unnecessary or too costly.

If a company wants to consistently hire superior people, it needs to implement a system that everyone uses that is designed to find and hire superior people. By default, most companies use a system that is designed to fill jobs. It's hard enough to hire one great person. It's even harder to hire 5 or 10 great people. But somehow when we get to thinking about hiring tens or hundreds, we lose sight of what it takes to hire just one great person. In this book, we show you how to hire one great person hundreds of times. For this to work, all of the problems noted earlier need to be overcome.

While I've observed all of these problems over the years, I've also observed a number of managers, HR people, and recruiters who seem to get it right most of the time. They've mastered the rules of the game. Most have learned through trial and error. I've watched them in action, then tried their ideas out. I then further refined these ideas and tried them out again. I've also tracked candidates for years to determine the best predictors of subsequent success. Eventually, a few fundamental principles became clear, which formed the foundation for a systematic process for hiring top people. This became the Performance-based Hiring methodology described in this book.

Then came the Internet, job boards, new referral programs, candidate tracking systems, new types of assessment testing, and passive candidate name-generating systems. With all of these great tools now available, everything was supposed to change. Hiring the best would be as easy as posting an ad or making a phone call. These tools overpromised and underdelivered.

In many ways, these tools made it more difficult to hire top people, not easier. For one thing, the hidden job market is no longer hidden. The new tools make it easier for a passive candidate to find another job within days. This adds more competition into the mix. For recruiters, passive candidates are now easier to find, but harder to attract with everyone emailing and calling the same people. These tools have broken down the barriers to leaving a company,
increasing workforce mobility while decreasing company loyalty. There is no longer a stigma to looking for other jobs and accepting counter-offers.

In this third edition of *Hire with Your Head*, I describe how to use these tools to your advantage, but this represents a small change in tactics, not a change in philosophy. The primary goal of this book is to show every manager and every recruiter how to hire one great person. The secondary goal is to show how to do it over again, and again, and again.

Here are seven ways to get it done:

1. **Stop using traditional boring job descriptions for advertising.** Top people don’t look for jobs based on their skills and experience. They look for jobs based on the challenges and opportunities involved.

2. **Make the job description the real job.** Most job descriptions list skills, required experiences, academics, competencies, and personality traits, with a little about duties and responsibilities. This is more a people description than a job description. Instead, define what people need to do with their skills and experiences. These are called performance profiles. You’ll use them to screen, assess, and recruit every one of your candidates.

3. **When the supply of top talent is less than the demand, you need to design your advertising and sourcing programs and systems based on how the best look for new jobs.** Somehow, most companies have not considered this fundamental principle of marketing and economics when creating their hiring and recruiting processes.

4. **During the interview, forget the clever questions.** Instead, dig deeply into a person’s major accomplishments to observe trends of growth and patterns of behaviors. Then compare these to the performance objectives stated in the performance profile. This is the core of the performance-based interviewing process described in this book.

5. **Hire people who are both competent and motivated to do the work.** It’s easy to measure competency, but don’t stop there even if the person is affable, outgoing, and interested in your job.
To assess true motivation, you’ll need to look for multiple examples of where the person has excelled and the underlying environment and circumstances.

6. During the interview, put your emotions in the parking lot. Implement an evidence-based assessment process, which means use the interview to collect information, not to make a decision. The decision is made later in a formal meeting where all interviewers share this unbiased information to reach consensus. Watch your accuracy soar with this simple system.

7. As the competition for talent intensifies, strong recruiting skills are essential for hiring top people on a consistent basis. This requires strong consultative selling skills in combination with great jobs, an interviewing process based on deep job-matching, and the hiring manager’s total involvement. Too many companies still rely on a transactional approach to recruiting based on money, charming or pushing a candidate into acceptance.

Collectively, these ideas and principles are embedded in the Performance-based Hiring process described in this book. However, this book is not about principles; it’s about tactics. It describes how to hire one great person again and again. Don’t lose sight of this concept as you build systems to hire dozens or hundreds of great people. Each great person is unique. Treat him or her this way. Implemented properly, Performance-based Hiring can become your systematic process for hiring top talent.

