

HIRING PLAYBOOK

Competing for "A-Players" in a Candidate's Market

by Bespoke Talent

SaaS Sales Recruiting

This playbook covers:

p. 3 HIRING WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOU

p. 5 PLAN THE HIRE

p. 13 EXECUTE THE CAMPAIGN

p. 18 CLOSE THE CANDIDATE

p. 20 WORKSHEETS



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Why a Hiring Playbook?

If your game is hiring sales talent, a lot rides on you. Whether you're a CEO, VP of Sales, or internal recruiter, we will call you a "hiring leader."

While account executives carry the burden of winning the sales game, hiring leaders are responsible for assembling the winning team. Your company's sales success boils down to how well you do your job.

This playbook combats company-killing hiring practices: poor planning, sloppy execution, gut decisions, and ineffective closing—reasons why non-performers in traditional sales fail. Our playbook will shift your thinking about hiring, foster clarity in your criteria, provide deliberate planning templates, and improve the effectiveness of your hiring game.

Use this playbook to set the strategy for your hiring game-plan. Its four principles will enhance your long-term hiring success:

- 1. Hiring must be a top priority: Hiring team members is the highest priority in any growth business. The degree to which you emphasize successful hiring can make or break your career and your company.
- 2. Hiring leaders are fully accountable for the success or failure of their people: If you hired and kept them, you are responsible for their successes or failures.
- **3. The term "A-Player" is not universal:** You need to define what "A-Player" means for your company's current needs and those of your target territory.
- 4. Hiring leaders must plan and execute hiring campaigns as if they are traditional sales campaigns: Utilize processes and plans that will reduce hasty or impulsive decisions.

This playbook aims to revamp your hiring game into the ultimate sales campaign. When you do so, you ensure your company's success through achieving your campaign's overarching goal: acquiring A-Player talent.



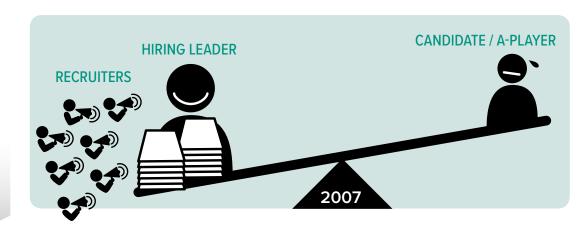
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The Hiring Environment Has Changed

The power has shifted.

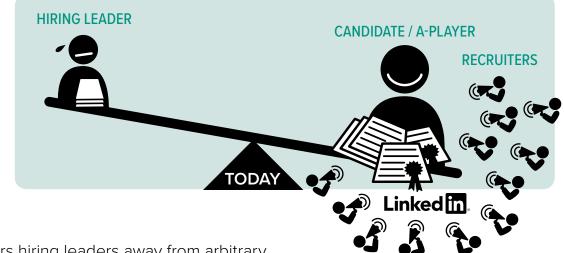
Ten years ago, hiring managers had their pick of A-player talent, and candidates struggled to find new opportunities. LinkedIn was 5 years old and only starting to build steam with its Talent Solutions recruiting platform. Hiring leaders were primarily beholden to:

- Job boards
- "The network"
- Recruiter databases



Today, strong social networks (led by LinkedIn) are platforms for everyone in the professional world, giving hiring organizations and

recruiters access to innumerable potential candidates. To compete for the best talent, hiring leaders need to rethink their recruitment and hiring approaches.



This playbook steers hiring leaders away from arbitrary hiring practices toward carefully planned sales campaigns that attract top talent.



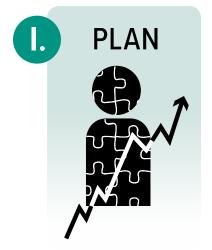
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Sales Recruiting info@bespoketalent.biz www.bespoketalent.biz 608.556.1600 HIRING WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOU PLAN THE HIRE EXECUTE THE CAMPAIGN CLOSE THE CANDIDATE WORKSHEETS

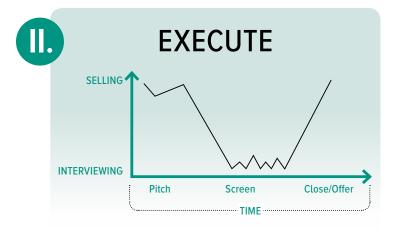
If You Want A-Players, Hire Like an A-Player Hiring Leader

HIRING WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOU PLAN THE HIRE EXECUTE THE CAMPAIGN CLOSE THE CANDIDATE WORKSHEETS

The best hiring leaders know that their hires will make or break their companies, quotas, career trajectories, and W-2s. A-Player hiring leaders run their hiring campaigns like carefully crafted sales campaigns:



As sales leaders know, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The bulk of your hiring efforts depend on accurately defining your company's current situation and, more specifically, that of the territory in question. Once you've created this profile, you can identify the qualifying team to participate in the screening process.



