

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

# How to Avoid Recruiting Underachievers & Build a High-Performing Team

*Tips for Hiring Success*

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As a SaaS startup, your and your department's success will be heavily dependent on your team. Hiring the right people can mean the difference between growth or failure. So, without further ado, let's discuss the importance of hiring the right people for a startup business.

### Impact on Productivity:

A startup requires everyone on the team to be highly productive, flexible and willing to wear many hats. One underperforming employee can hinder productivity and create tension in the team. Hiring the right people means you will have a team that is highly motivated, productive and capable of working well under pressure.

### Culture Fit:

Startups are naturally high pressure environments, it's essential to have a positive company culture that motivates and inspires your employees. A new employee who doesn't align with your company culture can bring down team morale, leading to a toxic work environment. A team that shares the same values and vision for the company is more likely to work together towards achieving a common goal.

### Innovation:

Startups are known for being innovative and thinking outside the box. Hiring employees who are creative, proactive, and open to new ideas can fuel innovation within the company. A team with diverse skills and experiences can bring different perspectives to the table, leading to more innovative ideas.



### Cost Savings:

Hiring the right people from the outset can save you time and money. If you hire the wrong person, you may end up spending time and money on training and rehiring, which can slow down your business growth. Additionally, hiring the right person means they are likely to be more productive and stay with the company for longer, reducing the need for recruitment and training.

### Reputation:

A startup's reputation is everything. Employees who are committed to their work and believe in the company's vision will not only contribute to the success of the business, but they will also act as brand ambassadors. Their enthusiasm and loyalty will be reflected in their work, leading to positive customer feedback and increased brand recognition.

In conclusion, hiring the right people is crucial for the success of a startup. The impact on productivity, culture fit, innovation, cost savings and reputation all contribute to the growth and sustainability of the business. Startups should take the time to identify the skills, values, and work ethics required for each position, and conduct a thorough recruitment process to find the ideal candidates. By investing in the right employees, startups can build a strong foundation for future success.

In the following pages, we share with you our proven strategies to avoid hiring people who turn out to be underachievers.



# CHAPTER 1

## Unveiling the True Requirements of the Role You're Recruiting For

Recruiting the right candidate for a role is a crucial aspect of organisational success. A good recruitment strategy can help identify the ideal candidate, ensure the candidate's fit with the business and reduce the risk of a bad hire. But, identifying the right candidate for a role requires understanding the requirements of the role. This means taking into account the job description, essential skills, level of experience and company culture.

- Analysing the job description is the first step in understanding what a role requires. The job description is a document that provides information about the responsibilities, requirements, and expectations of the role. Reviewing the job description carefully helps to identify the key requirements and responsibilities of the position.
- The next step is to identify the must-have skills. Make a list of the essential skills that are required for the role. These may include technical skills, soft skills or industry-specific knowledge. Understanding the necessary skills can help identify the ideal candidate for the role.
- Additionally, determining the level of experience required for the role is essential. Decide if you need someone with entry-level experience or a seasoned professional. This helps to ensure that the candidate's experience aligns with the level of the position, leading to better job performance and retention.



- Finally, it's important to consider the company culture when assessing the requirements of a role. Different startups have different cultures, and it's important to identify the type of person who would thrive in your startup. This may include considering factors such as communication style, work ethic, and values. The candidate's fit with the company culture can determine the longevity of their employment with the startup.

A checklist for understanding what a role requires can be a helpful tool in guiding the recruitment process. This checklist should include at least the following:

- reviewing the job description
- highlighting key responsibilities
- identifying the essential skills for the role
- determining the level of experience required for the position
- considering the company culture and the ideal fit for the business

In conclusion, understanding the requirements of a role is essential to finding the right candidate for the position. By analysing the job description, identifying essential skills, determining the level of experience, and considering the company culture, startups can ensure they recruit the ideal candidate for the role.

Use our bullet points and the checklist provided to guide your recruitment process and make informed hiring decisions.



## CHAPTER 2

### Sorting the Essential Must-Haves from the Desirable Nice-to-Haves

Building a successful startup team is essential to the growth and success of any company. When it comes to hiring new employees, it's important to know which skills and qualities are essential and which are just "nice to have." Understanding the difference between must-have and nice-to-have requirements can help you make better hiring decisions and build a strong team that can help your startup thrive.

