

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Overcoming The Four Roadblocks That Can Hinder Growth

Strategies For Recruitment Success

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Roadblock 1 - Shopping List vs. Real Requirements.....	3
Roadblock 2 - CV Selection vs Position Description.....	5
Roadblock 3 - Choosing A Match During Interviews.....	7
Roadblock 4 - Avoiding Underperformers.....	11
Checklists For Recruitment Success.....	9
Uncovering real role requirements.....	9
Aligning CV shortlist with role requirements.....	13
Choosing the right match during the interviews.....	15

ROADBLOCK 1

You Get Fooled by Your Shopping List Instead Of Uncovering Real Role Requirements

Too often, SaaS startup founders fall into a common recruitment trap: They're swayed by their 'shopping list' of desired qualifications, rather than focusing on the actual requirements of the role. In this chapter, we'll explain why this occurs and provide actionable insights on how to avoid this pitfall in your hiring process.

First, let's understand the nature of the 'shopping list' error. It's the tendency to place undue emphasis on an exhaustive list of qualifications, skills, and experiences when posting a job vacancy. This approach, although seemingly thorough, often masks the real needs of the position. While an Ivy League degree or a five-year tenure at a major tech company might be impressive, they are not always indicative of success in a specific role at your startup.

The first step in avoiding this trap is to shift from a 'shopping list' to a 'performance profile' approach. A performance profile outlines what the candidate needs to achieve in the role, rather than just listing qualifications. This means focusing on expected outcomes, key objectives, and the challenges that come with the role. For instance, instead of asking for "five years of experience in software sales," you might list "demonstrated ability to develop effective sales strategies in a rapidly evolving tech market."

Next, consider the cultural fit. Your startup's culture is unique and plays a crucial role in team dynamics and overall business success. When evaluating candidates, consider their ability to thrive in your startup's environment.



This doesn't mean you should hire people who simply blend in; diversity in thoughts and experiences fuels innovation. But you want to ensure new hires align with the company's core values and mission.

Then, think about potential, not just experience. In a rapidly evolving SaaS landscape, adaptability and a growth mindset may be more valuable than a long list of past experiences. Look for evidence of learning agility, resilience, and the ability to innovate under pressure. These are qualities that aren't usually listed on a CV but can be uncovered during an interview or through references.

Lastly, consider using structured interviews and validated assessment tools to evaluate candidates objectively. These can provide valuable data about a candidate's suitability beyond the impressions formed during an interview.

In conclusion, successful recruitment in a SaaS startup requires a shift in perspective. Don't be fooled by your shopping list of qualifications. Dig deeper to uncover the real role requirements, focusing on performance expectations, cultural fit, potential, and data-driven assessments. This approach will not only lead to better hires but also contribute to a more efficient and effective hiring process, saving your startup valuable time and resources in the long run.

By rethinking your recruitment strategy, you'll be better equipped to find individuals who can truly contribute to your startup's growth and success, rather than just ticking off boxes on a list. Remember: Hire for the role, not the CV.



ROADBLOCK 2

You Misalign Your CV Selection With Your Position Description

A common pitfall in recruitment for SaaS startup founders is the misalignment of CV selection with the actual position description. In this chapter, we'll delve into why this disconnect occurs and provide practical guidance on how to synchronise your hiring process effectively.

The crux of this issue lies in the overemphasis on CVs and underemphasis on the position description. CVs offer a snapshot of a candidate's qualifications and experiences, which are undoubtedly crucial. However, a disconnect occurs when these are considered in isolation, without factoring in the unique requirements of the role. For example, an applicant may have a sterling academic record in computer science, but if the role demands strong sales skills, this mismatch may lead to underperformance.

The first step to aligning your CV selection with the position description is to redefine the role based on clear, measurable outcomes. Instead of stating that a candidate must have "five years of experience in SaaS sales," specify the desired results, such as "increase the conversion rate of leads to customers by 15% within the first year." This clarity will enable you to better evaluate CVs based on their potential to deliver these outcomes.

Next, consider the organisational fit. Each startup has its unique culture, and fitting into this culture is as important as meeting the role's technical requirements.



When reviewing CVs, look beyond the skills and experiences. Consider the candidate's values, attitudes, and work style. Will they thrive in your startup's environment? Will they contribute positively to team dynamics?

Then, focus on the candidate's potential. In the fast-paced SaaS industry, adaptability and a growth mindset often trump extensive experience. Look for signs of resilience, creativity, and an eagerness to learn. While these traits may not be explicitly stated in a CV, clues may be found in a candidate's progression, the challenges they've overcome, and the initiatives they've undertaken.

Lastly, use structured interviews and validated assessment tools to supplement the CV review. These methods can provide insights into a candidate's behavioural tendencies, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills, which a CV may not fully capture.

In conclusion, aligning your CV selection with your position description is paramount for effective recruitment. This involves focusing on performance expectations, organisational fit, and potential, rather than just qualifications and experiences. By doing so, you'll not only attract the right candidates but also streamline your recruitment process, saving valuable time and resources.

