

MASTERING S.M.A.R.T. TALENT MANAGEMENT

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HIRE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **25**

Chapter 7 | Interviewing Strategy
& Execution Tips

Interviewing Strategy & Execution Tips

Choosing the Best Place for Interviews

Something as simple as the location where an interview will be held can actually affect the outcome of it. Here are some things you should consider when choosing the location for your interviews.

Phone Interviews

A phone interview can be held anywhere, but be mindful of background noise and be sure to always handle them in a professional manner. Have a definite time and make sure that all participants have it marked on their calendar. Be sure, too, that everyone has the right conference call-in number, and let everyone know who will be in charge of the call, and who is making it. Share work, cell, and home numbers in case there are last minute problems and it needs to be rescheduled.

One of the worst things you can do is to forget that it was your responsibility to make the call – and it was to a grade A candidate. You also want to avoid having one of the hiring team members come into the conference call late and then repeat questions already asked. Treat all candidates as potential new customers – and I am certain you would never miss a call in that case.

Telephone interviews can be used to save time – including the applicant's time – by pre-qualifying candidates. You can screen by telephone and give the candidate an overview of the job and determine if the candidate is genuinely interested in the position. You can also use it to clarify issues on the resume, answer some of their questions, and find out if the basic qualifications are present or not.



Telephone Interviews Save Time and Money

Tips for Conducting Telephone Interviews

Here are some tips to help ensure that your phone interviews accomplish your interview goals and are also kept professional.

- If possible, keep the interview brief – 15 to 30 minutes max.
- When initially introducing yourself and your organization, speak slowly and clearly.
- Ask the candidate if you've called at a good time or if scheduling a 20-minute phone conversation at another time would be more convenient.
- At the beginning of the call, tell the candidate what you intend to accomplish during the telephone interview.
- Encourage the candidate to ask you questions as well.
- Discuss an overview of the key job duties, responsibilities, hours, and other requirements, such as overtime and weekend obligations.
- Briefly review the candidate's resume, asking about dates, titles, progression and locations, etc...
- Ask the candidate why he or she is interested and determine if the candidate is qualified (i.e., ascertain whether or not skills/experience match job requirements.)

- Prepare one to two behavioral questions to help you determine the candidate's level of experience and qualification.
- Communicate next steps and timelines.

** To download a SMART Telephone Interview Template, go to The Right Hire Resource Page at: www.ropella.com/therighthire*

Face-to-Face Interviews

Interviews need to be arranged with some advance thought concerning the environment and atmosphere, making sure that it will enable you to accomplish your goals. Here are some things you need to consider about the location and schedule:

1. The Level of Confidentiality Needed

Determine whether or not the candidate might not want to be seen at your facilities by his boss, peers, customers, vendors, or possibly even by your employees. Is there a reason why you wouldn't want your employees knowing which position you are hiring for? Do you need to prevent candidates from seeing each other while on site? If you answer any of these in the positive, then you want to protect your candidate's right to privacy just like you would for your customers.



Interviews Should Respect Privacy and Lack Interruptions

2. The Level of Formality Needed

Find out if the hiring manager would prefer the first interview to be less formal and meet off site for lunch – or perhaps in a nice hotel lobby. Does the hiring manager feel that it would be

a good idea to meet the candidate in familiar surroundings – letting him or her stay in their own comfort zone and perhaps even meeting their family? This approach can be a real benefit, because it will let you see them more relaxed and more like themselves. They will also be prone to share more information. Although rarely used, it can be valuable.

3. The Cost of the Interview

Calculate whether it may be more cost effective, due to the candidates' locations, to have the hiring manager fly to a single location and let the candidates come to meet him, compared to flying multiple candidates to your company offices. This cost consideration needs to be made when setting up your face-to-face interviews.

