

The Collaborative Hiring Process

Tips and Resources to Communicate, Collaborate and
Create Your Own Wave of Success



by **Zane Safrit**

What They're Saying About *The Collaborative Hiring Process*

Becky McCray, author, business consultant, business owner, and cattle rancher writes one of the top 100 business blogs, [SmallBiz Survival](#).

It's awesome. Really. I found myself reading it, at first, focused on offering feedback. Then I'm sucked in. I'm thinking about hiring, about my people, about what you had to say. That's it. It's a success.

Brad Smart, PhD., author of [Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People](#) and [The Smart Interviewer: Tools and Techniques for Hiring the Best](#).

Zane has created an easy-to-read manual that boils the complex hiring process down to straight-forward, practical advice. This short book emphasizes the essentials of hiring A players, from recruiting the best available, to thoroughly screening them, to smoothly bringing them on board.

Steve MacGill, Founder of [Peersight Online](#), the premiere leadership advisory board service:

Zane has done a nice job of producing a practical guide any business can use to significantly increase the success of the hiring process. I especially like the value released by connecting many things we typically don't consider when hiring.

Anita Campbell, CEO of Small Business Trends, LLC and Editor-in-Chief of [Small Business Trends](#) site and the Small Business Trends newsletter and the host of [Small Business Trends Radio](#):

Zane Safrit has a knack for knowing the right thing to say and do to keep employees happy and fire them up! He shares some of his

common sense, yet solid and insightful, approaches to make you a better manager and leader.

Lynn Kahle - Associate Professor, Global Business and Innovation, Copenhagen University College of Engineering, Department of Global Business Engineering

Drawing upon his vast experience in top management, Zane Safrit realizes the importance of fit and intrinsic motivation for the new surfer in your organization. This book is an important and refreshing perspective to recruiting and retaining the right talent for your organization, with takeaways that are easy to understand and implement.

Michael Cullen, Fabrication Supervisor for H.C. Duke and Sons

I just finished reading your online hiring guide and I have to say that I am very impressed. You have a very natural way about your writing and your knowledge and experience really shines through.

Going into my position in January I think the tips at the end are something I really can use. I already try to keep everything positive with my workers and just seeing how they react when I say "thank you" to them is pretty amazing. They are not used to it and I have found that a simple thing like that works 100 times better than yelling at someone all day.

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INTRODUCTION

Your employees are your company's greatest asset.

That's neither tip nor cliché'. It's a truism like saying *The Sun brings light and warmth.*

And as a business leader, it's vital to honor this truth. So, I start with its reminder:

Your employees are your company's greatest asset.

Consider this fact:

The cost of a mis-hire is, on average, 3-4 times their annual salary.

Old Hiring Process: High Risk with Limited Rewards

The opaque, top-down, hiring process too often managed and executed today by a single leader increases the risk of a mis-hire: the employee neither qualified for the job nor welcomed on their arrival. This hiring process creates later problems with disengaged employees, customer churn, higher expenses, declining growth.

Any possible rewards from hiring a possible A-Player are tempered by these initial hurdles created in the hiring process. They temper the contributions the newly enthusiastic A-Player was hired to make.

New Hiring Process: High Rewards with Limited Risks

Here in this book you'll find tools, tips and resources that can lower your risks and raise your rewards with new employees.

I used this system to generate positive results 100% of the time: 3 A-Players hired and 1 C-Player avoided.

The risks from a newly hired A-Player are minimized with open and transparent communication, that engages everyone to collaborate to find the best solutions for your hiring needs. I'll show you the tools, tips and resources to use to ***Communicate, Collaborate and Create your wave of success, again and again.***

Let's use the example of surfing, surfers and waves. Each new employee is like a surfer you tow into the the wave you've prepared.



Your prepare the wave in the weeks and months before they arrive. Your hiring process tows them into the wave you've created.

Done well, it all works to create a beautiful 30-foot wave and for you to ride... cleanly, breathlessly, to the shore.

And everyone's ready for the next wave.

Or...not.

By failing to prepare, you prepare to fail. - [Benjamin Franklin](#)

The simple tools, tips and resources I share insure you're prepared, your company's prepared and your new A-Player is prepared for a wave of success.

Past results can't guarantee future performance. But communication and collaboration can help you systematically create the solutions you need. And that's the wave you'll ride, again and again, as your company grows.

COMMUNICATE

Your first task is to communicate your needs for hiring this A-Player. *You* means the collective *you*. Many hands make short work. Many eyes make a more complete vision. And many mouths describe it faster, more comprehensively, and with more participation.

