



You're Not the Person I Hired

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Authors' Bios: Janet Boydell, Barry Deutsch and Brad Remillard are partners in IMPACT Hiring Solutions, a nationally recognized retained executive search firm. IHS also helps companies reduce turnover, retain top talent, and become talent magnets.

Authors' Big Thought: This book was written with one goal in mind: to help companies avoid hiring mistakes. It presents powerful tools to revolutionize how you hire

Chapter Notes:

Introduction:

The Top Ten Hiring Mistakes And How To Avoid Them

- You're Not The Person I Hired! Is a guide that can make sure the person you bring into a critical job is, in fact, the person he or she appears to be.
- The authors' research focusing on more than 20,000 hiring executives during the past fifteen years has identified the most common mistakes made in hiring. Through the course of their analysis, they determined the actual failure rate for newly hired managers and executives reaches a staggering 56% in many mid-sized and large organizations.
- The ten most frequent mistakes, in reverse rank order, were:
 10. Desperation Hiring: shallow sourcing and superficial interviews that failed to identify potential pitfalls.
 9. Ignoring Top Candidates Needs: (55%)
 8. Failure To Probe For Core Success Factors - self-motivation, leadership, comparable past performance, job-specific problem solving, and adaptability.
 7. Fishing in shallow waters: The search attracted only "Aggressive" candidates without seeking "Selective" and "Sleeper" candidates. (62%).
 6. Performance Bias: Interviews and offers were rewarded to the "best actor," not the best candidate (63%).
 5. Historical Bias: The hiring company used only past performance to predict future results (68%).
 4. Snap Judgment: Hiring teams relied too heavily on first impressions to make final hiring decisions (72%).
 3. Inappropriate "Prerequisites" Used Too Early In Selection Process. Specific education, technical skills, and industry experience to screen out qualified candidates (76%).

2. Superficial interviewing: Candidates' backgrounds and claims were not deeply probed or verified (92%).

1. Inadequate job descriptions drove the hiring process; these focused solely on experience and skills, not company expectations. A staggering 93%.

The Causes Of Hiring Mistakes

- *Inadequate preparation.* Rarely had the hiring companies outlined a detailed, measurable definition of "success" that could be used to source, evaluate, and select candidates.
- *Lack of information.* And training about how to hire more effectively at the executive level.
- *"Human nature."* Preconscious perceptions and nonverbal cues.

The authors use the following eight steps, The Success Factor Methodology, to help companies hire Top Talent.

- Step 1. Build The Success Factor Snapshot [™]
 - Clearly defines what the new executive must achieve during the first twelve to eighteen months, and dramatically increases hiring accuracy.
- Step 2. Plan Collaborative Sourcing Strategy
 - A thorough sourcing plan that identifies specific channels where highly desirable Selective and Sleeper candidates may be reached. This ensures a deep pool of Top 5% Talent.
- Step 3. Identify And Verify Success Prospects
 - Ensure that potential candidates grasp the company vision.
- Step 4. Create Candidate Profiles
 - This process calls attention to each candidate's unique value, highlights his or her strengths, and identifies any potential sticking points that will need to be overcome to ensure a successful hire.
- Step 5. Coordinate Success Factor Interviews
 - This step helps separate the best performers from the best interviewers.
 - The Five Key Questions interview helps to determine not only who can do the job, but also who will be the most adaptable and fit into the company's culture and working environment. Once our client has identified the final one or two candidates, conduct deep reference and background checks.
- Step 6. Overcome Obstacles To Hire
 - Work through potential problems like relocation issues, family objections, counteroffers, and "cold feet."
- Step 7. Facilitate Compensation And Benefits Negotiation
- Step 8. Transition and Follow-up

Section 1: You Bet Your Company

Chapter 1: Past Experience Is No Guarantee Of Future Results

- When newly hired executives fail to meet expectations, it's generally because success was never clearly defined in advance.
- To successfully hire a Top 5% candidate, companies need to identify what results they want from the new hire in the first year.

- Once there's a roadmap in place, every other step of the hiring process needs to support finding, interviewing, and closing the candidate who clearly demonstrates his or her ability to meet expectations.
- When companies hire a six-figure executive, they expect them to "hit the ground running" and produce results quickly. According to surveys of more than 20,000 hiring executives over the past fifteen years and a review of published literature on the subject of executive failure, roughly 56% of newly hired executives fail within two years starting new jobs.
- The most common root causes of much executive failure are:
 - Focusing on irrelevant, nebulous expectations, failure to clearly communicate expectations up front and flawed hiring processes.
- According to a study by the Corporate Leadership Council, hiring the wrong executive can cost an organization as much as three times their annual salary. The Gallup Organization has noted that the cost of poor hiring decisions may even be much higher than previously estimated. Some researchers have calculated the cost of a bad hire can be as high as twenty - four times the position's base salary.
- This book is designed to give you a structured set of tools and processes that will let you do for yourself what the authors do for their clients: identify and remedy the most common mistakes in executive hiring, and revamp your company's hiring process to be able to attract the Top 5% of talent in your industry.
- In the executive suite, the Top 5% are those rare people who outperform their peers and consistently create profitable businesses that grow at a sustainable rate.
- Focusing on candidates' experience alone is the wrong way to approach hiring. There are far more critical facts that must be uncovered and evaluated—namely their performance, results, success, and potential adaptability to your organization.
- Executives fail because the traditional hiring process focuses on things like schools, degrees, years of experience, past employers, etc.) that are not directly relevant, recent, or applicable to the hiring company's requirements and conditions.
- Setting clearly defined and quantifiable performance goals before the executive job search begins takes extra effort. The successful candidates—those who beat the 56% rule—are recruited and screened based on specific expectations regarding future success.
- Executives who precisely match what is expected are significantly more successful at helping companies reach profit goals.
- Hiring really good people isn't magic. It is a highly developed skill. Like other skills, it can be learned. But sometimes before you are able to learn a new skill, you must unlearn others. In other words, before you can improve your hiring results, you've got to break your organization of its ways of doing things. You and your hiring executives are going to have to unlearn everything you all thought you knew about hiring.
- The One Big Secret to hiring Top 5% Talent is this: You must design and put into place a hiring system that:
 - Precisely identifies what quantifiable results you want from our new hire during the first year
 - Mines deeply for the best candidates, no matter where they are
 - Structures interviews to unearth the most relevant predictors of success
 - Assesses accurately and moves only highly qualified candidates to the next step
 - Results in offers only to candidates who are capable of meeting your clearly defined expectations—the Top 5%.