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HIRE with your HEAD
A RUDE AWAKENING—WHAT IT REALLY TAKES TO GET AHEAD

I still remember the following situation like it was yesterday. I got the call sometime in the morning on a mid-October day in 1972 at my first management job, financial planning manager at Rockwell International’s Automotive Group in Troy, Michigan. At the time, I was working on my first presentation, due the next day, to the Group’s president and vice president of finance. It was going to be a very long day and night. I didn’t mind, since my new wife hadn’t made the move to Michigan yet. My boss, Chuck Jacob, and the reason for my being in Michigan, was on the phone with a desperate plea. Chuck was a 29-year-old Harvard MBA whiz kid, just out of Ford Motor Company, trying to prove to everyone that he deserved his position as controller for this multibillion-dollar automotive
supplier. He was also my idol. I listened. He was over at the University of Michigan interviewing MBA students for planning analyst positions to fill out our department. We needed these people urgently. The good news—too many had signed up for the interview, and Chuck needed me there to interview the overflow. We were going head-to-head with Ford, Procter & Gamble, IBM, and every other top Fortune 500 company, who wanted the best candidates from this prestigious MBA program. He told me there were stars in this group that we needed on our team. The bad news—I didn’t have a minute to spare. I protested, vehemently, pleading 14-hour days, a long night, and a critical presentation the next day. There was a momentary delay. Chuck’s response still blasts in my ears today: “There is nothing more important to your success than hiring great people! Nothing. We’ll somehow get the work done. Get your over here now.” He then hung up.

I was there within the hour. Together we interviewed about 20 people, took eight of them to dinner that night in Ann Arbor, and hired three of the top MBA students within two weeks. I’ve lost track of Russ, Joe, and Vivek, but I want to thank them and Chuck (who passed away at a too-early age) for an invaluable lesson: **There is nothing more important—to your personal and company success—than hiring great people. Nothing.** Chuck and I got back to the office at 10:00 P.M. that night and worked together until 3:00 A.M. to finish the report. The handwritten version was presented the next day to Bob Worsnop and Bill Panny. We apologized for the format and lack of preparation, but told them we were doing something more important. They agreed.

### BENCHMARKING THE BEST

I learned 50 percent of what I needed to know about hiring that day. Since then, I’ve been trying to understand the rest. I’m not quite there yet, but close. For the past 30-plus years, I’ve been fortunate to be able to work with other people, like Chuck, who always seem to hire great people, year in and year out. Few have had any formal training. They learned through trial and error. Equally important, I’ve lived and worked with managers who’ve made every possible hiring mistake in the book. This is their book, too. It’s the collective stories of the good and the bad, sharing what to do and what not to do. There are some great techniques in this book, but none are
more important than your belief that hiring great people is the single most important thing you can do to ensure your own success.

Many years later, I heard Red Scott’s adage, “Hire smart, or manage tough.” As far as I was concerned, this summarized everything. I’ve never met anybody who could manage tough enough. No matter how hard you try, you can never atone for a weak hiring decision. A weak candidate rarely becomes a great employee, no matter how much you wish or how hard you work. Instead, hire smart. Use the same time and energy to do it right the first time. Brian Tracy of Nightingale-Conant fame said on one of his audio programs that effective hiring represents 95 percent of a manager’s success. This seems a little high, but from what I’ve seen, 70 percent to 80 percent seems about right to me. This is still enough to keep hiring top talent in the number one position.

Every manager says hiring great people is their most important task; however, few walk the talk. Although important, it never seems urgent enough until it’s too late. When it really comes down to the actual hiring process, our words don’t match our actions. Here’s how you can quickly test yourself to see how well you score as a hiring manager. Rank the performance of every member of your own team. Are most of them top-notch and exceeding expectations on all aspects of their work without being pushed? If they are, consider yourself a strong manager. Unless you’re hiring people like this 80 percent to 90 percent of the time, you need to throw out everything you’ve learned about hiring, and start with a fresh new slate. If you’re already in the elite 80 percent to 90 percent, don’t relax. We’re undergoing some major workforce shifts that will make it even more difficult to continue to hire great people every time.