Successful execution of your campaign means dancing between pitching the job to the candidate and qualifying them to the job's particular needs. Vetting the candidate and identifying blind spots you yourself may not notice is a team effort. Wisely apply back-channels to add extra information to the mix.



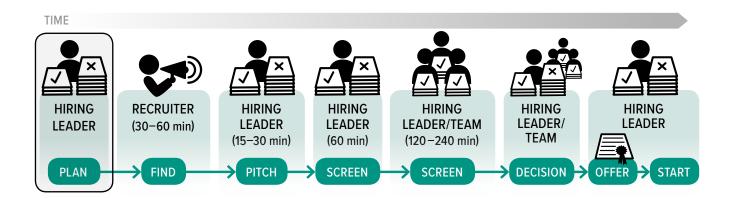
A-Players know great opportunities and don't waste their time on mediocre bait. Closing requires a creative and effective hook.



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PLAN: Planning is mandatory. It eliminates wasted time speaking with unqualified candidates or, worse, hiring a candidate whose assets don't align with the role. More time spent identifying your company's unique needs and who can best fulfill them means less time agonizing over unmet quotas or underperforming sales teams.



This section covers:

- A. Describe your Company
- **B.** Describe Your Sales Structure & Culture
- C. Define the Sales Territory
 - D. Determine the Sales Profile You Need
 - E. Select your Recruiting & Interviewing Team
- F. Write the Interview Script
 - G. Develop your Pitch
- H. Prepare your Lead Generation & Recruiter Team



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ASSESS

PLAN



Assess Before You Plan

One company's A-Player could be another company's D-Player. Since your last hire, circumstances have changed with regard to your company and your territory, greatly impacting the type of seller you hope to find. Before determining the particular sales profiles that would best perform in your current context, it is crucial to revisit your company's stats.



B. DESCRIBE YOUR SALES STRUCTURE & CULTURE



C. DEFINE THE SALES TERRITORY



- When was the company founded
- Why was the company started—what problem does it solve
- Who funds the company
- # of reference accounts/top reference accounts
- # of competitors/position amongst competitors
- What is the current performance of the sales team
- What is the current reporting structure of the sales team
- What is the maturity of the sales messaging
- What is the maturity of the sales process
- What is the average deal size
- What is the territory
- Why is this territory open
- What is the quota
- What is the mix of install base and new accounts
- What are the biggest near-term opportunities

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D. DETERMINE THE SALES PROFILE YOU NEED

Once you are clear on your company's unique stats and sales needs, the ideal candidate's particular character traits and areas of expertise become apparent.

Bespoke Talent has identified six Sales Profiles that dominate the field. Identify which one or two best fit your company's needs, or contact us to discuss this in more detail.

Now, get ready to vet.

With a clear understanding of your company's current situation and the ideal sales type it needs to flourish, create the questions that will qualify the candidate and access the character traits necessary for the position.

Examples

- Young and lean companies need a creative salesforce to craft the sales playbook (CONSULTANT). On the other hand, very complex and high ASP deals need those candidates who can skillfully navigate cross-enterprise sales campaigns (MAESTRO).
- Businesses with few reference accounts need salespeople who excel at creating on-the-fly messaging and building buzz (CONCEPTUAL).
 Conversely, those with multiple reference accounts need a team who can powerfully craft the deal using a data-driven approach (ACADEMIC).
- Businesses with longer sales cycles and larger deal sizes need salespeople who understand and have patience for—the long game (CLASSIC), whereas more transactional, defined markets with multiple competitors warrant "athletes" who can execute a calculated, proven sales playbook (ATHLETE).