Chapter 2: The Crapshoot Hiring Syndrome

- Typical hiring practices aren't a reliable or valid process— They're a crapshoot. You bet your company, roll the dice, and hope you'll get what you need.
- Typical hiring practices are a pseudo-process that rely on luck, not fail-safe procedures. A structured, systematic process develops only when you identify and unlearn old bad habits and then practice new ways to achieve desired results. Recruiting ads and interviews shouldn't focus on what the last person in the job had; instead, they need to focus like a laser beam on what the next person will need to do
- The most pervasive symptoms of Crapshoot Hiring are:
 - Dependence on luck
 - The illusion of clarity
 - Tribal hiring practices
 - Desperation hiring
 - Hiring based on "experience" and "skills" rather than success
- Success in hiring comes from having a structured, systematic, rigorous business process focused on attracting and assessing Top 5% Talent.

Chapter 3: Maybe If We Give It More Time It Will Work Out

- You must identify problem executives right away. Whether it is a new hire or a promotion gone wrong, giving people "a little more time" may be more harmful than helpful.
- When expectations are not being met, it is almost guaranteed that performance will not improve with more time. In most cases, time will just make things worse.
- If a new hire (or longtime employee, for that matter) is not living up to expectations, you must be emotionally strong enough to recognize the problem and take immediate action to remedy the situation. A bad hire or promotion is usually evident within the first three to six months.
- Obviously, new managers who are struggling to adapt to their new position should not be hung out to dry, stranded without transition support, or mercilessly drummed out without discussion. But there is a huge difference between positively waiting for things to change and making a proactive effort to clarify expectations.
- Clearly define the expectations for the position. Developing a(SFS) Success Factor Snapshot (see Chapter 6) for the problematic position will give you a means to measure and manage your executive's performance. Do this up front to ensure success from the beginning, rather than trying to catch up later.
- The SFS can also help you to deal with individuals in your organization who are faltering. The SFS helps to reset and clarify expectations for currently underperforming employees, as well as identify issues that need to be addressed with existing executives.
- Before you bring down the hatchet on a faltering employee, be sure they have all the information they need to succeed.
- Examine the cost of giving the bad hire chance after chance. Once you have clearly documented the direct costs and lost opportunity costs of your mediocre employee, take immediate action to identify and hire a Top 5% individual for that role. You'll feel like a weight has been lifted from your shoulders.
- For most CEOs and key executives, having to fire someone is the most unpleasant thing they are faced with in a business setting. It's gut wrenching and causes sleepless nights. An

executive who wants to give an under-performer “a little more time” usually rationalizes inaction in one of the following ways:

- *“I Am Super Coach!”* In a rare case coaching would help. But more often than not, executives who have walked down this well-worn path can tell you that at the end of it, you will find the very same dead end.
- *“She’s got it all—we can’t lose!”* The person has a long list of impressive credentials. When results are not materializing—you find it nearly impossible to believe. It can’t be the superstar. It must be something else.
- *“He’s my man!”* Blind loyalty and friendship should never cloud your judgment on performance.
- *“I don’t want them to know I screwed up!”* Admitting that a hire was a mistake is tough.
- *“I can’t have an empty desk.”* You do not want to be burdened with extra work while you spend more time and resources looking for yet another new hire.

