



The Art and Science of Talent

*An Evidence-Based Practice Guide to
Recruiting Across Growth Stages*

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Meet the Authors

Message from the Authors

Talent is the foundation of any company's success, yet recruiting the right people at the right time remains one of the biggest challenges for growing organizations. This guide was created as a collaborative effort, bringing together research-backed insights and real-world experience to help leaders navigate the complexities of talent acquisition across growth stages. Our goal is to provide practical, evidence-based strategies that not only help companies scale their hiring efforts but also build sustainable, high-performing teams. Whether you're making your first key hires or optimizing a global recruiting operation, we hope this resource equips you with the knowledge and tools to make smarter, more strategic hiring decisions that drive long-term success.



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As the former Head of GTM Recruitment at BetterUp, Leslie played a pivotal role in building and scaling one of Silicon Valley's fastest-growing startups from \$3M to \$300M in ARR. Through collaborations with I/O psychologists, sales executives, and founders, she honed her ability to pinpoint the tangible skills and supporting mindsets required for success, mastering the art and science of recruiting world-class talent.

Introduction:

Why this guide matters

Talent is critical for a startup's growth and success. Effective recruiting strategies are critical for companies of all sizes to attract and retain top talent.

However, your approach to talent acquisition needs to change right alongside your company's growth. What works for a 10-person early-stage startup won't serve a 50-person growth-stage start-up, and certainly won't help a 1,000-person mid-sized company—and getting your talent acquisition “scale” at each stage is critical for success.

This guide shows you how to:

- Build and scale your recruiting function at each growth stage
- Make evidence-based decisions about tools, processes, and strategies
- Avoid common pitfalls as you grow
- Proactively lay the groundwork for your next phase of growth

How to use this guide

First, find your stage:

EARLY STAGE | 1 - 50 Employees | Building your foundation

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GROWTH STAGE | 50 - 700 Employees | Scaling your processes

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MID-SIZE | 700 - 50000 | Employees Optimizing your operations

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ENTERPRISE | 5000+ Employees | Sophisticating your approach

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Part One:

Early-Stage Startup (1 - 50 Employees)

Your Current Reality

- Urgent hiring needs with limited resources and brand recognition
- Competition with larger companies for talent
- Need to build basic processes while moving quickly
- Pressure to maintain quality without slowing down

Core Priorities

- Our research shows early-stage companies should focus on:
- Defining core competencies for early success
 - Building a strong company culture from the ground up
 - Establishing efficient recruitment processes
 - Making the most of limited resources

Essential Tools and Strategies

Leveraging Your Networks

Regardless of stage, referrals have a number of benefits. Research has consistently shown that referred candidates are:

- More likely to be offered a job
- More likely to accept a job offer
- More likely to be satisfied once hired
- Less likely to turnover than candidates sourced through other means
- Have a lower cost per hire
- Have higher yield ratios (and there is some evidence suggesting that they also have higher productivity) (Dorsey & Allen, in press).

Because early stage companies have less brand recognition, higher risk, and often fewer resources, referrals can be a particularly important source of talent.

One potential downside however is that if not properly designed or incentivized, employee referral programs can negatively impact organizational diversity by reinforcing the existing workforce makeup (e.g., Frank, 2018). For a review of evidence-based ways to maximize both diversity and performance in the hiring process, see Van Iddekinge, Lievens, and Sackett (2023).

QUICK TIP:

While referrals are valuable, be mindful of diversity. Research indicates that over-reliance on referrals can reinforce existing workforce demographics.

Attend Industry Events & Meetups to Build Relationships

When you're an early-stage startup competing with larger companies for talent, building authentic relationships is crucial. A few key activities can include:

- Target specialized tech meetups, industry conferences, and professional organizations where potential candidates gather
- Have founders and early employees attend and speak at events to share your company's mission and vision
- Host your own meetups or sponsor relevant community events
- Focus on building genuine connections rather than immediate recruiting
- Create a simple system for tracking relationships and following up after events

Clearly & Thoughtfully Define Company Values & Employee Value Proposition

Research shows that early-stage companies often compete for talent through their mission and growth potential rather than compensation alone. Your values and employee value proposition (EVP) should reflect:

- Impact: How employees can directly influence company success
- Growth: Learning and development opportunities
- Ownership: Both equity and decision-making authority
- Mission: Clear connection to meaningful work
- Culture: What makes your workplace unique

Here's how to document and implement your EVP:

1. Document your core values with specific behaviors that demonstrate them
2. Define what makes your company uniquely attractive to potential employees
3. Create clear messaging around growth and development opportunities
4. Gather input from current employees on what attracted them
5. Test your messaging with potential candidates

KEEP IN MIND:

Your EVP should be authentic to who you are now while pointing toward who you want to become. Don't try to copy larger companies—emphasize the unique opportunities that potential talent would get or experience anywhere else.