Visit our website to learn more about the above profiles: www.bespoketalent.biz/6-sales-profiles

| W | E Vorksheet 2: Profile Your | | | PROOF QUESTIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE THESE | |
|----|--|--|-----|---|--|
| | OBJECTIVES OF THE JOB | RAW CHARACTER & EXPERIENCE TRAITS NEEDED | | CHARACTER TRAITS | |
| ۱. | Mastered pitch, objection handling and prospecting actively | Quick learner, good under pressure, believes in prospecting | 3 | How did you tackle the first 30 days of your last job? | |
| 2. | Tell me about the first 3 months at your last company? | Takes responsibility for lead generation, assertive, self driven | | What's your philosophy on lead generation? | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| | First 90 days | Hungry, knows how to set value-hook | | How do you drive higher ASP? How | |
| 1. | 1st deal closed or infinal stages, 25% higher ASP | | | have you reduced your sales cycle? | |
| 2. | 3-5 deals in stage 5 or above | Personal prospecting priority. Resourcefu knows how to move deals through process | | Tell me about the first 3 months at your last company? | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| | 180 days | | h i | | |
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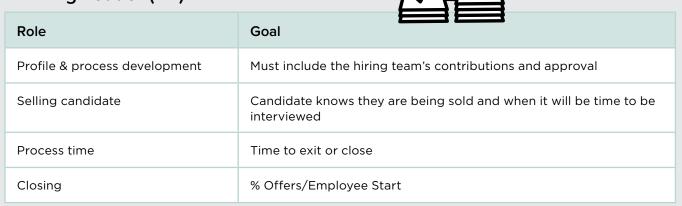


E. SELECT YOUR RECRUITING AND INTERVIEW TEAM

Your hiring team, led by you and including the recruiter, interview team, and human resources, is your biggest asset in candidate vetting. Choose team members with diverse perspectives and specialties to aid in the screening process. Differing viewpoints will complement each other and catch blind spots.

As the Hiring Leader, you are accountable for the success or failure of the search, the hire, and the employee's performance.

Hiring Leader (HL)

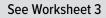


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| Role | Goal |
|--|--|
| Screen candidate to profile | % deliver on profile |
| Sell candidate on opportunity | % candidate is sold on company and role |
| Stay close to the candidate through process | % of time hiring leader can call recruiter with current candidate status |

| Role Goal | Role |
|---|----------------------------------|
| | |
| Profile & Contributing process to profile/ development process development | ATS/0 coord syste & sup |
| Participate Provide in screening objective activities feedback using relative to | Cand interv coord |
| interview profile/ script/ interview screening script | Sourc perfo |

ıman sources (HR Goal [/]candidate All hiring dination team members are em set-up trained oport didate Candidate view process dination time/stage #Candidates cing interviewed/ ormance hired

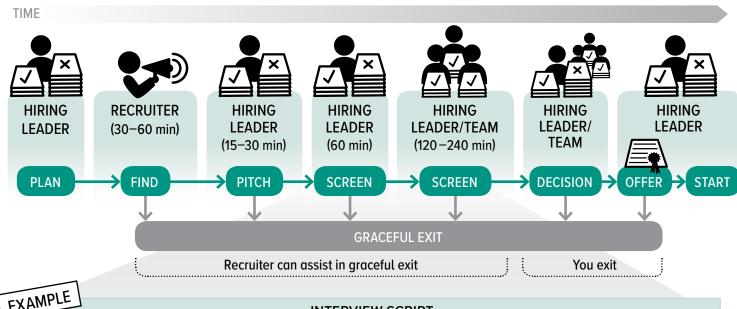


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F. WRITE THE INTERVIEW SCRIPT

You've clarified your specific profile needs. You've identified the team that will support your hiring vision. Now, it's time to nail down the interview questions. The Interview Script will guide the interviewing team to ask relevant questions, always aiming to qualify the candidate against the profile you worked hard to create.



| INTERVIEW SCRIPT | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|------------|--------|--|--|
| Interviewer | Interviewer's unique perspective/question set | Duration | Venue | Proof questions (from profile plan, worksheet 2) | |
| Andy - Peer | Cultural fit | 30 min. | onsite | What's your ideal "team" selling scenario? | |
| Cindy – Deal desk | Complex deal structure test of knowledge | 30 min. | onsite | Tell me about the most complicated deal you've done, how you overcame it or how you didn't? | |

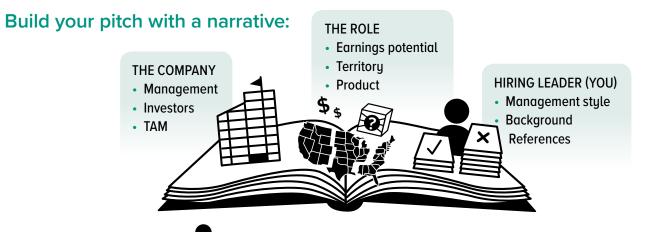
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G. DEVELOP YOUR PITCH