Section 2: Forget Everything You Know

Chapter 4: Hiring The Right Person ALWAYS Takes Too Long

- Just like job hunters, hiring executives need to budget realistic amounts of time—and effort—for results-oriented searches.
- The process of finding and hiring Top 5% Talent takes hard work, and that, in turn, takes time. It’s best if everybody recognizes this fact at the outset.
- Top 5% Talent is not surfing the online job boards or looking through Help Wanted ads in trade publications. They are busy doing their job—and doing it well. Add to that the fact their current employer is usually doing everything to ensure they are happy and not considering greener pastures.
- Four types of workers comprise the total talent pool for every position:
 - *Non-candidates* – Not Open To Any Opportunity. Very settled in current position. A “lifer” or near-future retiree who is actively resistant to the possibility of change.
 - *Sleeper Candidates* – Unconsciously Open To a Better Opportunity -Successful and happy in current position. Not looking, no current resume, but open-minded. May initially be resistant. Can be brought around for a compelling opportunity and motivational factors. Requires professional sourcing and recruiting.
 - *Selective Candidates* – Consciously Open To a Better Opportunity. Employed and satisfied. May have a current resume. Checks job boards occasionally for compelling positions, but not actively pursuing a job change. Requires savvy recruiting. Critical source of Top 5% Talent.
 - *Aggressive Candidates* – Actively Seeking a New Position May be unemployed or unhappy in current position. Actively seeking employment; applying for numerous positions, actively interviewing, eager to find a new job and may not be selective about the job or company. Responds to numerous ads hoping for a call. 80% of applicants; marginal source of Top 5% Talent.
- Thorough searches must reach Selective and Sleeper Candidates as well as Aggressive ones. Selective and Sleeper Candidates—are usually the most difficult and costly to source. They are also the candidates who are most worth finding—the group that is most likely to contain Top 5% Talent.

- Each requires a different approach to find, recruit, persuade, and close. The critical difference is their level of immediate openness to the possibility of a new position.
- A fast search is by necessity a superficial search. It will begin and end, of necessity, with the majority coming from the Aggressive Candidate Pool.
- If a recruiter tells you they can complete a systematic, detail-oriented, well sourced, thoroughly successful executive or managerial search in six to eight weeks, every hair on the back of your neck should stand up and you should get that guarantee in writing. A highly effective, successful search is going to take on average fourteen weeks, depending on a wide variety of factors.
- One of the ten top hiring mistakes in our study is that companies do not invest enough time to source “Selective” and “Sleeper” candidates. In a quick search, Aggressive candidates make up a vast majority of the pool, entirely missing the most likely source of Top 5% Talent.
- Finding the Top 5% may require screening 300+ people for an open position.
- Desperation Hiring doesn’t work. Investing in a proven system to find the right person will actually save time, money and deliver desired results in years ahead.
- If a vacancy already exists, and speed really is, for whatever reason, the number one criterion for filling a job, prospective clients have three choices:
 1. Conduct a lightning-fast but cursory search of Aggressive Candidates. This kind of search can be finished in a month.
 2. Do a limited search through multiple search firms, all of which forward a slew of resumes, which in turn are box checked against a standard job description. This kind of search can be wrapped up in eight to ten weeks.
 3. Take a deep breath, swallow your objections and commit to fixing your hiring process now, once and for all.
- If you are committed to hiring Top 5% Talent, there is no shortcut. Companies that thrive end up figuring this out, one way or another. Organizations that take the “quick and dirty” way out inevitably do the same searches over and over again.
- Investing “extra” time up front to make sure you find the right candidate pays off in multiples down the road.
- When you are tempted to rush a hire, think in terms of Return on Investment over the course of years, not months.

Chapter 5: Traditional Job Descriptions Are Worthless

- CEOs who take the time to determine clear organizational objectives and tie them to each executive’s performance expectations ensure flawless execution as they pursue their vision and strategy.
- Overall business strategy, vision, the annual operating plan, and interdependencies among these lead directly to the construction of a useful job description—not the other way around.
- The job description is the last thing a hiring executive should think about—not the first. Before individual goals can be spelled out, the company’s goals must be crystal clear.
- Individual position goals are the result of Success Factor Linkage- trickle-down motion that begins at the top of the organization, extends to departmental goals, and finally ends with specific position goals.

- The Success Factor Methodology is, at its core, a structured set of tools to help business leaders envision and define success at all levels. It translates vision into action in a chain reaction, just like tumbling dominos. Only complete alignment leads to success.
- Sometimes goals are monetary; sometimes they involve launching and completing a critical project; sometimes they involve increasing market share, opening a new branch of business, spinning off divisions, or acquiring other companies.
- Knowing what you want to accomplish is the only way to designate meaningful, measurable sub-goals for employees.
- Setting goals throughout the organization is a cascading operation that moves objectives downward through the organization. Individual position goals are the last to be specified, based on input from higher-level goals. The Success Factor Methodology ensures that this happens in the right order.
- Once organizational goals are established through some form of strategic or business planning, the next step is to link them to functional area goals in order to create position goals. This alignment of cascading goals is called the Success Factor Linkage™ (SFL).
- Interdepartmental squabbling and infighting are signs of a team that doesn't see the whole vision. The company's goals are not yet crystal clear.
- You get what you define. If job descriptions focus on minimums, you will in all likelihood attract people who can achieve only the minimum.
- The authors contend that job descriptions are completely worthless. For hiring top talent. Traditional job descriptions simply lump together an amalgam of skills, knowledge, abilities, attributes, responsibilities, years of experience, education, and behavioral adjectives—none of which are consistent predictors of on-the-job success.
- In their survey, *The Top Ten Hiring Mistakes*, they discovered that the number one hiring mistake is using an inadequate job description to guide the hiring process. The harsh reality is, when you define a job in mediocre terms, you tend to attract and interview mediocre people.
- What counts most, in both sports and business, is not what traits you bring to the game, but what you can accomplish by using those traits.
- The Success Factor Methodology moves hiring out of the realm of static traits and into the realm of action and results.
- The Success Factor Snapshot replaces the traditional job description, and is a tool that breaks down a position's requirements in terms of specific, measurable deliverables, benchmarks, and timetables.
- Organizations should ultimately create Success Factor Snapshots for every position in the organization, because each SFS ties individual performance into the organization's objectives. The single most critical thing you can do to improve your hiring process is to use the SFS to align all your company's cascading goals. The SFS is the "hub" around which everything else revolves.
 - *Position Scope And Pay.* The SFS drives what the level, compensation, and scope of the job should be—not the other way around.
 - *Candidate Sourcing.* It prompts you to think about where you should look to attract a larger pool of Top Talent.
 - *Compelling Marketing Statement.* The SFS is the core of portraying the job as a compelling opportunity.