#### Defining Must-Have and Nice-to-Have Requirements

A "must-have" requirement is a skill or quality that is essential for a candidate to possess in order to perform the job successfully. These are the non-negotiables that you need in a candidate. For example, if you're hiring a software developer, a must-have requirement might be experienced with a specific programming language or a certain level of proficiency with coding.

On the other hand, a "nice-to-have" requirement is desirable but not essential for a candidate. For example, if you're hiring a content writer, a nice-to-have requirement might be experienced in a specific industry or a certain level of creativity.

#### Identifying Must-Have Requirements

When identifying must-have requirements for a new hire, it's important to focus on the essential skills and qualities for the job. This will help you filter out candidates who do not meet these requirements and allow you to focus on the best candidates for the role.



Here are some tips for identifying must-have requirements:

- **Review the job description:** Start by reviewing the job description and identifying the key skills and qualities that are required for the role. Make a list of these must-have requirements and use it as a guide when reviewing resumes and conducting interviews.
- **Consult with your team:** Talk to your current team members to get their input on the must-have requirements for the new hire. They may have valuable insights into the skills and qualities that are essential for the role.
- **Prioritise skills and qualities:** Once you've identified the must-have requirements, prioritise them based on their importance to the role. This will help you focus on the key skills and qualities that are essential for the job.

## Identifying Nice-to-Have Requirements

While must-have requirements are essential for the job, nice-to-have requirements can help you identify candidates who have additional skills or qualities that could be beneficial to the role or the company.

Here are some tips for identifying nice-to-have requirements:

- **Think about the company culture:** Consider the company culture and the qualities that would fit well with your team. For example, if your company values creativity and innovation, a nice-to-have requirement might be experience working in a creative field or a track record of coming up with innovative ideas.





- Consider the future of the company: Think about the future of the company and the skills and qualities that will be important as the company grows. A nice-to-have requirement might be experience in a specific industry or a skill set that will be valuable as the company expands.
- Don't prioritise nice-to-have requirements over must-have requirements: While nice-to-have requirements can be beneficial, they should not be prioritised over must-have requirements. It's important to focus on the essential skills and qualities first, and then consider additional factors that could be beneficial.

In conclusion, understanding the difference between must-have and nice-to-have requirements can help you make better hiring decisions and build a strong team for your startup. By focusing on the key skills and qualities that are essential for the role, you can identify the best candidates and build a team that can help your company grow and succeed. Remember to prioritise must-have requirements over nice-to-have requirements, and consider the future of the company when identifying additional skills and qualities that could be beneficial.



## CHAPTER 3

### Beyond the Surface: Why You Should Avoid Judging CVs by Their Appearance

When it comes to hiring new employees, many hiring managers and recruiters tend to judge CVs by their appearance. However, this approach can be misleading and may cause you to miss out on qualified candidates. In this chapter, we'll discuss why you should avoid judging CVs by their appearance and what you can do instead to make better hiring decisions.

#### Why Appearance Can Be Misleading

While a visually appealing CV can make a good first impression, it's important to remember that appearance does not always reflect a candidate's qualifications or suitability for the job. Here are some reasons why appearance can be misleading:

- It's easy to make a CV look good: With the help of online templates and design tools, it's easy for candidates to create visually appealing CVs that may not accurately reflect their qualifications or work experience.
- Visuals can distract from the content: A CV with flashy graphics or an unusual layout can be visually impressive, but it may distract from the actual content of the CV, making it difficult to evaluate a candidate's qualifications.
- Personal biases can influence perceptions: Unconscious biases can influence how we perceive a candidate's CV based on appearance, rather than on their qualifications or experience.