Use Social Media to Showcase Company Culture & Mission

Social media platforms offer powerful opportunities to authentically highlight your organization's unique culture, values, and day-to-day work environment. By sharing behind-the-scenes content, employee testimonials, and mission-driven narratives, companies can create compelling digital storytelling that attracts potential candidates who resonate with their core purpose and workplace ethos. These platforms also allow for interactive engagement, enabling potential recruits to get a genuine glimpse into the organization's personality and professional atmosphere.

Partner With Universities for Internships & Entry-Level Hiring

Establishing strategic partnerships with universities creates a robust talent pipeline that connects emerging professionals directly with your organization's opportunities. By developing internship programs, participating in campus recruiting events, and creating collaborative research or project initiatives, companies can identify and nurture young talent while giving students valuable real-world experience. These partnerships not only help organizations access fresh perspectives and skills but also provide students with potential pathways to meaningful careers within your industry.

Consider Offering Equity Compensation & Other Benefits to Offset Lower Salaries

For organizations with budget constraints, creative compensation strategies like equity compensation, stock options, or meaningful non-monetary benefits can make job offers more attractive to top talent. By providing opportunities for financial growth through equity, along with comprehensive benefits like flexible working arrangements, professional development programs, and meaningful work experiences, companies can compete for talent even when direct salary offerings might be less competitive. These approaches demonstrate a long-term commitment to employee success and potential financial upside beyond immediate cash compensation.

Recruiting Technologies & Tools

- Basic Applicant Tracking System (ATS, project management tools like Trello, Asana, or Notion, or spreadsheets)
- LinkedIn Premium for networking, candidate research, and a high volume of outreach when filling a specific role
- Job boards focused on startups (e.g., AngelList, StartUpJobs, Otta)



Evaluation & Analytics to Track

- Qualitative assessments based on interviews and cultural fit (For example, if you're gauging a candidate's comfort level with ambiguity, a relevant interview question might be, "Tell me about a time when you had to make an important decision without having all the information you would have liked. What was the situation, how did you approach it, and what was the outcome?")
- Basic metrics like time-to-hire, source of hire, and rejection reasons
- Structured interview frameworks to support decision making:
 - Assign intentional roles, attribute coverage, and (optional) specific questions for each panelist
 - Design a basic scoring matrix ([Google has a great guide for this](#))

Applying Scientific Evidence to the Hiring Process

- Rely on well-established research and meta-analyses to identify key competencies for roles
 - For example, Sackett et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the validity of different selection methods
- Leverage validated off-the-shelf assessments from reputable vendors, particularly sales or technical assessments
- Use validity generalization principles to apply findings from similar contexts
- Focus on assessing fundamental competencies like cognitive ability and conscientiousness that have shown broad predictive validity across roles and industries.

While comprehensive assessment is important, strategically layering your evaluation process yields better outcomes. Begin by validating basic qualifications and critical foundational competencies - such as self-leadership or learning agility - that research shows are predictive of success across roles. This focused initial screening creates an efficient filter while establishing a strong talent baseline.

Subsequent assessment stages can then systematically probe role-specific capabilities and additional competencies in increasing depth. While subject matter experts are best positioned to evaluate technical and role-specific capabilities, organizations must establish clear competency definitions, assessment guidelines, and evaluation rubrics to ensure consistent and objective assessment of fundamental competencies across interviewers.

The importance of this structure becomes clear when you consider how subjective competency assessment can be. For instance, when evaluating “self-leadership,” one interviewer might interpret a candidate's description of navigating organizational constraints as showing a lack of ownership or empowerment, while another might view the same response as demonstrating resourcefulness in problem-solving. These divergent interpretations underscore why standardized criteria and clear behavioral indicators are essential for valid competency assessment. This structured approach not only respects candidates' time but also ensures you thoroughly evaluate both fundamental attributes and specialized skills in a logical progression, guided by consistent standards.

Part Two: Growing Startup Recruiting (50 - 250 Employees)

Your Current Reality

At this stage, you're likely experiencing these needs:

- Scaling recruiting efforts to prepare for rapid headcount growth
- Developing a structured hiring process
- Building an employer brand to attract passive candidates
- Focus on diversity in hiring by establishing programs with KPIs*
- Balancing quality and speed in hiring decisions**
- Hire a recruiting ops specialist to select, optimize and maintain systems

*Companies that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion during their early growth stages establish critical foundations that yield compounding benefits. By implementing clear DEI definitions, metrics, and accountability systems while still under 250 employees, organizations create authentic diversity-centered cultures that naturally attract and retain diverse talent.