- *Interview Process.* Putting together a SFS gives you a built-in structure for interviews, helping your hiring team focus 100% on what needs to be done. Success Factors also provide the substance for several core interview questions that ensure a high-quality, equitable interview process.
- *Candidate Assessment.* Focuses on a candidate's ability to deliver results comparable to those defined in the SFS. In addition, it helps the hiring team to conduct a fair and objective comparison.
- *Validation Process.* The SFS leads to a final, specific set of verification questions.
- *Candidate Assimilation.* Because clarifying and interviewing for defined expectations will provide a smoother transition and candidate assimilation.
- *Candidate Retention and Motivation.*
- *Performance Management.* The SFS is the driving force for managing the performance of an individual employee. It provides the vehicle for coaching and objective discussions around performance, both on a monthly basis and in annual performance reviews.
- Primary reasons for the 56% failure rate of new executives are:
 - Focusing on irrelevant experience and skills
 - Nebulous expectations
 - Failure to clearly communicate expectations up front
 - Flawed hiring processes
- The SFS addresses these issues head-on. It eliminates irrelevant experiences and skills from the equation; it clarifies expectations; the new hire knows what is expected prior to coming on board; and, it starts the hiring process down the right path.
- The Success Factor Methodology and Success Factor Snapshot (SFS) are tools that require up-front thinking about overall company goals. While such analysis may seem peripheral to filling an empty post, in point of fact it is absolutely critical.

Chapter 6: Building A Success Factor Snapshot

- When the goal is large, the obstacles are many, and the timing is critical, we tend instinctively to approach projects in a step-by-step, manageable sequence, breaking down the larger goal into smaller, bite-sized" pieces.
- Hiring requires a project-management approach, just as any other complex endeavor.
- The Success Factor Methodology "projectizes" the hiring process.
- The core of the Success Factor Methodology is the Success Factor Snapshot (SFS), which replaces the traditional job description and completely drives all of the hiring processes. This unique document ties an individual's success directly to the organization's operating plan.
- The SFS pulls together concise statements of important interim accomplishments called "Success Factors" for which a position holder will be held accountable at the end of a specific period— usually twelve to eighteen months. In most executive and managerial positions, six to eight Success Factors are critical to success within such a timeframe.
- SOAR (Substantial departmental goal -> Obstacles → Action →- Results) is a methodology that helps the hiring team to structure the definition of work for each position in specific, measurable terms.
- This template is available for downloading on the HRI Web site (www.Impacthiringsolutions.com).

- Four steps produce the SFS: 1) Assemble the hiring team and identify 3-4 substantial departmental goals. 2) For each substantial goal, define 2-3 Obstacles, Actions, and Results. 3) Consolidated into individual Success Factors. 4) Compile the Success Factors into the Success Factor Snapshot.
- The heart and soul of leadership is defining success at the individual level and linking that success to the organizational goals.
- The core of leadership in an organization is the ability—and willingness—to define key results and expectations in concrete, unambiguous terms, and then to leverage teams in order to achieve those goals.
- Not defining Success at the individual level is an abdication of leadership.

Chapter 7: How To Attract The Bottom Third Of Candidates

- Top 5% Talent does not need your job, so they won't be reached through halfhearted and redundant sourcing.
- The Top 5% are generally already employed in jobs where they are happy (or at least comfortable). They have pensions building up. They're on a promotion track. Most Sleeper candidates have not even thought to look for another job in years, while Selective candidates lay apply for an especially compelling opportunity.
- These are not people who are going to walk into the HR Department. You need to attract them through means beyond traditional want ads, arguing that your situation is a better opportunity than their current role or other roles they may be evaluating.
- Regardless of these facts, research showed that the sole strategy used by the majority of companies for sourcing candidates is: Expose the open position through traditional want ads to those people who are actively seeking a new job.
- Typical methods of looking for candidates are ineffective because they only skim the surface of the market.
- The Top Five Worst Sourcing Strategies:
 5. Run an ad in the local newspaper or an online job site
 4. Use an outplacement firm
 3. Ask friends and family for recommendations
 2. Hope for a good walk-in applicant
 1. No strategy at all
- A successful search for a key hire requires a broad-based approach, incorporating numerous concurrent strategies, to sourcing the candidate.
- To find that ideal candidate, you create a sourcing plan that is specific to your needs and explores new avenues for finding that Top 5% Talent.
- Begin with a compelling statement that focuses on the motivations of Top 5% candidates.
- The Success Factor Snapshot will dictate the search strategy and sourcing channels you'll use to find a Top 5% candidate.
- Once the sourcing channels have been identified, decide how to leverage the Compelling Marketing Statement.
- Write Compelling Marketing Statements that are about the candidate, not the company. If you want to find the perfect candidate, speak to their dreams and wishes. Top Talent doesn't care what you want as an employer—they want to know, "What's in it for me?" They want their career dreams and wishes fulfilled.
- There are four key components to writing an effective Compelling Marketing Statement:

1. *The Headline* - You must break through all the clutter and smack potential readers with a figurative brick between the eyes. Another tactic is to allude to current news, music, pop culture, events, or movies.
 2. *The Challenge* - The challenge should be crafted in a way that gets right at the heart of why someone might be open to a better opportunity.
 3. *The Vision* - Ideally, you will be able to sum up your vision for the entire business in two or three compact statements, and then identify one or two ways the new hire will help to achieve. Understanding the vision and their role in it is one of the most critical decision factors for Top Talent.
 4. *The Success Factors* – The final component of a Compelling Marketing Statement is the top 2-3 Success Factors from the Success Factor Snapshot. Top 5% Talent want to know what they are going to be held accountable for, what type of impact they're going to have on your company, and what that project/impact might mean for their personal career. Offer a brief insight in two or three lines.
- There are three ways to use the completed Compelling Marketing Statement in your search for Top 5% Talent. Build a more effective sourcing plan by concurrently targeting your employees' natural networks, online advertising, and the candidate natural networks.
 - First, you can leverage the power of your employees' natural networks through an effective employee referral program. Your best people already know other great people.
 - The second key sourcing target should be online job boards, simply because you need to make the position as visible as possible. Leave an online job advertisement up for just two weeks at a time. It sometimes takes three or four iterations of the Compelling Marketing Statement before you tap into the right motivations of candidates you're seeking to attract.
 - A third key sourcing tactic is to disseminate the word to leverage other "natural" networks where potential candidates may reside.
 - Think along two dimensions for this sourcing strategy:
 - First, where do the candidates you desire to attract spend time with each other? What locations and places do they congregate to pursue professional, learning, educational, hobbies, and other interests?
 - Second, what groups do they belong to, either online or offline?
 - For most positions at an executive or managerial level, there are numerous venues and groups to tap into.
 - Using these three sourcing strategies along with your Compelling Marketing Statement should enable you to fill the bulk of your hiring needs quickly, easily, and efficiently.
 - The key to success in using these sourcing strategies is to execute against all three of them concurrently. You'll rapidly discover which strategy is bearing the most fruit and be able to invest or refocus your energy in that direction.

Chapter 8: What Color Is Your Petri Dish? Cultural Considerations and "Fit"

- Organizational culture encompasses a vast constellation of unspoken, undocumented norms, values, expectations, and behaviors.
- Culture in most organizations is simply understood as "the way things get done around here."

- Whatever your organizational culture is, people who join the company will need to adapt to it. If new employees cannot adapt, they will not be able to succeed—no matter how wrong their prior accomplishments are.
- Corporate culture is one of the prime factors that will decide whether any given individual will be able to succeed in the company. Awareness and the ability to specifically describe your culture is a prerequisite for a good cultural fit.
- Some of the dimensions included in culture are: dress code, how management communicates with staff, pace of work, risk tolerance, competition/cooperation, teams, affirmation/acknowledgment, emotional atmosphere, working hours, work/life balance, age of workforce, ethics, and goal timeframe orientation.
- It's critical to define the company culture in a succinct manner, because the hiring team needs to describe it in both the Compelling Marketing Statement and every interview with potential candidates.
- Honesty and up-front assessment of your culture during the interview process is an absolute necessity. Misrepresenting cultural "negatives to attract somebody through the front door will simply result in them leaving through the back door. Candidates must be given what they need to make an informed choice to join your organization.

Section 3: Interviewing And Beyond

Chapter 9: Before The First Candidate Arrives

- Preparing for a round of Success Factor-based interviews is no small task. To hire Top 5% Talent, you must be properly equipped emotionally, mentally, and even physically. The interview process often brings out the worst in interviewers.
- Before the candidates arrive, you and your hiring team must prepare in three critical areas: Emotions, Processes, and Environment.
- *Emotional Preparation* requires being aware that first impressions are powerful and recognition is the key to minimizing their impact.
- Before you meet candidates face-to-face, conduct thorough pre-interview phone calls. Take at least thirty minutes to discuss one or two of your critical Success Factors. This will allow you to gather vital data about the candidate's successes and capabilities (first impressions you can actually use), without irrelevant and distracting physical attributes like what kind of suit, watch, or shoes the candidate has chosen to wear for the interview.
- If you decide at the end of the phone interview to bring the candidate in for a physical face-to-face interview, you should send the candidate an abbreviated form of the Success Factor Snapshot and explain the type of interview you'll be conducting.
- A structured interview will allow you to evaluate each candidate using the same yardstick.
- If you have a good feeling early on about a particular candidate, be tougher on yourself. Give yourself time to form an opinion. You should at least wait until you have finished the first or second interview question before you decide you "like" or "dislike" a candidate.
- What are some of your subconscious biases? What do you tend to notice, maybe even fixate on? Before the first interview even begins, try to come up with a list of the things that bother you during an interview. For instance, to minimize unconscious bias as much as possible, create your own list of personal peeves.
- Most people experience some level of anxiety regarding being interviewed. An interview is not familiar territory for most people, including Top Talent (who beat the bushes for work). Interviews are unnatural situations, which is why we caution the interviewer to

remember that many physical factors are well beyond a person's control. They are not automatic reasons to disqualify a candidate from consideration