## What to Look for Instead

Instead of focusing on appearance, here are some things you can look for when reviewing CVs to help you make better hiring decisions:

- **Relevant work experience:** Look for candidates with relevant work experience that matches the requirements of the job. Pay attention to the job titles, responsibilities, and achievements listed on the CV.
- **Key skills and qualifications:** Look for candidates who possess the key skills and qualifications required for the job. Pay attention to the education, certifications, and technical skills listed on the CV.
- **Accomplishments and achievements:** Look for candidates who have achieved notable accomplishments or received awards in their previous roles. These can indicate a candidate's potential for success in the new role.
- **Personal attributes:** Look for candidates who possess personal attributes that align with your company's values and culture. Pay attention to any volunteer work or community involvement listed on the CV, as well as any hobbies or interests that may indicate a good cultural fit.

**Judging CVs by their appearance can be misleading and may cause you to miss out on qualified candidates.** Instead, focus on the content of the CV and look for relevant work experience, key skills and qualifications, accomplishments and achievements, and personal attributes that align with your company's values and culture. By taking a more comprehensive approach to reviewing CVs, you can make better hiring decisions and build a stronger team for your company.



## CHAPTER 4

### Uncovering the Truth: The Art of Asking Tough Questions in Job Interviews

As a hiring manager, one of your most important responsibilities is to identify the right candidates for your team. Job interviews are a critical part of the hiring process, and they provide an opportunity to learn more about the candidate's skills, experience, and fit for the job. However, it's essential to go beyond surface-level questions and dig deeper to uncover the truth about the candidate's abilities and character. In this chapter, we will explore the art of asking tough questions in job interviews for hiring managers.

#### Examples of Hard Questions to Ask

Can you describe a time when you faced a significant challenge at work and how you overcame it?

This question can help you understand the candidate's problem-solving skills, resilience, and ability to handle pressure. Look for specific examples that demonstrate their resourcefulness and initiative.

What do you consider to be your greatest weakness, and how have you worked to overcome it?

This question can give you insight into the candidate's self-awareness and willingness to grow and learn. Look for answers that show they have taken concrete steps to address their weaknesses, such as taking courses or seeking feedback from colleagues.

How do you handle conflict with colleagues or clients?

This question can help you assess the candidate's interpersonal skills and ability to work well with others. Look for answers that show they can listen actively, communicate effectively, and find solutions that are mutually beneficial.



Can you tell me about a time when you made a mistake at work, and what did you learn from it?

This question can help you gauge the candidate's accountability and ability to learn from feedback. Look for answers that show they take responsibility for their actions and use mistakes as an opportunity to improve.

What motivates you in your work, and how do you stay engaged and productive?

This question can help you understand the candidate's values and work style. Look for answers that show they are passionate about their work, take ownership of their responsibilities, and are proactive in seeking new challenges.

### **Checklist for Asking Tough Questions**

- Prepare a list of questions that go beyond the candidate's resume and cover letter.
- Focus on open-ended questions that encourage the candidate to provide detailed answers.
- Listen actively to the candidate's responses and ask follow-up questions to clarify their answers.
- Look for specific examples that demonstrate the candidate's skills and abilities.
- Use behavioural interviewing techniques to explore the candidate's past experiences and behaviors.
- Assess the candidate's fit for the job, the team, and the company culture.
- Avoid questions that could be interpreted as discriminatory or irrelevant to the job.



Asking tough questions in job interviews is essential to uncovering the truth about candidates and identifying the right fit for your team. By preparing a list of open-ended questions and using behavioral interviewing techniques, you can assess the candidate's skills, experience, and fit for the job. Remember to listen actively to their responses, ask follow-up questions, and look for specific examples that demonstrate their abilities. With this approach, you can make informed hiring decisions that benefit both the candidate and your organisation.

In summary, hiring the right people is crucial for the success of a startup. The impact on productivity, culture fit, innovation, cost savings and reputation all contribute to the growth and sustainability of the business. A startup should identify the skills, values, and work ethics required for each position and conduct a thorough recruitment process to find the ideal candidates. Understanding the requirements of a role, analysing the job description, identifying essential skills, determining the level of experience, and considering the company culture can ensure they recruit the ideal candidate for the role. Startups should also differentiate between must-have and nice-to-have requirements when hiring employees.



# CHECKLISTS & TO-DO

## Role Requirements To-Do

### 1. Analyse the Job Description:

- Read the job description thoroughly.
- Highlight key responsibilities and requirements.
- Understand the expectations of the role.

