

The Talent Leader's Playbook

**7 Strategies for Faster,
More Effective Hiring**



 **indeed**

Methodology

The Indeed Smarter Hiring Annual Report is based on an online survey conducted from 30 April–19 May 2025.

Respondents included:

- 6,837 jobseekers, defined as people who are in full- or part-time employment or are looking for work.
- 2,481 employers, defined as people with senior management responsibility in their organisation.

This survey represents 12 of Indeed's core markets. Respondents per country were distributed as follows:

- Jobseekers: U.S. (1,014), Canada (505), U.K. (1,012), Germany (503), France (504), Netherlands (255), Italy (508), India (1,010), Singapore (506), Japan (520), Australia (249), Mexico (251)
- Employers: U.S. (511), Canada (100), U.K. (504), Germany (256), France (100), Netherlands (100), Italy (102), India (251), Singapore (103), Japan (253), Australia (100), Mexico (101)

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Introduction

Ask the specialists: How are top talent leaders solving today's toughest hiring challenges?

Your guide to bridging the
7 disconnects that make hiring harder

Hiring is too slow. Employer offers do not match what candidates really want. And the rise of AI in the application process has both employers and jobseekers pointing the finger.

These are just some of the disconnects between employers and jobseekers identified in our most recent annual report, [Indeed Smarter Hiring Insights: Solving the 7 Disconnects That Make Hiring Harder](#).

The report, based on a survey of 6,837 jobseekers and 2,481 employers in 12 countries, makes it clear that jobseekers and employers are struggling to understand each other, albeit for different reasons.

The question is: What can employers do about it?

In this guide, seven top talent leaders explain how you can create a more transparent, predictable hiring experience that builds trust at every stage of the journey. Take a read, then use our quiz to test how ready you are to bridge the gaps.

Key takeaways from the specialists:



Make the invisible visible.

Better hiring can boil down to better communication whether that means writing more descriptive job posts or explaining when it is OK (and not OK) for candidates to use AI. Do not make candidates read between the lines.



Drive speed with specifics.

More extensive screening, including detailed application questions, can speed up hiring by eliminating weeks of back-and-forth.



Show, don't tell.

Employee testimonials, transparent pay bands and success metrics around upskilling and AI recruiting can help take the guesswork out of hiring and help jobseekers see themselves at your company.



Trade credentials for capabilities.

Many organisations are ditching degree requirements and tenure thresholds, focusing instead on leadership abilities and learning potential.





Disconnect #1

Leadership skills are prized.
Why do not candidates know that?

EMPLOYERS

40%

say leadership and workforce skills are the most critical skills gaps.

Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 jobseekers and n=2,481 employers

JOBSEEKERS

21%

say it is important to demonstrate those skills on their applications.

SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Show candidates what leadership means to you.

Leadership is one of the most sought-after capabilities in today's workplace, but many candidates are not highlighting it. Plenty have the skills, but they misunderstand what leadership means to employers.

"Jobseekers equate leadership with a title, like manager or director," says Taylor Meadows, Head Strategist of Employer Branding at Glassdoor. "Employers equate leadership to behaviour."

That means strong candidates can undersell themselves and employers can miss out.

THE PLAYBOOK:

Meadows offers three ways to help identify leadership skills.

Define "leadership" up front.

Leadership can look different depending on the company and industry. Meadows recommends dedicating a section of each job posting to "what leadership means to us."

Ask jobseekers how they elevate others.

Being a leader does not mean climbing the corporate ladder. A true leader, Meadows argues, knows how to bring people along with them.

Embrace "conversational interviews."

Structured questions can help standardise hiring, but Meadows says candidates often reveal more in conversation. Instead of focusing on rigid prompts, create space for applicants to talk about experiences where they influenced outcomes, took initiative or supported teammates. "Conversational interviewing allows for more authenticity for both parties," Meadows says.



Disconnect #2

Employers want future potential.
Jobseekers promote their pasts.

SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

To hire for potential, be clear about what you are seeking.

Employers want to hire people who can adapt to rapidly changing workforce needs. But they rarely come out and say that or explain how they will evaluate it.