Your ability to hire A-Players correlates directly with the quality of your pitch. A-Players recognize a good pitch—and a bad one. Take the time to construct a pitch that will grab attention and pique interest.



| HIRING LEADER | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|-----------|
| Story Arc | Points to Cover | WHAT IT GIVES THE CANDIDATE | ТНЕ РІТСН |
| Introduction | Why did the company start Who invested in it and why What does the company solve and why is it so compelling Why did you, the hiring leader, join | Insight into why your heart is in this company's product, mission, and future | |
| Twist | What mistakes has the company made What did the company learn as a result | Candidate feels that you've made mistakes and learned, possibly that he/ she won't have to make same mistakes | |
| The Opportunity | What's ahead for the company in terms of customer response, available pipeline, market growth, failing competition, etc Why is it exciting | Optimism about timing of entry and potential for success | |
| The Role | Who is the right person for the role and why Opportunity for growth: career and W-2 | Motivation to sell back to opportunity or decline | |

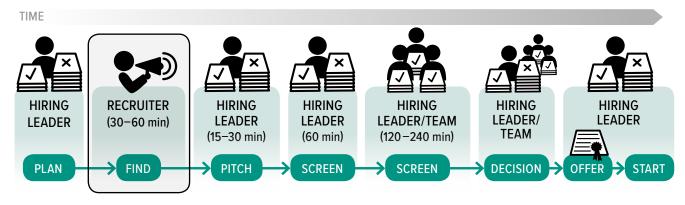


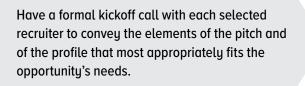
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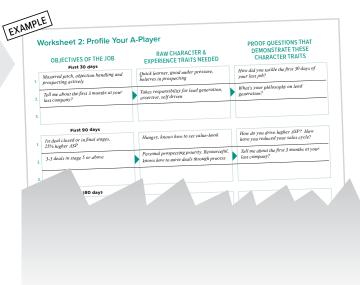


H. PREPARE YOUR LEAD GENERATION

Select recruiters who accurately represent you and your company's brand.

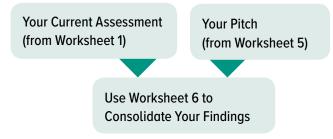






Prepare your recruiters:

Once your recruiting team has your A-Player profile and company pitch, it can begin to cast a net for candidates.



See Worksheet 6





H. PREPARE YOUR LEAD GENERATION (CONTINUED)

The argument for A-Player external recruiters:

Hiring A-Players will make or break your company and your career. Why wouldn't you expect the same of the team that helps you find and close those A-Players? That team includes you and a few trusted, seasoned external recruiters.

Consider:

- External recruiters, particularly partners in boutique firms, probably operate on their own due to higher compensation levels that reward their drive, intellect, and ability to execute.
- A-Players, like your customers, are more likely to listen to recruiters who understand the industry, your company, the brand, the solution value and who can provide details about you (hiring leader) and the patch.
- Candidates often use strong recruiters as "coaches" and tend to disclose more to an external recruiter than to you or to an internal recruiter.

Think outside recruiters are too expensive?

The real expense is hiring people who don't deliver. Acquiring A-Player sales people will drive more revenue, faster. An annual quota can be executed months faster and with a high probability of over-achievement. Early revenue recognition and over-achievement easily justifies recruiting fees.

BESPOKE **TALENT** Sales Recruiting info@bespoketalent.biz www.bespoketalent.biz 608.556.1600 RULE OF THUMB ON WHEN TO USE OUTSIDE RECRUITERS:

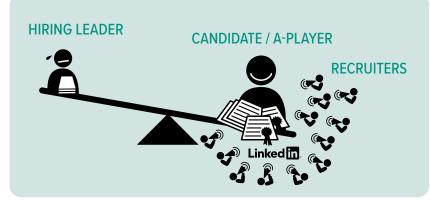
- When you've exhausted your personal network
- When your sales responsibilities exceed your ability to hunt for A-Players
- If you're targeting sales executives or leadership with five years of experience or higher—they demand the best





EXECUTE: You've assessed your needs and made your plan. It's time to execute.

If you've planned your profile efficiently, execution should proceed as such. Remember, however, that you have little time to lose. Once an A-Player starts considering a new option, they simultaneously start considering additional opportunities that compete with yours.



