



## Hooking the tech mind

Recruitment efforts for IT positions often generate lukewarm responses. Perhaps hirers are going about it the wrong way.

The human resources recruitment function is often regarded by other departments as a transaction-oriented task that HR merely responds to. Hiring and placement of technical personnel often yield dismal results because IT hirers often only supply basic technical requirements that a candidate needs but leave out other skills that are important to the job scope in the context of the entire division.

IT department heads tend to be more tech-based and may sometimes lack the knowledge and experience of the interview process. Furthermore, hiring managers tend not to think through what they need and who they already have on their team before sending out their requests. This often results in a change in requirements halfway through the screening process. It would serve hiring managers well to have a clear recruitment objective, in the context of their short to long term road map, and know the technical expertise of existing team members and what additional talent is needed to support the department's goals.

It is important for HR personnel to analyse the position in order to obtain an all-inclusive job description by working closely with the hiring manager. HR can focus on the required soft skills while department hirers clearly outline the technical skills needed and together they can create oral or written tests to be administered in an interview. Useful questions that can be posed to hiring managers for HR to gain a clearer insight into a position can include:

- Does the candidate need to interact with clients or internal staff?
- Is the person required to write proposals or submit technical reports?
- Are project management skills required?
- Will negotiation or selling skills be necessary?
- Must the person gather and analyse information and data?
- Is it a supervisory position?

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While hiring managers often leave out soft skills such as the ability to communicate and negotiate well, HR personnel often lack the technical knowledge that is essential when prodding hirers to clarify the technical job descriptions provided. Apprehension from non-tech savvy HR staff in asking IT-related questions can be overcome by overlooking dense computer jargon and seeing the big picture through the different components in a technical job description. HR should try to understand the application of the common technical terms, previous projects and on-going programmes in the company. A short one-day course could be helpful to shed light on the technical needs of the company as basic knowledge of common technical jargon is important. But as an emergency measure for the non-techie, log on to the Webopedia Computer Dictionary website at [www.webopedia.com](http://www.webopedia.com).

It would be useful for HR to get a grip on the technical aspects of the job description by organising the technical requirements into four fundamental areas as follows:

1. Practical skills: Learned job abilities such as application development and testing, project management, writing, speaking and selling skills;
2. Product specialisation or expertise: Product understanding re-

quirements like product domain, application knowledge and product usage. In other words, how the person uses their job skills in a project;

3. Tools and technology: Knowledge of the specific tools of the trade in line with the position and number of years of experience, complete with application know-how of tools and technology such as databases and finance modules; and
4. Industry knowledge: Assess what the person knows about the company, its customers, marketplace and general expectations of the product or service.

Hiring processes can be made more productive when abilities which are vital to the position are separated from bonus skills – divide them into clear categories. This helps to keep the focus on what is most important for the position without undue attention given to the 'nice to have' requirements during the interview. Putting in too much effort on secondary specifics often prolongs the search and may result in a zero candidate match.

### Must have

- Competent in the use of RF circuit design and RF system engineering tools
- Possesses good track record of successful RF design
- Familiar with wireless standards and software defined radios

### Nice to have

- Experience with relevant RF/EMC type approval standards and processes

The outcome of taking such organised measures followed by a well-conducted interview with relevant testing tools and reference checks with former supervisors, clients, and colleagues would result in a best fit. The ability to provide specific details lowers hiring costs, decreases time wasted and reduces staff turnover.

Karen Tok, director

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