Jobseekers are not mind readers. “Make the implicit explicit,” says Aidan McLaughlin, Indeed's Senior Director of Content Marketing, who led a panel discussion on skills-first hiring at Indeed FutureWorks 2025.

THE PLAYBOOK:

McLaughlin shares guidance on how to let candidates know you value potential.

Tell real stories.

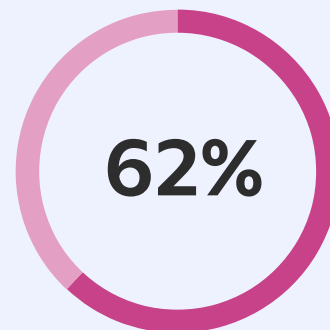
Link to employee testimonials on your careers page to show how people have succeeded by applying transferable skills to roles outside of their prior experience. These do not have to be polished productions. The more raw and authentic, the better.

Be specific about priorities.

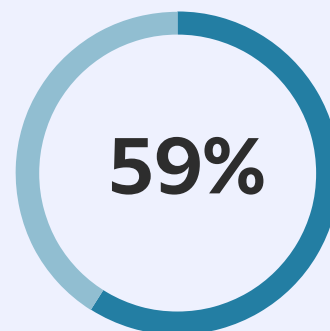
If applicants do not know your industry, they may assume they are not qualified. If, say, the ability to dissect complex problems is more important than sector-specific knowledge, say that explicitly.

Ask for proof of potential.

Rather than asking broad questions about candidates' experience, ask specifically about key competencies: the last time they had to learn something quickly, how they have handled challenges in different contexts, what they are doing to build new skills. “This not only sets people up to apply confidently, but it also sets the tone for good interviews,” McLaughlin says.



of employers feel most confident hiring for a mix of experience, skills and potential.



of jobseekers feel most confident applying to jobs that mirror their direct experience.

Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 jobseekers and n=2,481 employers



Disconnect #3

Boilerplate job posts
leave candidates cold.

EMPLOYERS

20%

say one of their biggest hiring hurdles is that applicants do not meet job requirements.

Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 jobseekers and n=2,481 employers

JOBSEEKERS

25%

say vague job descriptions are their biggest hiring hurdle.

SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Write job posts that get the job done.

To find better candidates, employers need to write better job descriptions. Too often, hiring teams repurpose old write-ups, fill posts with jargon and include rigid requirements that are not actually necessary for success.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Administrative Assistant

Location: Boston, MA | **Job Type:** Full-time

JOB SUMMARY

We are seeking an experienced Administrative Assistant to join our team. The ideal candidate will have a stable work history in office administration and will be responsible for supporting day-to-day operations and executive staff.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or a related field required.

Experience: Minimum 3–5 years of proven experience in an administrative or secretarial role.

THE PLAYBOOK:



Laura Roberts, Senior Director in the Employer Mobilisation practice at the workforce development nonprofit Jobs for the Future, explains how she rethinks a traditional job posting to attract candidates with the skills and potential to succeed in the role.

! Laura's take

Work history is not a skill. A candidate can have the right skills for the role even if there is a gap in their resume, or if they developed those skills through a job in a different field.

✓ Try this instead

In a job summary, it is important to convey purpose: Explain why the role is integral to the success of the team and the company so candidates can understand why the work would matter to them.

! Laura's take

Focus on capabilities more than degrees and prior roles. Required skills and experience should relate directly to the purpose described in the job summary. If they do not, consider whether they are really necessary.

✓ Try this instead

Strike degree and experience requirements entirely, or at the very least, frame them as 'preferred' rather than "required" so you do not rule out candidates.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Administrative support:

Coordinate and manage calendars, travel arrangements and departmental meetings for senior leadership.

Office operations:

Oversee daily clerical tasks, including filing, mail distribution and inventory management of office supplies.

Communication:

Serve as the primary point of contact for incoming calls and visitor greetings, ensuring professional representation of the company.

Documentation:

Prepare, edit and proofread internal memos, reports and financial invoices.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Expert-level proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

Experience using standard office equipment (multi-line phone systems, scanners, printers).

! Laura's take

Be specific about skills, but do not be so narrow in your description that it keeps people from seeing how their experience is relevant.