### 2. Identify Essential Skills:

- List down the technical skills required for the role.
- Note the soft skills that are crucial for the position.
- Identify industry-specific knowledge that may be necessary.

### 3. Determine the Level of Experience Required:

- Decide whether the role is suitable for an entry-level candidate or requires a seasoned professional.
- Align the level of experience required with the responsibilities of the role.

### 4. Consider the Company Culture:

- Define your startup's culture - consider communication style, work ethic, and values.
- Identify the type of person who would thrive in your startup's culture.

### 5. Assess the Fit for the Business:

- Evaluate how well the candidate's skills, experience, and personality fit with the job role and company culture.
- Consider if the candidate aligns with the business's long-term goals and vision.



## Role Requirements Checklist

- Thoroughly reviewed and understood the job description.
- Identified and listed down the key responsibilities of the role.
- Identified and listed down the essential skills for the role.
- Determined the level of experience required for the position.
- Defined the company culture and identified the ideal fit for the business.
- Assessed the overall fit of potential candidates with the role and company culture.
- Checked alignment of candidate's goals with business's long-term vision.



# CHECKLISTS & TO-DO

## Must-Haves & Nice-To-Haves To-Do

### 1. Define Must-Have and Nice-to-Have Requirements:

- Identify the skills or qualities that are essential (must-have) for the role.
- Pinpoint the qualities that are desirable but not necessary (nice-to-have).

### 2. Identify Must-Have Requirements:

- Review the job description and highlight the key skills and qualities required.
- Consult with your current team to get their input on the must-have qualities.
- Prioritise these skills and qualities based on their importance to the role.

### 3. Identify Nice-to-Have Requirements:

- Consider the company culture and the qualities that would complement your team.
- Think about the future of the company and what skills and qualities will be valuable as the company grows.
- Remember not to prioritise nice-to-have requirements over must-have ones.

### 4. Assess Potential Candidates:

- Use your list of must-haves and nice-to-haves requirements to screen resumes and during interviews.
- Ensure potential candidates meet all the must-have requirements.

### 5. Make Hiring Decisions:

- Consider both must-have and nice-to-have requirements when making your final decision.
- Ensure the selected candidate aligns with the company's future goals and fits well with the company culture.



## Must-Haves & Nice-To-Haves Checklist

- Defined must-have and nice-to-have requirements for the role.
- Identified and prioritised must-have requirements.
- Identified and listed down the nice-to-have requirements.
- Assessed potential candidates against the must-have and nice-to-have requirements.
- Made a hiring decision considering both sets of requirements and the company's future goals.



# CHECKLISTS & TO-DO

## Objective Selection To-Do

### 1. Understand the Misleading Nature of CV Appearance:

- Acknowledge that a visually appealing CV may not accurately reflect a candidate's qualifications or work experience.
- Recognise that flashy graphics or an unusual layout can distract from the content.
- Accept that unconscious biases can influence how you perceive a candidate's CV based on appearance.

### 2. Focus on Relevant Work Experience:

- Look for CVs that showcase relevant work experience matching the job requirements.
- Pay attention to job titles, responsibilities, and achievements listed on the CV.

### 3. Identify Key Skills and Qualifications:

- Look for key skills and qualifications that are required for the job.
- Consider education, certifications, and technical skills listed on the CV.

### 4. Look for Accomplishments and Achievements:

- Seek candidates who have achieved notable accomplishments or received awards in their previous roles.
- These could indicate potential for success in the new role.

### 5. Assess Personal Attributes:

- Look for personal attributes that align with your company's values and culture.
- Take note of any volunteer work or community involvement, hobbies, or interests listed on the CV.



## Must-Haves & Nice-To-Haves Checklist

- Acknowledged the misleading nature of CV appearance.
- Focused on relevant work experience in CV reviews.
- Identified key skills and qualifications from CVs.
- Looked for notable accomplishments and achievements.
- Assessed personal attributes that align with company culture.
- Avoided letting CV appearance influence hiring decisions.



# CHECKLISTS & TO-DO

## Asking Interview Questions To-Do

### 1. Preparation of In-Depth Questions:

- Prepare a list of hard-hitting questions that go beyond the candidate's CV and cover letter.
- Ensure your questions are open-ended to encourage detailed answers.