And, I'll describe a process you can use to duplicate these same results again and again as your company grows. And you'll be able to learn as you go. It's a collaborative process. That's the key next step.

COLLABORATE

Collaboration is built on the foundation of transparent communication. Collaboration is where the ideas and solutions are generated. These are the rewards for your hard work sharing and refining ideas until the solution is found, shared and used to create the next wave.

CREATE

And you'll have a process to systematically create rewards for your group as you systematically find solutions. These rewards include:

- **Increased Engagement.** You'll see greater engagement creating your brand by all those who'll participate. Your collective ideas, perceptions, obstacles, problems, solutions are your raw materials to create your brand.

I offer you some *artist materials* of tools, tips and resources to manage this process systematically, in any market, with any company.

- **Your New, Inspired, A-Player.** They arrive inspired from the passion they found in your interviews, complete with the qualifications you need.

- **Your Big Wave.** You've prepared this big wave during this hiring process. Together, you and your new employee ride it on their first day with you.

- **This Process.** You can use this process to hire another star A-Player or to communicate, collaborate and create your next solution.

Chapter 1: Finding A-Players to Interview

Tips, Tools, and Resources to Find the Best Candidates to Interview.

This isn't a tip. It's beyond a truism. It's the law:

- **You'll hire A-Players, the best employees, only when you interview A-Players.**

It's an obvious law, too.

But, how many of us have failed to do the obvious...to our detriment? That's why I start out with the reminder of this obvious law:

- **You'll hire A-Players, the best employees, only when you interview A-Players.**

Here follows some tips, tools, and resources to **find A-players, the best employees, to interview**. I've used them all, except for 2. And those 2 resources are resources I'll use in the future. And...as an added bonus, I'll point out some potholes, I've stepped in, that you'll want to avoid along the way.

And they also require the least investment of your precious time or money. And in the discussion of time and money, I include:

- *your* time
- *your* money
- *your* company's time
- *your* company's money
- *your* colleagues' time
- *their* money.

Why include your colleagues' time and money?

Time is money. You'll need their investment of their time and, thus, their money to hire your next A-Player. You'll need their help and support, their engagement and execution, their participation and feedback to find your next A-Player. You'll need their time and money.

It's together, with everyone, where you will communicate your existing needs, collaborate to find the best solutions and then create a system to sustain your success or create your wave.

Together, you're motivated. You're incentivized, together. Your growth, your accomplishments, your promotions, your happiness as you leave each day and as you arrive the next morning is contingent on being surrounded with A-Players like...yourselves, together.

If hired correctly, your new A-Player will be enabled to be successful from their first day. And, their success determines your performance and your rewards. The process I offer you here will insure your new A-Player will bring you success. And as another added bonus, you'll have a systematic process able to communicate, collaborate and create subsequent waves for the future.

Communication and collaboration will insure you inspire and reward everyone's full participation in this most important step. Inspiration is the first step of creation. And rewards are how you sustain that creative process.

Communicate

SET THE STAGE

• STEP 1: Articulate a Clear, Precise, Thorough Job Description.

This absolutely has to be your first step. Go no further until you've articulated a clear, precise, and thorough job description with and to everyone in your company.

Your job description will describe your company's needs. And you'll write it to answer these and other questions, that include:

- What's holding you, your colleagues and your company, from moving forward?
- What gap is filled with this new position and/or new A-Player?
- What will you be able to do with this new talent that you're not doing now?
- What goal will be reached?

The job description will also serve as the road map for you, for your new hire and for everyone at your company during the hiring process and celebration of the results. This document will communicate to everyone at any time where it is you're going with this new employee and the results when you reach that destination. It will be the target for all of your evaluations and decisions throughout your journey. Everyone in this process will use it to measure their progress towards your company goals during this process.

- **YOU.** All eyes and fingers will point towards you as the leader. Your progress will be measured by how well your new A-Player meets the expectations outlined in your job description.
- **THOSE IN YOUR COMPANY.** Your colleagues will judge your commitment to their success by the progress they're able to make finding the right person, training them and making them successful.
- **YOUR NEW A-PLAYER.** Your job description communicates confidence and excitement to everyone in your company. Their confidence grows as you show you're a company organized with the tools for their success. Their challenges and rewards are clear. Now, they're excited.

Once completed, step 2 is made easier.

• *STEP 2: Decide on Clear, Precise, Job Qualifications.* (Be sure to include them in the job description.)