Ongoing demographic changes, global expansion, the Internet, and the great dot-com boom and bust changed the hiring rules forever. This resulted in a cultural shift of major proportions. Changing jobs every few years no longer carries the stigma it did pre-2000. Company loyalty is no longer a hallmark of character. It is no wonder, considering that reductions in pension plans, the shifting of the cost of health care to the employee, and the outsourcing of whole departments have forced each employee to look out for him- or herself. Companies no longer set the hiring rules, the best people do. While this has always been true, evidence abounds that this shift is accelerating. Just consider the increase in turnover. Retention is now the new buzzword and focus, as companies attempt to stem
the tide of their best people leaving for greener pastures. Unfortunately, most companies are still using outdated hiring processes to find top people in a modern world. Posting boring jobs on a major board is out of date.

This book is about hiring top people. Finding them, interviewing them, and recruiting them to work for you. Many of the techniques presented in this book have been developed by observing people who consistently hire top people. This is a process called benchmarking and much of the material in the book has been developed this way. Some of the concepts were developed through trial and error as part of my search practice and then tested and validated in the field. Benchmarking and modeling the best practices are the cornerstone of the Performance-based Hiring process described in this book.

Modeling your hiring practice after the managers and recruiters who consistently find and hire good people is similar to modeling after the good performers for any type of job. This is pretty simple. Just find out what the most successful people do that makes them successful, and find other people who can do the same things. It turns out you don’t need to be a trained psychologist to hire good people. Psychologists look for the underlying traits of high performers. Why bother? Just look for high performers. They’ll possess the necessary underlying traits.

As a result of these benchmarking studies, an interesting pattern has been observed: The best hiring decision is not intuitive or based on gut feelings. Instead, it involves a three-step process:

1. **Remain objective throughout the interviewing process, fighting the impact of first impressions, biases, intuition, prejudices, and preconceived notions of success.** This way, all information collected during the interview is both relevant and unbiased.

2. **Collect information across multiple job factors, rather than deciding quickly if the candidate is suitable for the job based on a narrow range of traits, like technical competency, intelligence, or affability.** Collecting the right information before deciding yes or no is the key here.

3. **Use an evidence-based approach to determine whether the candidate is motivated and competent to meet all job needs.** This involves some
type of formal decision-making process based on evaluating the evidence rather than using an up/down voting system.

From my observations, it appears that weaker interviewers and those managers who make many mistakes violate one or more of these rules. A large percentage of these mistakes are made by smart people who make quick simplistic judgments largely based on first impressions and personality. Not unexpectedly, their hiring results are random. The overly intuitive interviewer short-circuits the process, superficially assessing only a narrow group of important traits. Every now and then, a star is hired, but more often it’s a person who is strong in only a few areas and not broad enough to handle all aspects of the position. If you’ve ever hired someone who is partially competent, you’ve fallen into this common trap. The technical interviewers are at the other extreme. These people go overboard on validating technical competency, ignoring other critical core skills like working with others, planning, budgeting, and meeting deadlines. While the result is a solid team, many of them lack the motivation to do the real work required. The key to hiring both competent and highly motivated people is to collect enough of the right facts. Trouble occurs when this balance is broken.

Hiring is too important to leave to chance

If you want to hire superior people, use a system designed to hire superior people, not one designed to fill jobs. Even with all of the new available technology, most companies do not take full advantage of it. The emphasis seems to be on reducing costs and filling jobs as rapidly as possible, not hiring stronger people or minimizing hiring mistakes. Hiring the best must drive every aspect of a company’s hiring process, especially if you want to redesign the hiring process you now have.

If you want to hire superior people, use a system designed to hire superior people, not one designed to fill jobs.
Throughout, I cite some great books on management and hiring, specifically:

- **Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done** by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, with Charles Burck.
- **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don’t** by Jim Collins.
- **First, Break All the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently** by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman.
- **Winning** by Jack Welch and Suzy Welch.
- **Jack: Straight from the Gut** by Jack Welch, with John A. Byrne.

Each of these books should be read by everyone who is a manager or wants to be one. They set the stage. The one common theme is that hiring top people must be the primary task of all managers, and companies must establish the tools and the resources to do it right. While these books emphasize the importance of hiring top talent, none describe how to actually do it. That’s what this book is about.