This early investment pays dividends as the company scales. Rather than retroactively trying to correct homogeneous hiring patterns, these companies build diverse talent networks, referral streams, and employer brand recognition within underrepresented communities. This is important because both minority and nonminority applicants are more attracted to companies that express a value for diversity (Williamson et al., 2008, Human Resource Management). In addition, minorities are more attracted to organizations with minority representatives (Avery, Derek R., Patrick F. McKay, and Sabrina D. Volpone, 2013).

These findings suggest that while diversity and inclusion are universally beneficial to recruiting, it may be challenging to be seen as an attractive employer by minority group members until your organization has sufficient diversity to begin with. Setting the foundation early and moving beyond surface-level initiatives to

to embed DEI into core recruiting and retention practices, making it fundamental to how the company operates rather than treating it as a separate initiative is key to later success.

******A common misconception at this growth stage is that quality hiring requires prolonged decision-making processes. In reality, the opposite is often true—speed and quality are complementary rather than opposing forces in talent acquisition.

While maintaining high hiring standards is non-negotiable, companies must recognize that top talent, especially passive candidates, moves quickly off the market. The notion that “passive” candidates will wait indefinitely because they're “not actively looking” is a dangerous myth. Once exceptional candidates engage in one interview process, they typically explore multiple opportunities to understand their market value. Companies that delay decisions while pursuing an ever-expanding candidate pool often lose their strongest prospects to more decisive competitors.

This is particularly critical for growing companies competing against better-known brands for talent. The solution lies in building robust recruiting systems and clear decision-making frameworks that enable both thorough assessment and rapid action. Rather than viewing extended processes as a sign of diligence, companies should recognize that their ability to move decisively on strong candidates is itself a marker of organizational effectiveness and a competitive advantage in securing top talent.

Core Priorities

Moving from early to growth stage requires:

- Building a dedicated recruiting team
- Implementing scalable systems
- Developing standardized processes
- Creating data-driven decision frameworks

Essential Tools and Strategies

Establish An In-House Recruiting Team

An in-house recruiting team provides dedicated expertise and deep understanding of the company's specific hiring needs across different domains. By having specialized recruiters focused on areas like sales, engineering, and business, the organization can develop more targeted and effective sourcing strategies. This approach allows for a more nuanced and tailored approach to talent acquisition, ensuring that each critical role is approached with domain-specific insights and strategies.

Implement An Employee Referral Program

Employee referral programs leverage the professional networks of existing team members to identify top talent more efficiently and cost-effectively. By offering generous incentives, companies can motivate employees to actively participate in the recruitment process, which often results in higher-quality candidates who are more likely to be a good cultural and professional fit. These programs are typically much less expensive than external recruiting agencies, which can charge 2-3 times more than the referral bonus, making them a financially smart approach to talent acquisition.



Build Relationships With Recruiters For Hard-To-Fill Positions

Developing strong connections with specialized recruiters who have deep expertise in hard-to-fill positions can provide a strategic advantage in recruiting top talent. These recruiters often have extensive networks and deep understanding of specific industries or role types, allowing them to identify and attract candidates that might be challenging to source through traditional channels. By cultivating these relationships, companies can create a more robust and flexible recruiting ecosystem that can quickly respond to complex hiring needs.

Create a “Careers” Page on Your Company Website

A well-designed careers page serves as a powerful marketing tool to attract potential candidates by showcasing the company's unique culture, values, and growth opportunities. It provides a comprehensive view of what makes the organization an attractive place to work, going beyond job descriptions to highlight the human side of the company. An engaging careers page can help differentiate the company in a competitive job market and attract candidates who are not just looking for a job, but seeking a meaningful career path.

Attend Job Fairs & Host Recruiting Events

Job fairs and recruiting events offer direct opportunities to engage with potential candidates, providing a platform for face-to-face interactions and real-time talent scouting. These events allow companies to not only meet potential candidates but also to build brand awareness and demonstrate their company culture in a more dynamic and interactive way. By actively participating in these events, organizations can create more personal connections with potential talent and gain insights into the current job market landscape.

Clearly Define The “Candidate Journey”

Mapping out the candidate journey is an intensive operational exercise that requires recruiting teams to meticulously document and standardize every interaction from initial outreach through onboarding and the first 90 days. This detailed process mapping—where teams literally plot out who owns each touchpoint, what happens when, and how it should be executed—creates the operational backbone for consistent, high-quality talent acquisition. Given recruiting's task-heavy nature, this granular approach prevents critical steps from falling through the cracks while establishing clear norms and accountability across the hiring process. Success hinges not just on the initial mapping, but on regular reassessment every 6-12 months to ensure the process scales effectively with growth and adapts to changing hiring volumes. When executed thoughtfully, this operational rigor translates into a seamless candidate experience that enhances both new hire satisfaction and long-term retention.