- It's the hiring team's responsibility to extract the necessary information from the candidate to determine if they can be successful in the position. Create an environment that allows the candidate to relax and get down to the task of showing you why she's the best choice for the job.
- *Process Preparation* requires assembling an interview team and ensuring that every member of the team understands 1) their role in the interview, 2) what is being measured, and 3) the questions they'll be asking. Select three or four people for each interview (there may be several) who will be able to intelligently ask relevant questions that explore the candidate's ability to succeed in the position based on the SFS.
- During the first interview, simply be sure to hit the high points of the Success Factor Snapshot you wrote for the open position. Determine whom you want to invite back for the next round of interviews.
- An efficient strategy is to combine other members on the interview committee into panel interviews with no more than three or four people. Panels ensure that evaluations are more objective. The panel format offers a chance to put candidates "in the job." Since most top-level positions will require extensive group presentations and the ability to communicate effectively in the boardroom, the panel interview helps to assess such skills firsthand.
- So set up a round-table atmosphere. When panel members focus their questions around the obstacles identified in the Success Factor Snapshot, an interview can become a simulated problem-solving session, much like a staff meeting.
- Follow-up interviews will be highly individualized. Interview panel preparation should involve assigning various Success Factor questions to different members of the panel, ensuring that panel members have specific and useful questions to ask, and deciding what homework to assign for the final candidates.
- *Environmental Preparation* requires putting the "best face" on your company in order to attract the Top 5%. You're not doing candidates a favor; one of them will soon have the responsibility and authority to make or break a critical department. Treat them all accordingly.
- Commit here and now to treating potential hires as you would treat your top customer, from the moment they walk through the door.
- When you treat a candidate as if he or she were a \$10 million customer, they naturally relax and perform better in their interview. They will be far more interested in coming to work for your company and contributing to an organization that deserves their talents.
- Differentiate your firm from all the rest. If you want to hire the best you too have to be the best.
- Are You Prepared?
 - Your receptionist should be briefed on how to speak to candidates and where to direct them.
 - The waiting area should be comfortable and appealing.
 - Do not make a candidate wait for an extended amount of time. If there is a delay, be sure the candidate is checked on or offered refreshment.
 - Set aside an interview space that is private, yet inviting. Do not allow interruptions or phone calls during the interview.

- After the interview, walk them to the door and be sure to say Thank you.

Chapter 10: Face-To-Face Interviews That Aren't A Waste Of Time

- The interviewing process must be structured and use the Success Factor Snapshot to be as effective as possible.
- The problem with most interviews is that they never get to the core issue: Can this candidate succeed in the open position?
- You may ask 1000 questions in a long series of interviews. But, if they're the wrong questions, you aren't going to know any more at the end of the interview than you did at the beginning.
- A systematic, structured interview based around the Success Factor Snapshot is critical to hiring successful, Top 5% performers.
- When you are conducting a Success Factor-based interview, it's vital to create conditions that make candidates feel comfortable sharing in-depth information about their background, including their current position.
- Candidates need to feel safe about discussing situations and experiences that may be sensitive. So, before diving into the "meat and potatoes" of the interview, take five to seven minutes to create the appropriate mood and tone for what's ahead.
- Basic "small talk" can go a long way toward relaxing candidates enough to ensure a fair interview.
- Next, describe the type of interview you're about to conduct.
- Other key items to share with the candidate before you start asking questions:
 - Make the job important.
 - State two or three of the most critical Success Factors up front.
 - Share the vision for your company two to three years from now.
 - Demonstrate how this role will specifically impact that vision.
 - Listen more than you talk.
 - Give them enough time to respond.
 - Get beyond the resume.
 - Take notes on what they are saying rather than planning your next question.
 - If the interview session is going to span the lunch hour, take them to lunch.
- Typical "fuzzy" interview questions, or travelogues of a candidate's resume, are useless when it comes to predicting their ability to succeed in the job.
- A relaxed candidate can interview better; give them the benefit of the doubt and make them comfortable before digging in.
- The Five Key Questions should be the foundation of all interviews:
 1. Can you give me an example of initiative?
 2. When have you executed a project or strategy flawlessly?
 3. When have you successfully built and led a team?
 4. One of our critical Success Factors is X. Can you give me an example of a comparable achievement from your past?
 5. How would you go about achieving our Success Factor within this environment? The candidate may not have all the information they need to answer on the spot. This

question, instead, is a springboard to dialogue. Sometimes the questions the candidate asks back are more important than any statement or example they might give.