✓ Try this instead

Connect daily responsibilities to the larger impact of the role. Success in this job might require the ability to handle multiple competing priorities and create organisational processes. A shift manager at a restaurant likely has those skills, even if they have never distributed mail or booked travel. Give candidates the ability to see how they could succeed in the role.

! Laura's take

Experience with specific tools is not as important as the ability to learn.

✓ Try this instead

Start with higher-level context: This role requires someone who is able to interface with both digital tools and standard office equipment. Frame the "technical requirement" as a proven ability to learn to use new systems.



Disconnect #4

Slow hiring loses
the talent war.

SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Make your first moves count.

In a world of AI-enhanced applications, “it is getting harder to tell qualified and unqualified candidates apart from one another,” says Hannah Lindsley, Senior Director of Data Science at Indeed. As a result, hiring professionals are overwhelmed and missing the chance to connect with great candidates.

THE PLAYBOOK:

Lindsley suggests three strategies for speeding up the hiring process before talent slips away.

Ask sharper application questions.

Employers often know within the first 30 seconds of a phone interview whether a jobseeker is wrong for the role, Lindsley says. Asking these questions early can help reduce interview time later.

Help potential matches succeed.

If there are specific competencies you will be looking for in an interview or assessment, give candidates the information they need to prepare.

20% of employers say their biggest hiring challenge is losing candidates to other employers.



23% of jobseekers say they will start looking elsewhere if a job offer does not come within two weeks.



Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 jobseekers and n=2,481 employers



Disconnect #5

Career growth isn't the hook
employers think it is.

PERK PERCEPTIONS

27% of jobseekers say base salary is the top factor when they are weighing offers, but just

13% of employers say it is the most compelling part of their offer.

20% of employers see career growth as their most enticing offering, while just

12% of jobseekers agree.

Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 jobseekers and n=2,481 employers

SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Put yourself in your candidates' shoes and adapt your offer accordingly.

Money talks. Indeed research consistently shows that base salary is a top draw for candidates, just after flexibility and work-life balance.

The problem? Employers underestimate those essentials and overestimate the pull of less tangible perks such as career growth and culture.

THE PLAYBOOK:

Hiring Lab Senior Economist Brendon Bernard and Indeed Senior Talent Strategy Advisor Kyle M.K. propose three ways companies can rethink offers to meet jobseekers' needs.

Focus on “classic benefits.”

Trendy perks will come and go, but jobseekers will always need the basics: competitive salary, health insurance and paid time off. Prioritise these standard perks over free gym memberships, Bernard advises.

Match benefits to your audience.

Preferences vary widely by demographics, Bernard says. Hiring entry-level talent? Student loan reimbursement can be a big hook. Recruiting seasoned executives? A retirement savings plan will carry more weight.

If you cannot offer flexibility, offer predictability.

Not every role allows for flex work. When that is the case, predictable hours and reliable schedules still give employees something invaluable: “the ability to plan their lives outside of work,” M.K. says.



Disconnect #6

AI is reshaping hiring
but damaging trust.

70% of jobseekers say AI works best for drafting resumes and cover letters but less than one-third of employers approve of this use case.

71% of employers say AI is best for candidate screening, but only a quarter of jobseekers think that is acceptable.



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SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Build trust and drive results with AI like zapier

A trust gap separates jobseekers and employers when it comes to AI in hiring. AI and automation company Zapier is bridging that gap with an AI-assisted strategy that is yielding higher-quality hires and better candidate experiences without turning off jobseekers.

THE PLAYBOOK:

Brandon Sammut, Zapier's Chief People and AI Transformation Officer, explains the key elements of the company's AI hiring strategy.

◆ **Step 1: Make applicants' AI guidelines clear.**
Zapier publishes AI [do's and don'ts](#)* for every stage of the application process, helping candidates distinguish thoughtful uses from 'AI' with sample prompts to guide them.



Step 2: Deploy AI recruiters with transparency.

When Zapier began piloting agentic recruiters, the company [explained up front](#)* why it is using AI, why it may benefit applicants, and how it is ensuring that humans make the final call.



Step 3: Offer options.

Candidates can decide whether they want a human or an AI agent to interview them. "Right now, choice feels really important" Sammut says. The majority still choose a human but about 30% choose agents. The reasons they cite include convenience and they feel they will get a fairer shot with an agentic interviewer.