Recruiting Technologies & Tools

- More robust ATS, such as Greenhouse, with basic analytics capabilities
- Scheduling software, such as Goodtime, Calendly or Acuity, to streamline interview scheduling
- Monthly reporting to executive leadership team on key recruiting metrics (i.e. sourcing insights, active pipeline insights and related challenges and wins, and channel insights as to what channels are driving the most candidates). These kinds of metrics will be important to start tracking early in your processes to improve the quality of your hires, especially as you scale).
- LinkedIn Recruiter for active sourcing, specifically a LinkedIn Recruiter enterprise solution that allows hiring managers and the recruitment team to actively source and collaborate on candidate pipelines
- Employer branding tools (e.g., Glassdoor, The Muse)
- Video interviewing platforms (e.g. Brighthire), which allows for a more deliberate and conscious interview process.

Evaluation & Analytics to Track

- Begin tracking more detailed recruiting metrics
- Conduct structured interviews with scorecards (structured interviews have been shown to have higher validity and reliability compared to unstructured interviews) (Sackett et al., 2022; Levashina et al., 2014).
- Implement basic skills assessments for technical roles
- Establish quarterly cadence for employee surveys to understand key differentiators and opportunities in employee retention and candidate attraction

Applying Scientific Evidence to the Hiring Process

- Begin collecting pre-hire assessment data and performance data systematically
- Conduct simple correlational analyses between hiring assessments and early performance indicators
- Continue to leverage established research while starting to build internal validation evidence
- Adjust competency models as needed based on emerging business priorities and initial internal data

Establishing rigorous data collection protocols during this growth phase creates a foundation for evidence-based talent decisions that compound in value over time. Early employees, who will eventually become your longest-tenured team members, provide the richest longitudinal dataset for understanding the relationships between pre-hire indicators and long-term success. By systematically gathering pre-hire assessment data and tracking performance metrics from the start, organizations can begin conducting meaningful correlational analyses even with relatively small sample sizes.

KEEP IN MIND:

For more insights on the importance of establishing systems and collecting data around people analytics, download our whitepaper, ["People Analytics Across Company Growth Stages: Evolving Your Approach as You Scale."](#)

While continuing to leverage established research on predictive validity, companies can gradually build their own internal validation evidence, creating increasingly refined competency models that reflect their unique context and evolving business priorities. This early investment in data infrastructure, though sometimes overlooked amid rapid scaling pressures, enables organizations to make increasingly sophisticated talent decisions based on years of accumulated evidence rather than starting from scratch when they reach larger scale.

Implementing Systematic Data Collection

While establishing comprehensive data collection may seem daunting during rapid growth, a phased approach ensures sustainable adoption. Start by:

- Defining a minimal viable dataset that includes standardized scores for core competencies, structured interview feedback using consistent rating scales, and clear performance indicators at 30, 90, and 180 days.
- Design simple but scalable tools - even basic forms with standardized rating scales and mandatory feedback fields can yield valuable longitudinal data if consistently applied.

- Integrate data collection into existing workflows rather than creating separate processes; for instance, incorporate structured assessment ratings into your applicant tracking system's standard interview feedback forms, and align performance check-ins with existing onboarding milestones.
- Begin tracking basic metrics like time-to-productivity, retention at key milestones, and performance ratings against initial interview assessments. While sophisticated analytics can wait, maintaining clean, consistent data from the start prevents the common pitfall of reaching scale only to realize your historical data is too inconsistent to analyze.
- Train hiring managers on the importance of thorough documentation and standardized ratings, positioning it not as an administrative burden but as their investment in building a data-driven hiring engine that will make their future hiring decisions more effective.

Above all, remember that perfect data collection shouldn't be the enemy of good. Even capturing consistent data on 2-3 core competencies and basic performance indicators will provide valuable insights as your dataset grows.

Part Three: Growth-Stage Startup *Recruiting* (250 - 700 Employees)

Your Current Reality

At this stage, you're likely experiencing these challenges:

- Scaling recruiting efforts to meet rapid headcount growth
- Developing a structured hiring process & interviewer training for manager and above
- Building an employer brand to attract passive candidates
- Improving diversity in hiring
- Balancing quality and speed in hiring decisions

Core Priorities

- Transforming talent practices into robust, scalable operations
- Creating a dedicated Recruiting Operations function
- Forging deeper alignment with Recruiting and Finance
- Introducing more sophisticated assessment tools & enhanced data collections mechanisms

The growth from 250 to 700 employees represents a crucial phase where companies must transform promising talent practices into robust, scalable operations. Rather than introducing entirely new systems, this is the stage to double-down on and optimize existing foundations through strategic investment and operational excellence.