Communicating the details here are just as important. They include:

- *the work environment* (outdoors, indoors, work-at-home, open floor or cubicle-nation...)
- *the setting* (office-park, warehouse rehab, downtown, suburbs, garage)
- *their workspace* (mac or pc, software, office or cubicle or lobby..., personal stuff allowed or sterile setting)
- *colleagues' personality*
- *skills required* (do they need a commercial driver's license, is Microsoft Office expertise required, do they need to be a certified MS tech, experienced with a forklift, able to lift 50 lb. packages, coder skills, API-skills, etc)

Every detail adds opportunities for collaboration with everyone involved.

And every detail offered is their opportunity for success.

And every detail insures an accurate, detailed map, is in the hands of everyone, at all times.

And vice versa. The risk of getting lost, of failure, increases with each detail omitted.

You'll hire the person that fits your needs, stated or not. The purpose here is to state them clearly. Opportunity comes from clarity in your communication. That clarity comes from everyone's collaboration. Failure comes from its lack.

• *STEP 3: TOE the Line. TOE stands for:*

- **T**ransparent. You'll be rewarded with greater engagement, participation, input and...forgiveness as you make this recruiting process transparent for all. Tell everyone, tell them repeatedly and put it in writing. And demand the same of everyone else. Small companies usually are at an advantage here. But this is a double-edged sword.
- **O**pen. Keep all parties informed, all to all, on the progress of each step in this recruiting process. It's time-consuming if your time horizon is very short. Otherwise, it's obvious this is an investment whose immediate return comes in the form of ...
- **E**ngagement. This is the holy grail of small business success. Recruiting and hiring is a perfect opportunity to create another layer of engagement with the current members and with the future member.

Now, everyone's helped create the criteria that, together, you'll use to first recruit the best pool of prospects. And you've engaged everyone in the process of finding the next star for them and your company. You're all engaged and committed to the outcome: a pool of A-Players to interview,

Then from that pool, you'll interview together, in a systematic manner, each member to find that A-Player for your company. **I'll share with you a systematic interview approach I've used with outstanding results.**

Everyone now knows who, what, when, why and how:

- why you want to hire,
- when you want to hire,
- what skills you need to hire,
- how you plan to hire them.
- what contributions everyone has made to-date
- what roles they'll play in the future

Now you're left with one question: *Where?* Where do you find your candidates to interview?

At this point, you have a strategy and a goal for that strategy. You have a mission and a clearly defined goal that if acquired indicates your mission is a success. Now it's time to:

PERFORM

• STEP 1: Look Within.

The best place to start looking is inside your company. That's the best place to look for all your solutions.

That's everyone in your company: your employees, your colleagues.

It's their evangelism that's brought your team together. Their evangelism brings your customers to you. Look to them. They know best how to solve your company's needs. They'll know best who will work best.

- *Teaser:* Be prepared for a pleasant surprise. The A-Player may already work for you. As they collaborate with you to create a precise job description, more opportunity is created for them to communicate their previously unexpressed talents. They may come forward with their, as yet, unseen talents in response to the job description and requirement.

Step 1-A: Include your customers, partners and vendors. Some companies may invite their customers, partners and vendors to be participate in this process.

I salute those companies who have such an inclusive relationship with also these parties that help build a company's brand experience.

However, be mindful of their needs, your relationship and what your inclusion of them in this process can communicate. Some may consider an invitation to participate in your hiring process as a sign of your incompetence or a lack of respect for their time and priorities.

My recommendation:

1. Take this step **if** you already have an existing, open and transparent, partnership with these valuable partners: customer, partner or vendor
2. **But, take the first step with your closest confidantes: your employees.**

• STEP 2: Evaluate Your Candidates Within, First, Before You Contact the Candidate.

Internal, confidential, evaluations are an important step within any small, close-knit community, whether the community's members are connected by geography or professional interests.

It's imperative your first evaluations of candidates are kept confidential.

You will save time, money and embarrassment for all involved. It shows you are a well-organized company that respects not only your employees, but prospective employees. That builds trust and loyalty.

Here are the steps, in order:

- a. *Meet with those participating in this hiring process* (employees, customers, partners or vendors).

- b. *Compare everyone's notes, impressions, questions, rejections or endorsements.*
- c. *Document the interactions.* That's important for later:
 - i. assigning rewards and recognition
 - ii. reviewing at each stage (learning from mistakes)
 - iii. keeping an accurate chronicle of each step as time passes
- d. Prioritize and schedule candidate interviews

• *STEP 3: Create a single point of contact.*

Assign one person to communicate with the interview candidates and the schedule for their interviews with everyone in the company.

It can be the hiring manager. It can be promising member of your company with whom you can test, with minimal risk, their skills and maturity with this task.