- You should be evaluating the questions the candidate asks and the assumptions behind them.
- The Magnifying Glass Approach to probing questions helps you to figure out who's really done the job vs. who's exaggerating.
- Candidates claim responsibility for accomplishments that really were not their accomplishments, but are those of bosses, peers, or perhaps even subordinates.
- There hasn't been a candidate born who can make up false answers quickly enough. They've either done what they say they've done and can describe it in infinite detail, or they will implode in the chair right in front of you.
- Every time you ask a candidate a question based on examples, expect to spend fifteen to thirty minutes exploring the details of each example. Put the candidate's answer under a magnifying glass, and ask for multiple examples to make sure something wasn't an anomaly.
- Every interview will be different, but no matter what example is being discussed, your probes will generally follow the time-honored journalist's "5 Ws": Who? What? When? Where? Why? "And for good measure, throw in How? (Yes, even though it is not a W).
- Homework is a critical predictor not only of ability to succeed, but also how a candidate will work within your environment.
- When the pool of talent is narrowed down to the final two candidates, it's time for the interview team to come up with homework assignments. An important predictor of how a candidate will adapt to your organization's environment is to see an example of his or her thought processes, analytical skills, and problem-solving, up close and personal.
- Effective homework assignments are projects of reasonable size and scope that involve one of the most critical Success Factors listed in your Success Factor Snapshot.
- No matter what functional area, homework should entail questioning, analysis, research, and a panel discussion with some form of presentation.
- You are looking for a concrete example of their approach to problems, their analytical and presentation skills, and their ability to synthesize information.
- Homework demonstrates the candidate's ability to understand and adapt to the needs, wants, resources, and working environment of your company.
- Don't be bowled over by the person whose presentation is the slickest. Look for evidence of ability to achieve within your environment and culture, and for evidence that the candidate's underlying approach to problem solving is sound.

Chapter 11: Beyond The Interview: Vetting, Verification, And Evaluating The Truth

- Superficial, irrelevant issues often get more of an interviewers' attention than real substance.
- When you interview, what's on your mental checklist? Some of the most time-honored "criteria" have absolutely nothing to do with whether a candidate can do the job.
- The team can lose sight of the real goal: Measuring the candidate's ability to deliver the results defined in the SFS.

- Don't trust—verify. Throughout the interview process, you've taken the candidate's word on faith. Now it's time to move from faith to proof. Evaluate candidates using the Eight-Point Success Matrix.
- This standardized form helps the interviewing committee stay focused and objective and eliminates subconscious (irrelevant) biases. It also minimizes the ability of "good actors" to bluff their way into a role.
- "Fit" is based on the examples, illustrations, specifics, results, accomplishments, and patterns of behavior that emerge in candidate interviews.
- It calibrates interviewer ratings, keeping everyone on the same page. Built around the five key predictors of success, the Eight-Dimension Success Matrix forces interviewers to assess answers to questions in a uniform way.
- The most important consideration in using the matrix is this: Do Not, Under Any Circumstances, Put Off Completing The Form After Each Interview. You absolutely must ensure that your hiring process does not fall victim to procrastination and memory loss .
- Make reference calls to verify candidate claims, not to request recommendations.
- Verification is a mandatory step in a proven hiring Process.
- First off: No family, friends, or personal references. When a reference's primary relationship with a candidate is personal, there is an automatic conflict of interest.
- Ask them for three to five professional references. Ideally, these should be former bosses, peers, or individuals they have supervised.
- Ask for the numbers of customers, vendors, and suppliers. Because coworkers and colleagues have usually spent more time with the candidate than the boss, they are outstanding sources of verification. Usually "lateral" references can offer deeper insights to work style, team leadership ability, personality, and cultural issues. Pay particular attention to these areas when speaking to former coworkers, probing for any indications that the person may cause interpersonal problems or "rub people the wrong way."
- Don't stop at the first layer of verification. When you speak to first tier references (those whose names the candidate gave you), ask whom else the candidate worked with, reported to, supervised, or led as part of a team. These are secondary references, and they are additional potential sources of objective verification.
- Finally, it is important not to "wear out" references. Third-party verification calls should be one of the last items on the hiring agenda, not the first.
- You can download a template that can help you to guide a third-party verification call at www.impacthiringsolutions.com.
- Good calls will take time and will dig nearly as deep as the interview itself.
- 83% of hiring managers use testing as a part of the hiring process. Testing is a valuable adjunct to the Success Factor Methodology, because when administered correctly, tests can uncover useful information about personality traits, potential for achievement, and other factors that may not be immediately evident in an interview situation.
- If you test, use external psychologists who are professionally trained in testing and assessment. Untrained personnel can expose you to liability and will not be able to guide you through the pitfalls and minefields of psychological tests.
- Run thorough background checks. As recent scandals have shown, you simply cannot take people's word for it. Verify everything. Better safe than deceived.

- The only way to be sure everything you've heard is true is to invest the time and money to verify the candidate's claims in his resume or other documents he completes and signs after beginning the interviewing process.
- If you decide to wait to run these checks until after you extend an offer, be sure you make the offer contingent upon satisfactory results from the background check.
- Elements of a background check include:
 - Criminal Background
 - Credit
 - Educational Background
 - State Drivers' License Bureau
 - Social Security Verification