Key to this evolution is the introduction of a dedicated Recruiting Operations function, which serves as the architectural backbone for scaling processes, tools, and data systems. This is also the time to forge deeper strategic alignment between recruiting and finance - establishing clear signals for headcount planning, approval processes, and resource allocation.

The introduction of more sophisticated assessment tools, enhanced data collection mechanisms, and comprehensive interviewer enablement programs shouldn't be viewed as "nice to haves," but as critical infrastructure that enables quality hiring at scale.

Companies that treat this stage as merely doing "more of the same" miss the opportunity to build the operational muscle required for the next phase of growth. Those that succeed approach it as a period of intentional investment in systems, tools, and cross-functional alignment that will support hiring hundreds of employees while maintaining quality and efficiency.

Essential Tools and Strategies

Build Relationships With Specialized Recruiters for Hard-To-Fill Positions

While building an in-house recruiting function is essential, having relationships with specialized recruiters for key technical or executive roles can be invaluable. Focus on finding recruiters who deeply understand your industry and can serve as long-term partners rather than transactional vendors.

Enhance Careers Page on Website to Showcase Company Culture & Growth Opportunities

Your careers page should be more than just a list of open positions—it's an opportunity to tell your company's story and demonstrate what makes your workplace unique. Focus on authentic representation of your culture, clear growth paths, and compelling reasons why candidates should choose your company over others.

Attend Job Fairs & Host Recruiting Events

Attend job fairs and host recruiting events Strategic participation in job fairs and hosting your own recruiting events helps build your talent pipeline while strengthening your employer brand. Focus on events where your target candidates gather and consider hosting specialized events that showcase your company's expertise and culture.

Define the “Candidate Journey” From Outreach Through Onboarding & First 90 Days

Map out every touchpoint in your candidate experience, from initial contact through the crucial first 90 days of employment. Having a clearly defined journey helps ensure consistency, identifies potential friction points, and creates a foundation for continuous improvement.

Develop a Comprehensive Employer Brand

This growth stage requires a strategic pivot from basic recruitment marketing to comprehensive employer brand development, partnering with specialized agencies to formalize the employer value proposition (EVP), establish consistent brand guidelines, and create a cohesive voice across all candidate touchpoints. This professional approach to employer branding transforms ad-hoc recruitment content into a compelling, standardized narrative that resonates with target talent pools.

Establish a Recruiting Resources Prioritization Model

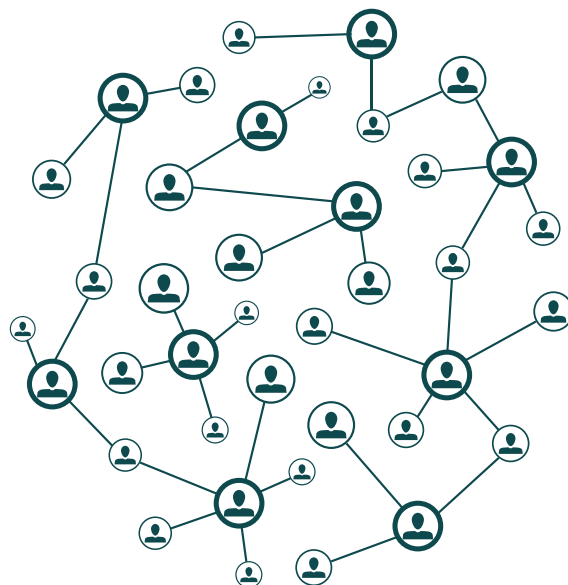
Create clear criteria for prioritizing hiring needs across the organization, considering factors like business impact, urgency, and resource requirements. This helps ensure recruiting efforts align with company priorities and prevents resources from being spread too thin.

Create Feedback Loop on Talent & Performance

Establish feedback loop on talent and performance from hiring manager → functional CxO → recruiting for ongoing calibration. Create systematic ways to gather and incorporate feedback about hire quality and performance, ensuring this information flows back to inform future recruiting efforts. This continuous feedback loop helps refine your hiring criteria and improves the quality of future hires.

Incentivize Leadership to Maintain Robust Talent Network for Future Hiring

Encourage leaders to actively maintain relationships with high-potential talent, even when there aren't immediate openings. This proactive approach to network building can significantly reduce time-to-hire when critical roles open up and helps ensure access to top talent.