All Final Interviews

Regardless of the location of the other interviews, you need to have the final interviews at your company where the new hire will be working. You also want to have as many people as possible on your evaluation team to meet and interact with the final candidates. This will enable the candidates to see the facilities and workspace, the surroundings, and available resources so that an informed decision can be made about joining your company. Professionals simply want to see where, and with whom, they are going to spend large parts of their time



Have As Many People As Possible Meet the Final Candidates for Added Persuasion

It is important that you treat your final candidates the same way that you would treat potential new customers. If you were scheduling a face-to-face meeting with a potential new customer, wouldn't you want to provide a comfortable, hassle-free environment that is as enticing as possible? You would do

all you could to roll out the red carpet to impress them – now do it for your best candidates and they will be more likely to come and work for you.

Preparing for the Interview

Interviews should not be rushed into with little or no preparation. They need to be performed professionally – and this requires preparation. The first step is to make sure that you have all materials about the candidate with you, including the resume and cover letter, the SMART Skills Survey and Candidate Scorecard, test scores, etc. – all in one packet.

The next step is to have all of the questions you want to ask outlined and ready. Any behavioral questions should also be prepared, and your techniques ready. Once these things are set, then get yourself into the right frame of mind.

You can be sure that the candidate will be prepared to meet you. It is important, respectful, and professional that you show the same level of preparedness and are ready to conduct a quality interview.

An Interview “Relationship Cultivation” Checklist

Before you start an interview, here are a couple of things you want to keep in mind.

1. Realize that just because a candidate does not verbalize questions (see Top 10 Questions list below), do not think that they are not important to them or to their influencers. Ask yourself what questions were important to you when you were in their shoes, and what questions did your influencers ask you when you got home from the interview?
2. When candidates are currently being treated as valuable employees at their place of employment and not necessarily looking to change jobs, they are not going to come out of the blocks in the first interview and strongly sell themselves. You’ve heard the old adage: “The more desperate a candidate is to get the job, the less likely you are to be interested in them.” The opposite is also true. When they play hard to get, it has a tendency to make them more desirable.

3. Even though they may not sell themselves a lot at first, keep in mind that people typically make decisions based on their emotions first, and then defend that decision with logic. As confidence is built up to accept the challenge, they will get more serious about showcasing their abilities.
4. For those managers who are prone to think that candidates have to impress them before they will get the job, they may be risking losing some very good candidates. If a candidate is currently employed, you should not assume that your job is better than what he already has. A candidate who is happy and successful in his present job is not apt to do much more than ask generalized questions while exploring a job they don’t yet need. A lack of selling himself strongly should not be considered as being indifferent or uninterested. The candidate may warm up to the opportunity as they proceed.

Job changes may involve difficult and complex decisions. It is made even more difficult when family members, relatives, or friends start to influence the candidate. The thought of relocation adds complexity and stress because the idea of cost of living changes or buying and selling a house, or moving kids while in school now also has to be looked into.



Selling a Home Can Add a Lot of Stress to the Relocation Equation

Yes, it is true that courting and selling should be taking place during all interviews. Remember, though, that it is essential to continue to court all the candidates from start to finish, because you may not recognize top talent immediately. During the interview, you can expect to be asked a number of questions that you should be prepared to have the answers for. Even if they are not verbalized, you will want to answer

them anyway. Here are some of them, and when you do answer them, it will help the candidate to feel more comfortable with you – which will certainly help to make faster progress and a better relationship.

Ten Most Common Interview Questions

Interviews should not be rushed into with little or no preparation. They need to be performed professionally – and this requires preparation. The first step is to make sure that you have all materials about the candidate with you, including the resume and cover letter, the SMART Skills Survey and Candidate Scorecard, test scores, etc. – all in one packet.

Take the time to think through the most likely questions you would expect to be asked by candidates during the interview, and then be prepared to answer AT LEAST these top 10 most commonly asked questions:

1. Why is the position open? For how long? Why wasn't it filled by now?
2. How would you describe the organization's stability? For sale? Going through reorganization?
3. What is the hot news on the street about your organization, both positive and negative?
4. How would you describe the corporate culture and/or political landscape of your organization?
5. What is your background, interests, and management style?
6. Why do you like working here? Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
7. What are the growth options for this position? Any past promotional success stories?
8. What is the greatest challenge you expect the new candidate will face in this job?
9. How do you feel about me, as a candidate, based on my resume and this interview?
10. Where do we go from here? How quickly can you make a decision and get back to me?