Keep in mind: Time kills all deals.



This section covers:

- EXECUTE
- A. Know when to Pitch and when to Screen
- B. The Pitch & Screen[™]
- C. Screen with your Team



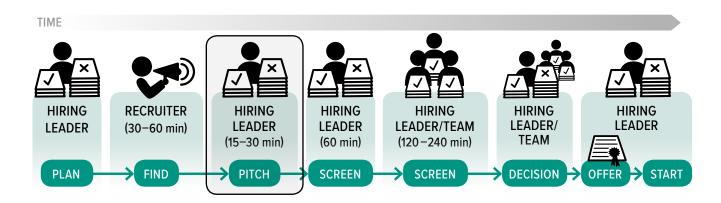
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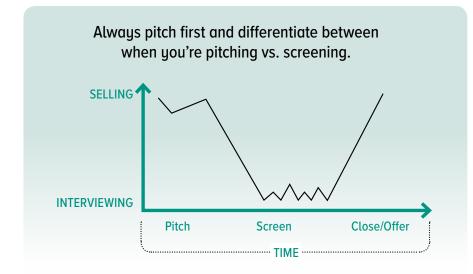
A. KNOW WHEN TO PITCH AND WHEN TO SCREEN

Your network and/or recruiting team have delivered candidates with the ideal sales profiles—it's time to identify your candidate and make your first pitch. All too often, hiring leaders enter interview mode before selling the candidate on the opportunity. Candidates tend to respond negatively to such an approach:

As every top sales talent knows, you have to earn the right to ask a question.

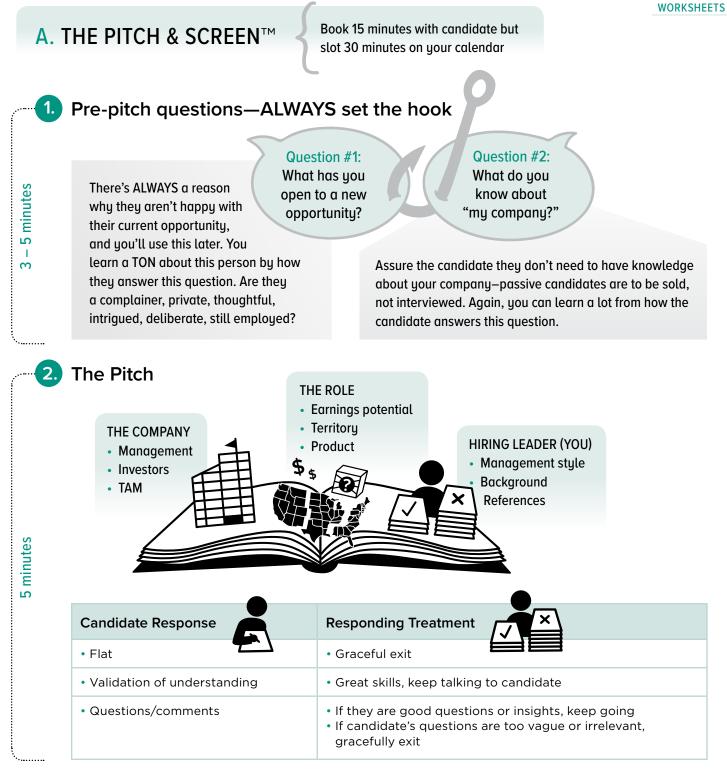


Focused intent and absolute awareness of which operating mode—selling or screening—is in play is vital at this point.







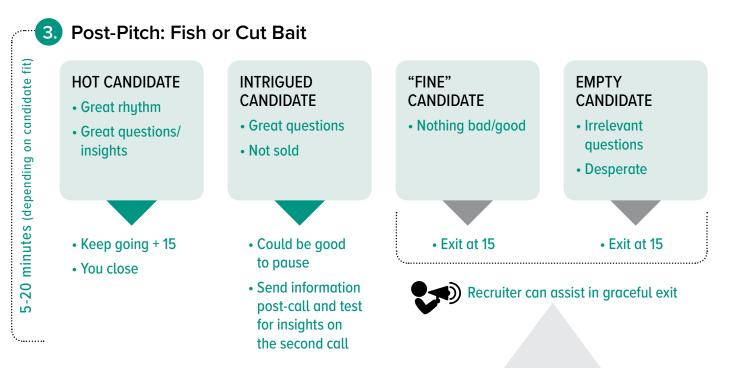


Time check: 10 minutes





At Bespoke Talent, we generally advise against "gut" decisions; our exception, however, is your first impression of the candidate. If you have mastered your pitch, the candidate should show strong signs of fit. It's important to be deliberate in continuing or ending the call. Don't waffle—you know an A-Player when you see one.