### 2. Active Listening:

- During the interview, actively listen to the candidate's responses.
- Ask follow-up questions to clarify their answers and gain more insight.

### 3. Focus on Behavioural Evidence:

- Use behavioural interviewing techniques to explore past experiences and behaviours.
- Look for specific examples that demonstrate the candidate's skills and abilities.

### 4. Assessing the Candidate's Fit:

- Evaluate the candidate's fit for the role, the team, and the company culture based on their responses.

### 5. Avoid Discrimination:

- Avoid questions that could be interpreted as discriminatory or irrelevant to the role.



## Must-Haves & Nice-To-Haves Checklist

- Prepared in-depth, open-ended questions.
- Actively listened and asked follow-up questions during the interview.
- Used behavioural interviewing techniques.
- Assessed the candidate's fit for the role, team, and company culture.
- Avoided discriminatory or irrelevant questions.



# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS LIBRARY

## Skills-Related Interview Questions

1. What are your strongest technical skills?
2. How proficient are you in [specific software/tool]?
3. Can you tell me about a project where you used [specific skill]?
4. How do you stay updated with the latest [industry] trends?
5. Can you provide an example where you used [specific skill] to solve a problem?
6. How did you utilise your skills in your previous role?
7. Can you explain a complex [industry-related] concept in simple terms?
8. How do you handle multiple tasks at once?
9. How would you rate your [specific skill] on a scale from 1 to 10?
10. Can you describe a situation where you had to learn a new skill quickly?
11. How proficient are you in using [specific programming language]?
12. Can you tell me about a time when you used your [specific skill] to overcome a challenge?
13. What steps do you take to improve your [specific skill]?
14. Can you tell me about a time when you had to use your [specific skill] to meet a tight deadline?
15. How have your skills evolved over the years?
16. How have your skills helped in achieving team objectives?
17. Can you provide an example where your skills helped in saving cost or improving efficiency?
18. How comfortable are you with [specific skill]?
19. How did you use your skills to handle a difficult client?
20. What new skills are you interested in acquiring?



# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS LIBRARY

## Experience-Related Interview Questions

1. Can you describe a significant challenge you faced in your previous role and how you overcame it?
2. What was your key contribution in your last job?
3. How has your past work experience prepared you for this role?
4. Can you discuss an accomplishment you're particularly proud of?
5. Can you describe a time when you took a leadership role?
6. How did you handle a disagreement with a colleague in the past?
7. Can you discuss a project that didn't go as planned and how you managed it?
8. Can you describe an instance when you had to make a difficult decision at work?
9. How have you dealt with a difficult client in your past role?
10. Can you provide an example of how you've contributed to your previous team's success?
11. Have you ever had to meet a tight deadline? How did you ensure it was met?
12. Have you worked in a cross-functional team? What was your role?
13. Can you share an instance where you had to adapt to significant change at work?
14. Can you describe a situation where you used your negotiation skills?
15. Have you ever trained a colleague or a team? What was the experience like?
16. Can you discuss a complex project you've managed from inception to completion?
17. Can you provide an example of a risk you took in your previous role and the outcome?
18. How have you handled a mistake you made in your previous job?





# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS LIBRARY

## Goal & Career-Related Interview Questions

1. What are your long-term career goals?
2. Can you describe your professional development plan to me?
3. How does this role align with your career goals?
4. What are your short-term career objectives?
5. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
6. What kind of work environment helps you reach your full potential?
7. What are the most important values you demonstrate as a leader?
8. How do you think this position will help in achieving your career goals?
9. Can you describe a professional achievement you are particularly proud of?
10. Where do you see yourself in five years?
11. Can you describe the steps you've taken to achieve your career goals?
12. What skills or experiences do you think you need to reach your career objectives?
13. What's your ideal role and how does it align with your career goals?
14. How do you define professional success?
15. What kind of professional development opportunities are you looking for?
16. What are you looking for in terms of career development?
17. How does this role fit into your long-term career plans?
18. What are the three things that are most important to you in a job?
19. Can you describe a time when you made a significant career change? What drove that decision?






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