Before you start interviewing, it's very important that you have a post-interview follow up plan ready to go so that you can begin the follow up process right after you conclude the interviews.

"Relationship Harvesting" Checklist

Here are some additional techniques that you will want to add to your future-recruiting experiences to help it run like a fine-tuned and well-oiled machine.

** To see a full view or get your own copy of the Poster, Courting the Superstar Candidate, please go to The Right Hire Resource Page at: www.ropella.com/therighthire*



A Well-Developed Plan Will Enable You to Attract Better Candidates

- Send a follow-up email and/or letter right after the final interview and outline how well it went and what your intentions are for the final steps. Include any information you promised and seek to resolve any questions you think are still not settled.
- Reimburse any interview expenses immediately! Candidates should not have to put out their own money and then wait for repayment. This will not create a good impression of your company.
- Find out if any employees grew up or lived (at some point during their life), or went to school or worked at the same place as the candidate. If so, include them in the interview process. If they get along well, have them involved in follow-up visits. Having someone you "know" with commonalities in a new company makes the transition easier and will help them recognize that they made a good decision.
- Treat the candidate and their significant other to dinner. Include the hiring authority, their spouse, and another couple from the organization. Six people will provide for better interaction and a higher comfort level than just four.

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“The most important decisions that business people make are not *what* decisions, but *who* decisions.”

- Jim Collins, Author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't*



In most organizations, making the right hire means the difference between success and failure. This book helps you recruit great people and keep them loyal to the organization by helping you understand, assimilate and execute today's best processes, programs and practices for Sourcing and Marketing to potential candidates, Assessing and Recruiting top talent, Retaining & Training employees and Transforming your organization for the better.

What you will learn from this book

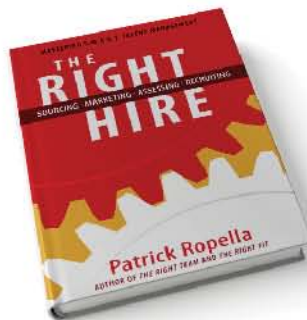
- How to successfully execute the all-important preparation stage of talent sourcing
- What to do to bring into alignment the whole interview-selection team
- Where to scout, network, and narrowcast in order to recruit the best candidates
- What techniques to use to screen and assess talent using proven tools
- How to use behavioral-based questions and interviewing techniques to uncover quality information that leads to great hiring decisions
- What can be done to dramatically improve the negotiations, offer, acceptance, start date and on-boarding processes
- And much, much more...

“People interviewing have choices, and *The Right Hire* presents the right things to do not only attract the top talent, but also to assess for culture fit, personal characteristics, experiences and credentials that will fit with your opportunity. With the growing need for companies to hire the very best talent available, *The Right Hire* is a must read.”

- Steve Watson,
International Chairman, Stanton Chase

“Too often making the right hire is seen as a matter of luck. It should not be. Follow the steps in this book and it will improve your success rate dramatically.”

- Yves Lermusi, CEO, Checkster



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Patrick B. Ropella is Chairman & CEO of the Ropella Group, a 25-year-old international Executive Search, Leadership Transformation, and Corporate Consulting firm in Florida with clients among the world's most prestigious corporations. The Ropella Group focuses on working with mid-level management and executive-level leaders regarding their search, leadership, and/or consulting needs across most roles and functions. Patrick authored the book and web based training program, *The Right Hire – Mastering the Art of SMART Talent Management*. The SMART Talent Management System covers Sourcing, Marketing, Assessing, Recruiting, Retention, Training and Transforming top talent. Patrick's status as a thought expert, and writer on talent management & leadership has been promoted, featured and published in a wide variety of trade magazines and business publications, and leadership and executive search industry blogs and journals. Patrick regularly speaks at webinars, career fairs, conferences, trades shows and more. For more information about Growing Your Great Company through Ropella services, visit www.ropella.com, or call Patrick Ropella at (850) 983 - 4777.