When re-evaluating your recruitment strategy, remember this: CVs are a tool for understanding candidates, but they're not the definitive measure of suitability. To find the best fit for your startup, always correlate your CV selection with your specific role requirements. After all, you're not just hiring for skills; you're hiring for success.



ROADBLOCK 3

You Choose The Wrong Match During The Interview Round

One of the most critical stages in recruitment for SaaS startup founders is the interview round. However, it's also an area where many mistakes occur, leading to a mismatch between the candidate and the role. In this chapter, we'll explore why this happens and provide tangible advice on improving your interview process.

The interview stage is often fraught with unconscious biases and distractions that can lead to misguided decisions. For instance, a candidate's charisma or an impressive CV might overshadow their actual suitability for the role. Similarly, the stress of the interview can prevent a potentially great fit from shining through.

To avoid choosing the wrong match during the interview round, several steps can be taken.

Firstly, structure your interviews. A well-planned interview with predefined questions can help mitigate bias and ensure that all essential areas are covered. Make sure these questions align with the role's actual requirements, and are designed to elicit responses that demonstrate the candidate's skills, experiences, and potential.

Next, consider introducing practical tasks or challenges relevant to the role during the interview. This approach offers valuable insights into how a candidate might perform in real-world situations, beyond their ability to answer interview questions. For a SaaS sales role, for example, you might ask candidates to prepare and deliver a sales pitch for your product.



Additionally, consider the cultural fit. Every startup has its own unique culture and values, and it's vital to ensure that candidates align with these. Look beyond their technical skills and qualifications and assess their attitudes, work ethics, and ability to collaborate with the existing team.

Consider involving multiple members of your team in the interview process. Different perspectives can help balance biases and provide a more rounded view of the candidate's suitability for the role and the team.

Another crucial factor is to focus on potential, not just experience. In the rapidly evolving SaaS environment, the ability to learn, adapt and innovate can be more valuable than years of experience in a static role. Look for evidence of a growth mindset, curiosity, and resilience in candidates.

Finally, trust your instincts, but validate them with data. Use assessment tools or behavioural tests to supplement your impressions from the interview. Remember, the goal is to predict future performance, and data can often provide a more objective basis for this than gut feeling alone.

In conclusion, the interview round is more than just a conversation; it's a tool for predicting a candidate's potential success in a role. By structuring your interviews, focusing on practical tasks, cultural fit, and potential, and utilising data-driven assessment tools, you can significantly improve your chances of selecting the right match for your startup.



ROADBLOCK 4

You Think You Hired The Perfect Match And Now They Are Underachieving

One of the most perplexing scenarios for SaaS startup founders occurs when a candidate, who seemed perfect during recruitment, starts underachieving once on the job. This chapter will delve into why this may happen and offer insights on how to navigate this complex issue.

Hiring is an imperfect science, and even with the best processes in place, mismatches can occur. When an employee underperforms, it's crucial to understand the potential underlying reasons before deciding on the next steps. Here are four common reasons for underachievement:

Unclear Expectations: Often, underperformance is a result of unclear or unrealistic expectations. The employee may not fully understand their role, the specific tasks they should be performing, or the goals they should be working towards. To rectify this, ensure that role expectations are clearly communicated and that there is a system in place for regular feedback and performance reviews.

Mismatched Skills: The employee's skills may not align with the actual requirements of the role. This could occur if the job description was not accurate or if the role has evolved. In such cases, additional training or even a role reassignment may be necessary.

Poor Cultural Fit: An individual can have all the right skills but still struggle if they don't align with the company culture. They may have difficulty adapting to the work style, communication norms, or values of the organisation.



To avoid this, ensure cultural fit is considered during the hiring process, and foster an inclusive and welcoming culture that allows for diverse work styles.

Lack of Motivation or Engagement: If an employee feels unengaged or unmotivated, their performance will likely suffer. This can stem from various factors, including feeling unappreciated, lack of growth opportunities, or disconnection from the company's mission. Regular check-ins and an open dialogue can help identify and address these issues.

In conclusion, underperformance in a new hire is a challenge, but it also offers a learning opportunity. By understanding the potential reasons behind underachievement, you can take targeted steps to rectify the situation, be it through clearer communication, additional training, cultural interventions, or engagement initiatives.

Remember, hiring is just the first step in building a successful team. Continuous effort is needed to ensure that each team member is set up for success and is able to contribute to their full potential. Addressing underperformance promptly and constructively not only improves individual performance, but also contributes to a healthier, more productive team and ultimately, a more successful startup.