Hiring the best requires a system designed around the needs of hiring the best people. This is what Performance-based Hiring offers—a simple and scalable business process that can be used by small companies with just a few people or large corporations that employ tens of thousands. Even better, it works whether you’re hiring large numbers of entry-level people or one CEO.

Wells Fargo is now rolling out Performance-based Hiring in their retail stores to hire tellers and bankers. American International Group (AIG) is now using Performance-based Hiring to hire managers, insurance sales reps, and customer service reps for their call centers. Broadcom, Cognos, and Quest are using the process to find and hire software development engineers throughout the world. HealthEast Care System in Minneapolis uses it to hire nurses and nurses aides. The YMCA is using Performance-based Hiring to hire area CEOs and branch managers to manage their facilities, as well as thousands of camp counselors every summer. And the list goes on at companies large and small, in the United States and abroad. These companies recognize that hiring top talent is not the same as getting requisitions filled, and they have found that Performance-based Hiring is the solution.
At its core, hiring the best is about understanding how the best people look for new jobs and how they decide to accept one job over the other. It's about why they decide to take, or not take, a counteroffer. It's about why they take one job over another even if the pay is less. Hiring the best is not about setting up an applicant tracking system or posting a traditional job description on some job board. Hiring the best is not about managing data more efficiently, but about managing the right data more efficiently.

Not understanding what motivates recruiters, managers, and the best candidates, and how they make decisions is the reason hiring is more challenging now than it was pre-Internet. Top candidates now have more choices than ever before, and it's easy for these people to find new jobs. The openness of the job market has made it far easier for a top person who is a little frustrated with his or her job to find something better. Unless you take into account this major increase in workforce mobility in your hiring and retention process, you are doomed to forever play catch-up.

The following 11 reasons are some easily correctable problems that prevent companies from attracting enough top people. As you read through the list, consider how many are representative of your company's hiring processes:

1. **Hard-to-find job openings**: Do you push jobs to candidates or do they still have to hunt to find your openings? With so many choices, the best candidates won't waste their time looking for needles in haystacks. Few companies use standard search-engine techniques to allow top people to quickly find their open positions. We had one client whose ad for 20 call center reps was on page 37 of a 40-page Monster.com listing. More candidates now Google to find possible opportunities, bypassing career boards altogether. What would happen if a potential candidate put a few keywords and skills into Google, the name of your city, and a standard title? It's important that your openings are prominently featured on the first page of your corporate website.

2. **Poorly designed career web sites**: When candidates click on your company's web site, ensure that they can find all available jobs without using generic, time-consuming, pull-down menu choices. Most career sites make it too difficult for good people with little time to explore career opportunities
and check out open jobs. There are many interactive web features available today to attract people and keep them involved. Unfortunately, few HR/recruiting departments have kept pace with technology in this important area.

3. **Boring ads:** Most posted job descriptions are nothing more than lists of skills, qualifications, and required experiences. These commodity-like jobs certainly aren’t written to compel a top person to apply or check them out. In many cases the prospect can’t even check them out or explore them further unless he or she formally registers with the site. If it was a marketing site, those interested could send emails or call for more information. Something similar could be offered to the career section. For the call center position noted previously, the ad itself was boring, demeaning, and exclusionary. We rewrote it, made it fun and compelling, got it to the top five on the Monster.com listing, and had 280 people apply in one day.

4. **A cumbersome application process:** Applying for most jobs is so cumbersome and time consuming it precludes the best people from even applying because they don’t have time to waste. This makes no sense. The application process used by most companies is designed around the needs of people the company doesn’t want to hire. Monster.com revealed a study that indicated that if the application form is automatically filled in using techniques to extract information from the candidate’s resume, there is a 75 percent chance the person will actually apply. If the form is blank, there is only a 20 percent chance the person will apply. Incorporate these ideas into every step of the process.

5. **Lack of basic consumer marketing expertise:** Most companies don’t track the end-to-end yield of those initially viewing an ad to those actually applying. This is a common technique used by all marketing groups that use Internet advertising to maximize their advertising effectiveness. Somehow, HR/recruiting think all that’s needed is to post a boring ad and the best people will knock down their doors.

6. **Lackadaisical managers:** Every manager believes the answer to hiring stronger people is having their recruiters source