Make this person the gatekeeper for:

- scheduling initial and later interviews,
- following up with both candidate and team members for their reactions,
- scheduling subsequent interviews
- making sure timeline goals are met

* *STEP 4: Document, Communicate and Collaborate*

You must document this process internally. And how you document this process is vital to open and transparent communication.

Document and communicate in an open and transparent way the progress with each stage of this process. Allow everyone in your company to participate. Anyone who has a stake in the outcome and participates in the process should share their feedback in this documentation.

Here is a great opportunity to document and communicate the best efforts of everyone who collaborated together to create the best solution. And in doing so, reach the goals faster of everyone involved. And in doing that, all of you will create a stronger connection and greater commitment and loyalty with each other.

Document is too harsh a word. The best word is *celebrate*. You're *celebrating*, now, in writing your collaboration and the solution you created.

That's the collaboration process. Everyone participating in an open transparent manner. And the conversation's recorded for posterity, as sometimes our memory is imperfect. And done correctly, it's a *celebration*.

Above, I've outlined the steps I've used successfully to do just that. And I can confirm the great dividends they deliver.

The best documentation tool for a collaborative process is a wiki. Wiki was originally defined as 'quick-quick' in the native Hawaiian language. Now, it's a generic term for resources that allow quick-quick project management and collaboration. A wiki should combine the best features of a blog, a forum, a project-management tool, and a word processing tool.

There are many wikis available online, each with a different approach for quick-quick collaboration and project management. My favorite is [Basecamp](#). It's offered by [37Signals](#). It's full-featured with timelines, to-do's, messages, comments, writeboards. It's inexpensive. It's dependable. Big business, small business, non-profits, startups, sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, individuals. You should, too.

I blogged a [testimonial about Basecamp](#) recently.

Disclaimer: I've recommended Basecamp for years. In mid-2008, I became an affiliate of Basecamp. You can go directly to their site through the hyperlink above, signup and it has no direct benefit to me.

EXPAND YOUR AUDIENCE (if necessary).

OK. So, you've looked within and you've been able to neither:

- *find qualified candidates to interview*
nor
- *hire your desired candidate using your internal resources.*

(Don't worry; it happens to the best of us.)

Maybe, you've even interviewed one or two (or more) with no success. But any possible candidates for further review have been eliminated.

Now, what? What are your options?

- Ads?

If you must use an ad, I'd encourage you to keep the name of your company confidential. Competitors don't need to know. Idle and incorrect gossip is kept to a minimum.

But, be prepared for an onslaught of unqualified emails, resumes and phone calls. These are unproductive interruptions to your day.

- Recruiters?

Be careful. I was a recruiter for corporate bankers early in my career. And our reputation was for integrity and professionalism and we depended nearly exclusively on word-of-mouth.

But ample opportunities for compromised ethics by all parties present themselves in this process. We were tested regularly.

These potential conflicts of interest, the lack of any enforced standards, the lack of loyalty ... all increase the risk of an expensive and unproductive experience.

A top-notch, professional, recruiter with high levels of integrity can bring added-value to your company. They can:

- *find better candidates*
- *more effectively screen candidates*
- *allow you to focus your time on meeting only the best of the best*
- *buffer you from needless publicity for your plans or your progress*

Unfortunately, only a minority of recruiters make these their mission. No offense to the industry is intended.

IF... you choose to use a recruiter, follow these recommendations:

- *Verify their universe of candidates.* Identify the companies with whom your recruiter has an existing relationship. These companies are in your industry or similar industries where potential A-Players work and would form the source for your candidate pool. A recruiter cannot recruit candidates for you from this list. The bigger the list, the smaller pool of candidates to draw from.
- *Testimonials.* Do NOT move forward without 5-10-15 wonderful testimonials.
- *Expenses.* Don't pay them ... unless it's a very high-level position that requires a high-level of personal, confidential handling and it's a limited universe of candidates.
- *Maximum fee.* Most recruiters are compensated based on a percentage of the salary of the candidate you hire from their recommendation. That incentivizes them to encourage you to pay more. Fix a maximum fee, regardless of the candidate's eventual salary.
- *Timelines and deadlines.* Get them in writing. Hold them accountable with appropriate penalties and rewards.

Two Potential Resources

Disclaimer: I've used neither of the resources listed below.

But if I've told you to NOT use a recruiter ... and you have had no success generating a group of A-Player candidates with neither your internal resources nor first stage of external resources... I am compelled to offer some option.



The key to [New-Hire's](#) charm is their efficiency and their desire to please. That starts with their CEO, Chuck Smith. I've met Chuck Smith. He came recommended by Steve MacGill, CEO and founder of [Peersight Online](#), a peer advisory board service I use and recommend. Chuck has had many years in the recruiting and hiring business. And not only is he a top professional, he's also a man of the highest integrity and commitment to his customers.