Recruiting Technologies & Tools

- More sophisticated, custom analytics dashboards that serve both executive-level strategic planning and function-specific operational needs. These reporting systems can deliver monthly and quarterly insights around the company's talent acquisition strategy to the Executive Leadership Team while providing department leaders—especially in high-volume, business-critical areas like Engineering and Sales—with detailed hiring metrics that inform specific talent acquisition strategies.
- Talent CRM (such as Gem) for transparency into hiring ROI and increasing efficiency in hiring workflows (sequences for emailing, calling, and texting candidates, etc.)
- LinkedIn Recruiter and InMail for active sourcing
- Employer branding tools (e.g., Glassdoor, The Muse)
- Video interviewing platforms for remote candidates
- A robust interview enablement program that scales as hiring does—including role-specific hiring certifications, comprehensive anti-bias training, and structured learning tracks that cover everything from tactical recruiting partnerships to strategic talent pool development. This kind of formalized training ensures consistency when evaluating candidates, while democratizing hiring best practices across the organization.

Evaluation & Analytics

- Begin tracking more detailed recruiting metrics (e.g., offer acceptance rate, quality of hire)
- Conduct structured interviews with scorecards
- Structured interviews have been shown to have higher validity and reliability compared to unstructured interviews (Levashina et al., 2014).
- Implement basic skills assessments for technical roles

Use of Scientific Evidence

- Begin collecting pre-hire assessment data and performance data systematically
- Conduct simple correlational analyses between hiring assessments and early performance indicators
- Continue to leverage established research while starting to build internal validation evidence
- Adjust competency models as needed based on emerging business priorities and initial internal data

Part Four: Mid-Sized Company Recruiting

(700 - 5000 Employees)

Your Current Reality

At this stage, you're likely experiencing these challenges:

- Balancing hiring quality and speed at scale
- Managing complex hiring workflows
- Optimizing recruitment marketing
- Building strong talent pipelines
- Maintaining hiring consistency

Core Priorities

- Improving quality of hire and reducing bad hires
- Enhancing candidate experience to improve offer acceptance rates
- Building a strong talent pipeline for future needs
- Optimizing recruitment marketing and employer branding
- Improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring

While continuing to leverage established research on predictive validity, companies can gradually build their own internal validation evidence, creating increasingly refined competency models that reflect their unique context and evolving business priorities. This early investment in data infrastructure, though sometimes overlooked amid rapid scaling pressures, enables organizations to make increasingly sophisticated talent decisions based on years of accumulated evidence rather than starting from scratch when they reach larger scale.

Essential Tools and Strategies

Developing a Robust Talent Pipeline Through Proactive Sourcing

Building and maintaining a strong talent pipeline means identifying and engaging

candidates before positions open. This approach combines strategic networking, consistent relationship nurturing, and targeted outreach to keep qualified candidates warm and interested in your organization for future opportunities.

Implementing a Comprehensive Employer Branding Strategy

Your employer brand should tell a compelling story about what makes your organization unique as a workplace, backed by authentic employee experiences and clear differentiation from competitors. Focus on creating and distributing content that showcases your culture, values, and employee experience across multiple channels while ensuring your message remains consistent and genuine.

Using Data-Driven Approaches to Job Description Optimization & Candidate Targeting

Leverage analytics and A/B testing to refine job descriptions and targeting strategies, focusing on language and requirements that attract qualified, diverse candidate pools. Track which descriptions and targeting approaches yield the best candidates, then use those insights to continuously improve your recruiting content and outreach strategies.

Build Relationships With Universities & Professional Orgs For Consistent Talent Flow

Developing strong partnerships with key educational institutions and professional organizations creates reliable talent pipelines for entry-level and specialized roles. Focus on building multifaceted relationships that go beyond traditional career fairs to include mentorship programs, internships, and ongoing engagement with student organizations.

Implement Structured Assessment Centers for Key Roles

Create standardized, comprehensive evaluation processes that combine multiple assessment methods to get a holistic view of candidates for critical positions. These centers should use validated tools and exercises that specifically measure the competencies most crucial for success in your organization.

Recruiting Technologies & Tools

- Advanced ATS with robust analytics and reporting
- CRM (Candidate Relationship Management) systems
- AI-powered sourcing tools (e.g., HiringSolved, Entelo)
- Programmatic job advertising platforms
- Chatbots for initial candidate screening and scheduling

Evaluation & Analytics to Track

- Implement predictive analytics for quality of hire
- Use data to optimize sourcing channels and recruitment marketing spend
- Conduct regular audits of hiring process for bias and efficiency
- Track advanced metrics like time to productivity and hiring manager satisfaction

Applying Scientific Evidence to the Hiring Process

- Conduct formal validation studies to empirically identify predictors of success in your specific context
- Develop custom assessments tailored to your organization's unique competency needs
- Developing custom assessments should follow best practices in test development and validation (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2018).
- Use predictive modeling to optimize selection processes
- Regularly revisit and update competency models to ensure alignment with evolving business goals
- Begin longitudinal studies to understand how predictors of success may change as employees progress in their careers



Part Five:

Enterprise Recruiting (5000+ Employees)

Recruiting Challenges and Priorities

- Managing global, high-volume recruiting at scale
- Optimizing recruitment processes for efficiency and candidate experience
- Leveraging AI and automation in recruiting workflows
- Aligning recruiting strategies with long-term workforce planning
- Maintaining agility in recruiting processes despite organizational complexity

Your Current Reality

At the enterprise level, you're facing:

- Complex, global recruiting needs
- High-volume hiring at scale
- Need for sophisticated analytics
- Multiple stakeholder management
- Compliance across jurisdictions

Core Priorities

- Managing global, high-volume recruiting at scale
- Optimizing recruitment processes for efficiency and candidate experience
- Leveraging AI and automation in recruiting workflows
- Aligning recruiting strategies with long-term workforce planning
- Maintaining agility in recruiting processes despite organizational complexity

Essential Tools and Strategies

Implement AI-Driven Sourcing & Matching Technologies

AI-powered recruiting tools can dramatically improve candidate matching and reduce time-to-hire by automatically screening resumes, identifying qualified candidates, and predicting potential job fit. These technologies can process vast amounts of data to surface candidates who might be overlooked through traditional screening methods while reducing bias in the initial screening process.

Develop Internal Talent Marketplace to Facilitate Internal Mobility

Internal talent marketplaces create transparency around growth opportunities within the organization and help match existing employees to new roles based on skills and career goals. This approach not only improves retention and employee satisfaction but also reduces recruiting costs and time-to-fill for key positions by leveraging your existing talent pool.

Use Predictive Analytics to Anticipate Future Needs & Proactively Source Candidates

Predictive analytics helps organizations move from reactive to proactive recruiting by identifying future talent gaps and hiring needs before they become critical. By analyzing historical data, market trends, and internal mobility patterns, organizations can build talent pipelines strategically and reduce the pressure of urgent hiring needs.

Implement Advanced Employer Branding & Recruitment Marketing Strategies

Advanced employer branding goes beyond basic career site content to create targeted, multichannel campaigns that reach passive candidates and build long-term brand awareness among key talent pools. Focus on creating authentic, data-driven content that resonates with your target candidates and differentiates your organization in a competitive talent market.

Develop Strategic Partnerships With Universities, Training Programs & Professional Orgs

Building deep, multifaceted relationships with key talent sources helps ensure a consistent pipeline of qualified candidates while also strengthening your employer brand. These partnerships should go beyond traditional recruiting events to include curriculum input, mentorship programs, and ongoing engagement that creates genuine value for both parties.

Recruiting Technologies & Tools

- Integrated talent acquisition suites with advanced analytics
- AI-powered candidate matching and assessment tools
- Robotic process automation (RPA) for recruiting workflows
- Virtual reality for candidate assessments and job previews
- Advanced CRM systems for talent pipeline management

Evaluation & Analytics to Track

- Use machine learning to continually optimize sourcing and selection processes
- Implement sophisticated quality of hire metrics linked to business outcomes
- Conduct advanced workforce planning and talent forecasting
- Use natural language processing for resume screening and candidate communication analysis

Applying Scientific Evidence to the Hiring Process

- Implement advanced predictive modeling and machine learning techniques to continually refine selection processes
- Conduct large-scale validation studies across different roles, departments, and geographic locations
- Use artificial intelligence to identify novel predictors of success from vast amounts of pre-hire and performance data
- Implement continuous validation processes to adapt to rapidly changing job requirements and business needs
- Conduct research on how predictors of success change over time as the company grows and evolves
- Contribute to the scientific community by publishing findings and participating in industry-wide validation studies



15 Practical Hiring
Tips for Leaders of
Any Size Company

Regardless of your company's current stage, here are some key tips for evolving your sourcing and recruiting capabilities:

1

Align recruiting strategy with business goals

Ensure your talent acquisition efforts support key business priorities. This means regularly reviewing and adjusting your hiring plans based on company objectives and maintaining open communication channels with leadership about evolving talent needs.

2

Invest in employer branding early.

A strong employer brand becomes increasingly valuable as you scale. This investment will pay dividends in reduced recruiting costs and higher quality candidates over time, while helping differentiate your company in competitive talent markets.

3

Prioritize candidate experience.

A positive candidate experience improves offer acceptance rates and protects your employer brand. Remember that every candidate is a potential future employee, customer, or brand advocate, so design your process to be respectful and transparent regardless of outcome.

4

Build a data-driven recruiting culture.

Start tracking key metrics early and use data to inform decisions as you grow. Even simple metrics like time-to-hire and source effectiveness can provide valuable insights that help optimize your recruiting process and resource allocation.

5

Embrace technology, but don't neglect the human touch.