A NOTE ABOUT GRACEFUL EXITS:

Too often in this industry we forget—in our quest for success—that we are dealing with people. It's not uncommon for hiring leaders to abruptly drop communicating with candidates once it's clear that they are not a fit. We urge you to extend a little more effort to end the relationship with class and dignity.

Consider the following:

- It's just good business.
- You never know what's happening in the candidate's world.
- You never know who that person will be and where they will end up.
- You are responsible for representing your company's reputation.

With those points in mind, exit your unwanted candidates gracefully by diplomatically stating why they are not a fit, coupled with some positive feedback.



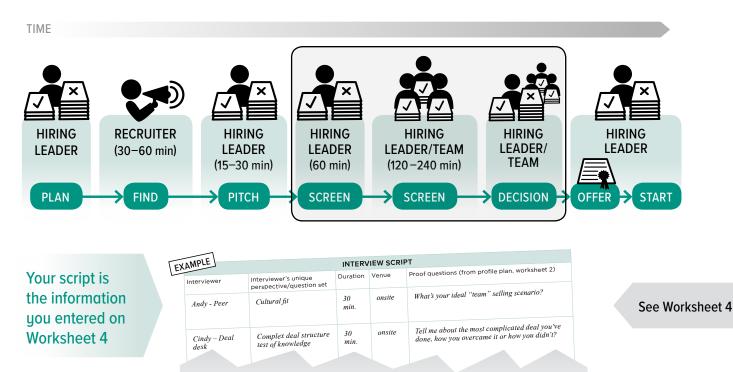
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C. SCREEN WITH YOUR TEAM

You've already written the script...

Candidates who respond well to the pitch can be moved into a more deliberative interview process with the interviewing team. It's vitally important that the interviewing team members ask the pre-planned questions, staying on script. This rule of thumb ensures standardized vetting of every candidate, better highlighting the best fit for the job.



BACKCHANNEL CANDIDATE WITH CARE

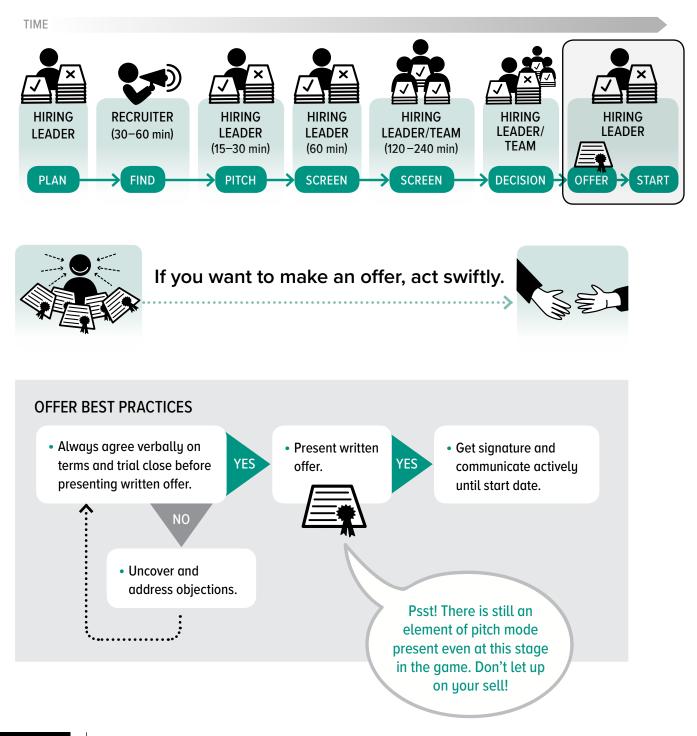
- Only backchannel when you feel positive about the candidate.
- Backchanneling can be useful when you have concerns or want validation.
- Be considerate of candidate's current employment.
- Consider any call as potential future hiring competition for this candidate.

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CLOSE: If you've decided the candidate is a great fit, close the deal. Do NOT hand off the closing process to anyone. This is where you, the hiring leader, go back to full selling-mode, not only through the verbal/written offer stage, but also until the start date.