Section 4: Closing The Deal

Chapter 12: It's Never About The Compensation

- High achievers don't just want more money. While financial incentives may be a nice addition to an overall eventual offer, Top 5% Talent is a rare group, motivated to reach the top of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs: Self-Actualization.
- Self-actualization is the key to understanding what motivates top talent: These people crave the opportunity to become more, accomplish more, achieve more, and earn profound self-worth from a difficult job done well. Their needs cannot be satisfied with a paycheck or a specific title. They want to make a difference, leave a legacy, and reach a level of knowing that demonstrates they are now "giving back."
- "What if...." Is the magic phrase to use early in the process to let great candidates thinking about strong, compelling reasons why they should make a move.
- The Success Factor Snapshot shows candidates a big picture view of all they can become if they accept your offer. Use this to motivate them and build enthusiasm. Candidates take new positions for three reasons:
- *The Opportunity* – Doing what they love, making a difference, accomplishing something significant or helping others to become the best they can be means more than stagnating or managing the status quo.
- A good technique to use in early recruiting calls is to ask questions based on the Success Factor Snapshot.
- Next, using the Success Factor Snapshot you can probe to discover and entice with questions that will intrigue the candidate and will differentiate your firm from all others.
- At the end of these questions, a Top 5% candidate will be thinking hard about where they are, where they're going, what they're getting out of their current position, and whether they can get more of the "good stuff" by making a change into your open position.
- *The Company* – Your job, as the hiring executive, is to make it clear to the candidate that the ship—your company—is sound, exciting, and has all the amenities they could possibly require during their voyage with you.
- You must create such a compelling vision for the future of the organization that the candidate can actually see, hear, touch, and taste success.
- Why should somebody come to work for you? If you don't have an instantaneous, exciting, compelling answer, you need to revisit the Compelling Marketing Statement for the open position.

- *The Boss* – It’s generally the boss that makes or breaks the deal. Top 5% Talent wants a leader who will both challenge and mentor them
- Top candidates want a boss who is better than (not equal to) them. They want to be comfortable with the person they will interact with. It’s your job as the company leader to make sure each is enticing, interesting, and realistic.

Chapter 13: How To Make An Offer They’ll Refuse

- Never make an offer until you know it will be accepted. If you have any doubt whatsoever about the answer, it’s either too soon or too late to ask.
- Avoid the common mistakes that can make deals fall apart. New hires are almost never really lost “at the last minute.” There are red flags and subtle issues that crop up all along the way—if you’re paying attention:
 - Family Objections.
 - Relocation Concerns.
 - Commute Concerns.
 - The Benefits Mismatch.
 - Cost-Of-Living Differences.
 - The “Vision Thing.”
 - What Will I Be Measured Against?
 - Supervisory Concerns.
 - The Waiting For More Information.
 - The Hidden Agenda. The candidate may be going through the interview process hoping to receive and accept a counteroffer.
- The number one reason offers are turned down is because little or no discussion about the offer takes place during the interviewing process.
- The problem with never discussing salary and benefits during the interview process is that both the candidate and the hiring manager must hope it will all come together in the end.
- How To Build A Successful Offer, Step By Step
 - Step 1: Treat every candidate as though they’re your top choice.
 - Step 2: Use “what if “ questions followed up with “How do you feel about that...” to uncover potential sticking points,
 - Step 3: Ask the same question in different ways
 - Step 4: Send up a Trial Balloon and if the response is anything other than an enthusiastic “Great!” go back and clear up sticking points.
- A trial balloon isn’t an actual offer. It’s a prelude to an offer, a teaser. It’s designed to test the candidate’s openness and readiness to accept a position.
- The bottom line is this: Both parties should know what the final offer is going to be, before it’s made. The final test of readiness is the Start Date.
- If the candidate responds that she needs to think about it and will have to get back to you, pull out a calendar and state the date of hire that is desirable for the hiring manager and firm. Ask, “What would prevent you from giving notice to your current employer and joining our firm in two weeks?” This question will help the candidate decide and will most likely result with a definitive date.
- Prepare the candidate for a counter-offer by telling him he’ll likely face one, and reminding him of the reasons he wants to come join your company... beyond compensation.

Chapter 14: Transition And Follow-up

- The first week is a critical transitional period for new employees, and missteps early on may never be remedied.
- Transition coaching based on personality traits, preferences, and attitudes can help to inform the entire team of potential sticking points before problems develop.
- Assimilation coaching has two key components.
 - First, the hiring executive and their new addition must become aware of, and sensitive to, differences in work styles.
 - Secondly, the new hire and his manager must reach a quick understanding of Success Factors and various issues that may affect delivery. The first few weeks and months on the job are critical, and therefore,
- It is recommended that assessment and coaching begin on the first day a new employee starts with your company.
- To help facilitate a successful transition, the authors recommend a third-party who is trained to administer and interpret appropriate work style assessments.
- A good third party professional, armed with accurate assessments can help the hiring executive and their new hire recognize their inherent differences before they've caused any friction. Fore
- The Success Factor Snapshot continues to play a role even after a new hire comes on board. Revisiting expectations during the first week can help avert unpleasant surprises further down the line.
- The Success Factor Snapshot becomes a living document providing the hiring executive with a performance management! Tool and vehicle for one-to-one.
- Focusing these monthly discussions around the SFS provides the hiring executive with a tool to manage flawless execution and ensure that the Success Factors are achieved.
- Using he SFS as the core in these discussions provides a framework of objectivity for constructive feedback and coaching.
- The Success Factor Snapshot should be reviewed and revised as necessary when the Success Factors are accomplished, priorities change, and new business issues surface. It forms the backbone of the first-year performance review. If it's used as a hub for your managerial processes, it can become a living document that guides every person in the company toward the common goals and successes that will ensure the company prospers.

Recommendation: This book is valuable from two perspectives: that of the hiring team to ensure the right candidate comes aboard and to the job seeker looking for a company that does it right.

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About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD

Many CEO's find themselves asking "What now?" to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you, as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team's performance, profitability and sustainability.

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