Use technology to enhance, not replace, human interaction in the recruiting process. The best recruiting tech solutions streamline administrative tasks and data collection, freeing up your team to focus on meaningful candidate interactions.

6

Focus on diversity and inclusion from the start.

Building diverse talent pipelines becomes more challenging as you scale. Establish inclusive hiring practices early and build relationships with diverse talent communities before you need them, rather than trying to retrofit diversity initiatives later.

7

Develop a strong internal mobility program.

Internal hiring can be a powerful source of talent as your company grows. Create clear career paths and development opportunities that encourage employees to grow within your organization, reducing recruiting costs while improving retention.

8

Continuously upskill your recruiting team.

The recruiting landscape evolves rapidly, requiring ongoing learning and development. Invest in regular training on new technologies, best practices, and industry trends to keep your team competitive and effective.

9

Balance speed and quality.

As you grow, develop processes that allow for quick hiring without sacrificing candidate quality. Create efficient workflows and clear decision criteria that enable your team to move quickly while maintaining consistent evaluation standards.

10

Think long-term.

Build scalable recruiting processes and technologies that can grow with your company. Avoid quick fixes that might work now but will create technical debt or process inefficiencies as you scale.

11

Stay informed about the latest research in personnel selection and assessment.

Scientific findings can inform your recruiting strategies at every stage. Regular review of research helps ensure your practices are evidence-based and likely to yield positive outcomes.

12

Invest in data collection and management systems early.

Good data is crucial for internal validation studies as you grow. Starting with clean, consistent data collection makes future analysis possible and helps identify areas for improvement in your recruiting process.

13

Partner with academic institutions or I-O psychology consultants to leverage scientific expertise in your recruiting processes.

These partnerships can provide valuable insights into assessment validity, predictive analytics, and best practices while keeping your processes grounded in proven methodologies.

14

Be prepared to evolve your competency models and selection criteria as your company grows and your needs change.

What makes for success in an early-stage startup may be different from what drives success in a larger organization, so regularly review and update your hiring criteria.

15

Balance the use of established scientific findings with the unique aspects of your organization and industry.

While research provides valuable frameworks, consider how these findings apply to your specific context and be willing to adapt them to meet your organization's unique needs.

In Conclusion

Data availability increases as the company grows. Companies can rely on established research and validity generalization in the early stages and conduct sophisticated internal studies in later stages. The use of evidence-based practices in talent acquisition is a journey of increasing sophistication and precision. As organizations grow and evolve, so too must their approach to sourcing and recruiting. From early-stage startups relying heavily on networking and qualitative assessments, to large enterprises leveraging AI and predictive analytics, the journey of talent acquisition is one of continuous adaptation and improvement. As organizations grow, their approach to using scientific evidence in recruiting can and should also evolve.

It's crucial to recognize that as your company grows and evolves, the competencies that predict success may shift. What makes for a successful employee in a 10-person startup may be different from what drives success in a 10,000-person enterprise. This is yet another reason to maintain strong convictions, weakly held. Monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of your talent acquisition system is an important precursor to continuous improvement and meeting the evolving needs of the business. This includes regularly revisiting and updating your competency models and selection criteria based on both internal data and the latest scientific research is key to maintaining an effective recruiting strategy.

Regardless of your company's current size or recruiting maturity, the key is to start where you are, use what you have, and continuously build towards more advanced capabilities. By aligning your sourcing and recruiting strategy with your company's growth stage and business priorities, you can attract the right talent to drive real business impact at every step of your journey. Remember, the goal of evidence-based recruiting is not just to follow best practices, but to continually refine your approach to identify and attract the talent that will best drive your company's success at each stage of growth. Whether you're making your first key hires or optimizing a global recruiting operation, a scientifically-informed approach to talent acquisition can provide a crucial competitive advantage.

The goal of sourcing and recruiting is not just to fill open positions, but to build the workforce that will drive your company's success. Whether you're trying to make your first key hires, scale rapidly, or optimize a global recruiting operation, a strategic approach to talent acquisition can give you a crucial competitive advantage. By aligning your use of scientific evidence with your company's growth stage and evolving business priorities, you can build a workforce that not only meets your current needs but is also prepared to drive your company's future success. The investment in evidence-based recruiting practices will pay dividends in better hiring decisions, improved employee performance, and ultimately, stronger business outcomes.

Want to ensure your talent acquisition strategy aligns with your business goals?

Contact Fractional Insights to learn how our Psychological Ergonomics framework can help you build a workforce that drives measurable business impact at every stage of growth. Visit fractionalinsights.com or email info@fractionalinsights.com to start the conversation.



Ready to gain a strategic advantage in recruiting top talent for your growing team?

Contact Talent Density Partners at leslie@talentdensity.co



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