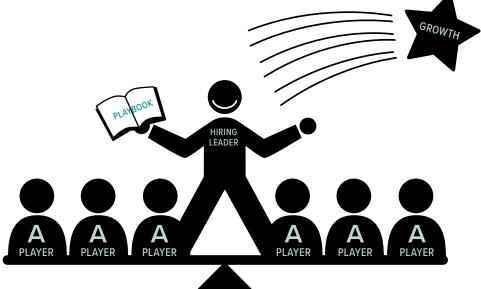
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Who said Pareto and his laws had any experience in hiring?

The Pareto Principle states that roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. Translated to sales teams, this law implies that there are a handful of A-Players delivering the majority of the revenue. Accepting this dynamic as status-quo is a losing mindset. Adopt a strategic hiring practice by attracting A-Player talent, and change the trajectory of your company and your career as a leader.



You're ready!

Now that we've laid out our case for optimizing your hiring game, we hope that you put it into action. We invite you to fill out the following worksheets and to see how the process can drastically improve your hiring practices.

P.S. Don't forget Worksheet 7, so you can document your process while it is still fresh in your mind and analyze it for improvement.

PRINT THE WORKSHEETS

 The next 7 pages (the Worksheets) are set up as "landscape" orientation. Please adjust your print settings accordingly when printing pages 20–27.

OR

GO ONLINE TO FILL OUT THE WORKSHEETS

• Interactive versions of these worksheets are also available to fill out online: playbook.bespoketalent.biz