Step 4: Test, test, test.

Zapier analyses outcomes and publicly shares results. Zapier's [preliminary results](#)* suggest its agentic recruiting pilot has driven:

- 1) higher jobseeker satisfaction;
- 2) better decision quality; and
- 3) a fivefold increase in candidates screened.

Disconnect #7

The need to upskill is clear.
What's unclear is who should
take responsibility.

49% of employers say it is upper management's job to upskill their workforce.

49% of jobseekers believe upskilling is their responsibility, followed by their direct manager's.



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SPECIALIST'S TAKE:

Employers, take the wheel!

Upskilling is everyone's responsibility, but it is employers who need to lead the charge. They are the ones who know where the organisation is going and which skills are needed to get there. "Managers control the prioritisation of upskilling. There needs to be transparency around the bigger vision and strategy, especially around AI," says Indeed's M.K.

THE PLAYBOOK:

From his experience advising talent leaders, M.K. shares his tips for taking the lead on learning and getting results.

Publish a learning policy.

Employees want to learn. They just need direction and time. M.K. recommends publishing an upskilling policy that includes the company's long-term goals, the skills different teams need to achieve them, a list of approved learning tools and a plan for carving out learning time.

Make the payoff clear.

Employees need to know what is in it for them. M.K. suggests employers share the pay increases and promotions that employees can expect once they have attained certain skills. This transparency sends a message that learning is core to career growth.

Show your receipts.

Proof matters. Track outcomes of your upskilling programme and share results. One telling data point, according to M.K.: the percentage of roles filled internally by upskilled employees.

Are you bridging the gap?

Test your knowledge.

1. You want more candidates with leadership potential.

What change do you make first?

- A. Note in the job description that leadership skills are required.
- B. Define which leadership behaviors matter and build them into screening questions.
- C. Use standard prompts in interviews to ask about leadership experience.

2. Strong candidates keep accepting other offers.

What is your smartest move?

- A. Devote more resources to interviewing candidates to reduce lag time.
- B. Move more interviews to virtual so you can schedule more efficiently.
- C. Shift key screening questions and skill checks into the application stage to cut down on interviews.

3. Candidates fixate on salary, but you lead with growth opportunities. What adjustment can you make?

- A. Train recruiters to talk more about career progression.
- B. Publish pay bands alongside growth paths.
- C. Highlight company culture more clearly.

4. You use AI in screening, but it is scaring jobseekers off. What builds trust?

- A. Share the efficiencies gained from AI.
- B. Minimise AI in candidate-facing steps.
- C. Publish clear guidelines on how you use AI and how jobseekers can use it too.

5. Your job descriptions feel generic. What is the real fix?

- A. Be more specific about technical requirements and tools used in the role.
- B. Clarify minimum qualifications and years of experience.
- C. Reframe the role around why it exists, what success looks like, and how performance will be measured.

Answer key:

1: B, 2: C, 3: B, 4: C, 5: C

Score Yourself

For each question: Give yourself 1 point for every “best answer” you selected.

0–1 Points: The Riddler

Your hiring strategy may require a lot of guesswork on the part of applicants. You likely value potential, transparency and speed but have not put those values into practice.

2–3 Points: The Fixer-Upper

You recognise what is broken, but you are not clear about how to fix it. Pick one disconnect and put the solution into practice. Do not just say you value potential – remove one unnecessary requirement. Do not just promise speed – move one screening step to an earlier stage.

4–5 points: The Bridge Builder

Your hiring strategy sends clear, trustworthy signals. You have replaced implied expectations with explicit ones, and candidates feel supported. Bravo!





Indeed is the No. 1 job-site in the world¹ with over 645M Jobseeker Profiles² and 360M sourceable Profiles.³ Indeed strives to put jobseekers first, while providing quality matches for employers, fast, to support their hiring needs.

Every day, we connect millions of people to better work to create better lives, combining the latest in AI technology with the power of human judgement and connection.

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¹Comscore, Total Visits, March 2025

²Indeed data (worldwide), jobseeker accounts that have a unique, verified email address.

³Indeed data (worldwide), jobseeker accounts set to public that have a unique, verified email address.

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