CHECKLIST FOR RECRUITMENT

Uncovering real role requirements

- **Identify key responsibilities:** Thoroughly review the job description to understand what tasks the role will be responsible for on a daily basis.
- **Define essential skills:** Based on the job description, create a list of necessary skills that are needed to perform the role effectively.
- **Detail required experience:** Understand the level and type of experience that a candidate should have. Consider industry-specific experience, years in a similar role, and management experience if applicable.
- **Understand company culture:** Consider the type of individual who will fit well within the company culture. This could include attributes such as communication style, work ethic, and values.
- **Establish educational requirements:** Determine if there are any specific educational qualifications or certifications necessary for the role.
- **Assess the need for technical abilities:** Depending on the role, certain technical skills or familiarity with specific software may be necessary.
- **Decide on the level of autonomy:** Understand if the role requires someone who can work independently or if they will be working within a team.
- **Identify any physical requirements:** For some roles, physical abilities (e.g. ability to lift a certain weight, stand for long periods, etc.) might be necessary.

- Consider language skills: For positions that interact with a diverse clientele or international team, proficiency in certain languages may be required.
- Define work schedule: Be clear on the expected work hours, shift patterns or need for flexibility in the role.
- Consider travel requirements: Determine if the role requires local, national, or international travel, and how often this might be.
- Understand growth potential: Consider the opportunities for advancement and professional development within the role.
- Assess emotional intelligence needs: Depending on the role, emotional intelligence may be a significant factor, especially in roles that involve team collaboration or customer interaction.
- Identify any legal requirements or checks: Certain roles may require background checks, security clearances, or specific legal entitlements (e.g., the right to work in a specific country).
- Review and refine: After creating the initial list of role requirements, review and refine it with the input from key stakeholders, including the team the new hire will join, HR, and senior management. This ensures a thorough and realistic view of what the role truly requires.



Aligning CV shortlist with role requirements

- Prepare a clear job description: Before starting the shortlisting process, ensure you have a clear and detailed job description that outlines the key responsibilities, skills, and qualifications required for the role.
- Create a list of must-have criteria: This should include the essential qualifications, skills, and experience required for the role.
- Create a list of nice-to-have criteria: These are the qualifications, skills, or experience that would be beneficial for the role, but aren't strictly necessary.
- Set up a scoring system: Allocate points for must-have and nice-to-have criteria. This will help you objectively assess each CV against the role requirements.
- Review the CVs: Start by quickly scanning each CV to get a sense of the candidate's qualifications and experience.
- Score each CV: Use your scoring system to evaluate each CV against the must-have and nice-to-have criteria.
- Note relevant experience: Highlight any past experience that aligns with the role requirements. This could include similar roles, industry experience, or experience with specific tasks or projects.
- Consider the candidate's career progression: Look at the candidate's job history to see if they have shown progression in their career that aligns with the role.
- Evaluate skills and qualifications: Look for evidence of the skills and qualifications listed in the job description.
- Assess cultural fit: Consider any information that might indicate the candidate would fit well with your company culture.

- Look for red flags: Be aware of potential red flags, such as unexplained gaps in employment, frequent job changes, or lack of relevant experience.
- Shortlist candidates: Based on the scores, create a shortlist of candidates who best meet the role requirements.
- Review the shortlist: Go through the shortlist again to ensure all candidates meet the essential criteria and that there's a good mix of candidates.
- Prepare for the next stage: For the shortlisted candidates, prepare for the interview stage by creating a list of questions that will further assess the candidate's suitability for the role.
- Get a second opinion: If possible, have another person review the shortlist to ensure you haven't missed anything and to reduce the chance of bias.



Choosing the right match during the interviews

- **Prepare Interview Questions:** Prior to the interview, prepare a set of questions that will help you assess the candidate's skills, experience, and suitability for the role.
- **Review the Job Description:** Before the interview, review the job description to ensure you have a clear understanding of the role requirements.
- **Understand the Candidate's CV:** Review the candidate's CV and application to familiarise yourself with their background and qualifications.
- **Set Interview Goals:** Identify the key information you need to obtain from the interview to make an informed decision about the candidate.
- **Evaluate Skills and Experience:** During the interview, assess the candidate's skills and experience in relation to the job requirements.
- **Assess Cultural Fit:** Consider whether the candidate's values, work style, and personality align with your company culture.
- **Ask Behavioural Questions:** Use behavioural interview questions to understand how the candidate has handled situations in the past.
- **Listen Actively:** Pay attention to the candidate's responses and ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding.
- **Take Notes:** Document key points from the candidate's responses to assist in your evaluation after the interview.
- **Check References:** Contact the candidate's references to verify their skills, experience, and work ethic.
- **Evaluate Communication Skills:** Consider the candidate's ability to communicate clearly and effectively.



- **Assess Problem-Solving Skills:** Look for evidence of the candidate's ability to solve problems and handle challenges.
- **Consider Growth Potential:** Evaluate whether the candidate has the potential for growth and advancement within the company.
- **Reflect on the Interview:** After the interview, take some time to reflect on the candidate's responses and overall impression.
- **Compare Candidates:** Once all interviews have been completed, compare candidates based on their skills, experience, cultural fit, and potential for growth to make the best choice.





BUILDING SAAS TEAMS THAT DELIVER

15 YEARS OF INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE FUELLING
SUCCESSFUL TECH RECRUITMENT



07 3519 6311



<https://www.retained.com.au/>



Level 1/ 232-236 St Pauls Terrace,
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/retainedsolutions/>