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HIRING PLAYBOOK WORKSHEETS

HIRING CHECKLIST

Worksheet 1: Current Assessment

Worksheet 2: Profile Your A-Player

Worksheet 3: Assemble the Interviewing Team

Worksheet 4: Build the Interview Script

Worksheet 5: Develop the Pitch

Worksheet 6: Ready Your Recruiters

Worksheet 7: Review Your Game





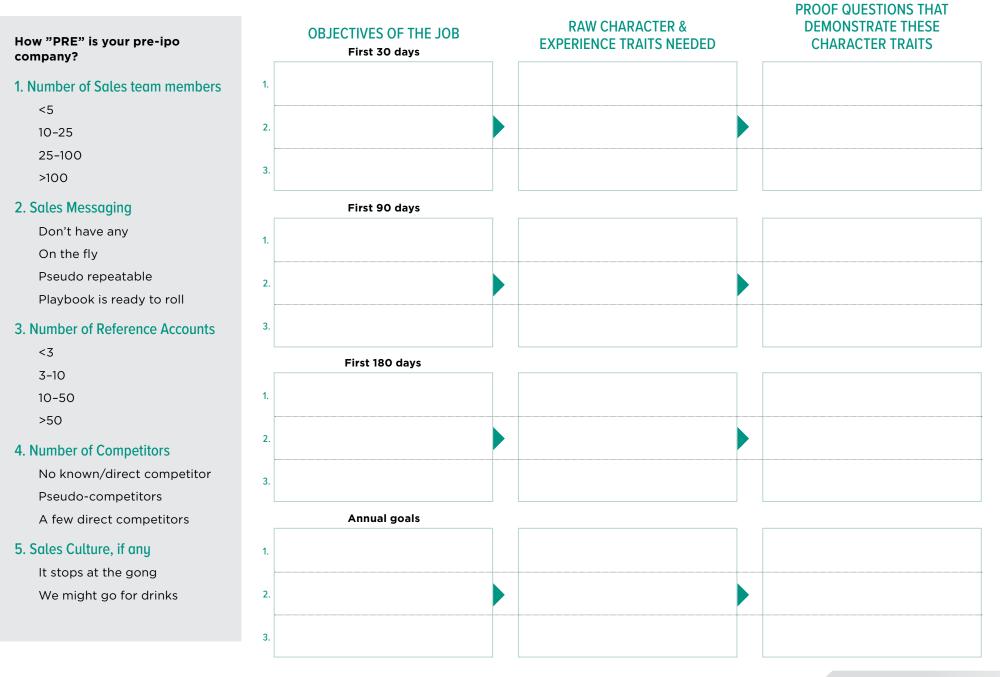
Worksheet 1: Current Assessment

| | | COMPANY NAME: | HIRING LEADER RESPONSES |
|---|------------|---|-------------------------|
| | | When was the company founded? | |
| | COMPANY | Why was the company started? What problem does the company solve? | |
| | CO | Who are the target buyers (companies, roles)? | |
| | | Why do the customers buy from us? | |
| _ | ₄ | Why do people want to work here? | |
| ∎ | | Who are the top reference accounts? | |
| | | Who are the top competitors? | |
| | | How many team members are on the sales team? | |
| _ | AM | What is the planned growth and how is it substantiated? | |
| _ | SALES TEAM | What is the current performance of the sales team? | |
| _ | SAL | What is the current reporting structure of the sales team? | |
| | | What is the maturity of the sales messaging? | |
| | | What is the maturity of the sales process? | |
| | ¥ U P | What is the average deal size? | |
| | | What is the territory? | |
| | ORY | Why is this territory open? | |
| | TERRITORY | What is the quota? | |
| | Ë | What is the mix of install base and new opportunities? | |
| | | What are the biggest near-term opportunities? | |
| | | What is the support structure for a sales rep in this patch? | |
| | n/s. | What % travel will be needed to be successful? | |



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Worksheet 2: Profile Your A-Player



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Worksheet 3: Assemble the Interviewing Team

| | TEAM IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONS | RESPONSES | | TEAM MEMBER | WHAT IS THE TEAM MEMBER'S UNIQUE | TEAM MEMBER DELIVERABLE |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| CANDIDATE RECRUITERS | How urgent is this search? | | | | VALUE? | |
| | How much time can I dedicate to this search? | | CANDIDATE RECRUITERS | DATE | | |
| | How difficult will it be to find the right fit? | | | | | |
| 0 22 | How complex is our product? | | | | | |
| ш | How do I prefer to schedule candidate Pitch & Screens™? | | ш | | | |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT | Do I need internal support to coordinate additional interviews with me and the additional interviewing team members? | | ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT | | | |
| ADN | What is the mechanism to track candidate feedback among the hiring team? | | | | | |
| | Who can help me get an offer drafted quickly? | | | | | |
| | Which departments will most frequently work with this candidate once hired? | | HIRING TEAM | | | |
| HIRING TEAM | If you could, who would you clone (internally) for this specific role? | | | | | |
| | Who, internally, understands and can compensate for my blindspots? | | Ц Т | | | |
| | Which of my leaders need to participate? | | | | | |



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Worksheet 4: Build the Interview Script

| INTERVIEW SCRIPT | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----------|-------|--|--|--|
| Interviewer | Interviewer's unique perspective/ question set | Duration | Venue | Proof questions (from profile plan, worksheet 2) | | |
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Worksheet 5: Develop the Pitch

| HIRING LEADER | |
|---|--|
| Story Arc | Points to Cover |
| INTRODUCTION | Why did the company start Who invested in it and why What does the company solve and why is it so compelling Why did you, the hiring leader, join |
| What it gives theInsight into why mission, and fut | your heart is in this company's product, |
| TWIST | What mistakes has the company made What did the company learn as a result |
| | e candidate that you've made mistakes and learned, /she won't have to make same mistakes |
| THE OPPORTUNITY | What's ahead for the company in terms of customer response, available pipeline, market growth, failing competition, etc Why is it exciting |
| What it gives the • Optimism about | e candidate t timing of entry and potential for success |
| THE ROLE | • Who is the right person for the role and why |
| | • Opportunity for growth: career and W-2 |
| What it gives the • Motivation to se | e candidate Il back to opportunity or decline |



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Worksheet 6: Ready Your Recruiters Consolidate your findings by copying and pasting from the preceding worskheets as indicated below.

| YOUR COMPANY: CURRENT ASSESSMENT (ENTRIES FROM WORKSHEET 1) | THE PITCH (ENTRIES FROM WORKSHEET 5) | PROOF QUESTIONS (ENTRIES FROM WORKSHEET 4) |
|--|---|---|
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Worksheet 7: Review your Game

| | | SCORE (1-10) | MISTAKE | CORRECTION FOR NEXT ROUND |
|---------------|---|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| | Current Assessment | | | |
| | Sales Profile | | | |
| NIN | Hiring Team Selection | | | |
| PLANNING | Interview Script Development | | | |
| | Pitch Development | | | |
| | Recruiter Selection/Preparation | | | |
| | Pitch & Screen Calls | | | |
| U Z | Graceful Exits | | | |
| EXECUTING | Qualified Candidates Expedient Advancement | | | |
| EXI | Interview Team Execution | | | |
| | Team Re-group & Decision Process | | | |
| U | Verbal Offer Agreement | | | |
| CLOSING | Written Offer Agreement | | | |
| U | Employee Start On-time | | | |