They will work with you to craft the text of your ad and place your ads for maximum responses.

And, you can customize their online screening questionnaire to help further filter the candidates you want to meet based on their answers. This lets you spend time only with those candidates you want to meet.

I asked to speak with a few customers for New-Hire. I immediately received a list of testimonials for New-Hire. And their responses, in turn, were near immediate and universally enthusiastic. According to their website 86% of their customers would recommend them to a friend or colleague. I believe it.

And if you really, really want a recruiter they offer that service also.

Here, I blogged a [testimonial about New- Hire](#).

The next option is:



Talk with Chad Hayward at [Hire Insight Group](#). We've exchanged emails. I like his approach:

** In terms of fishing or farming, the key is treating the process like a marketing activity. Basically, this means developing an employer brand and designing appealing materials, such as postings, around that brand (i.e., "why would someone want to work*

for you?"). *Of course, then there is the need to find the right places to market that job (generic job boards are not the only option, and is often not best); maybe we could offer suggestions on where readers could post vacancies.*

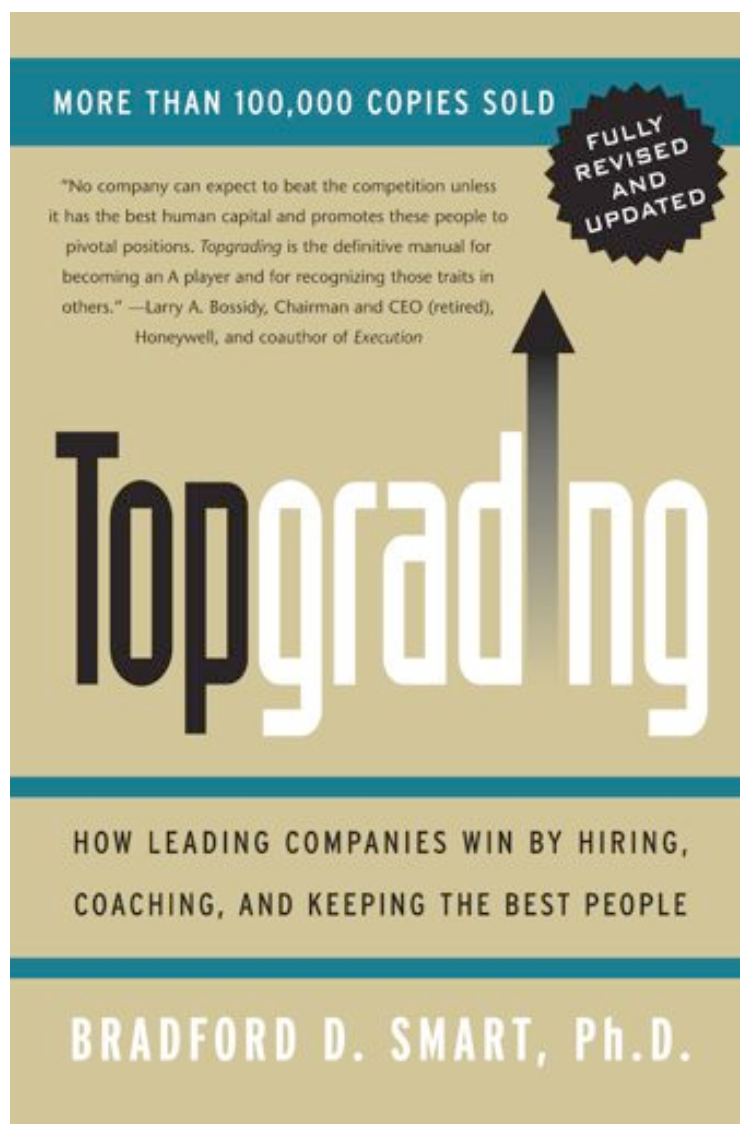
Again, I can't speak from experience using either company's services. However, these would be the first two companies I would contact if my own resources was not delivering qualified candidates to interview.

Chapter 2: Conduct a Systematic Interview

Tips, tools and resources to systematically discover your new A-Player

Here are the ones I used to hire 3 A-Players while avoiding 1 C-Player.

Tip 1. Read [Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People](#). It's author is Bradford Smart, PhD.



He's consulted with many of the Fortune 500 companies to create programs to insure they hire, coach and keep the best people, A-Players. GE may be one of the best examples to illustrate Topgrading's application and its impact. He offers day-long events where you can master the skills to hire, coach and keep the best. His website is www.SmartTopgrading.com

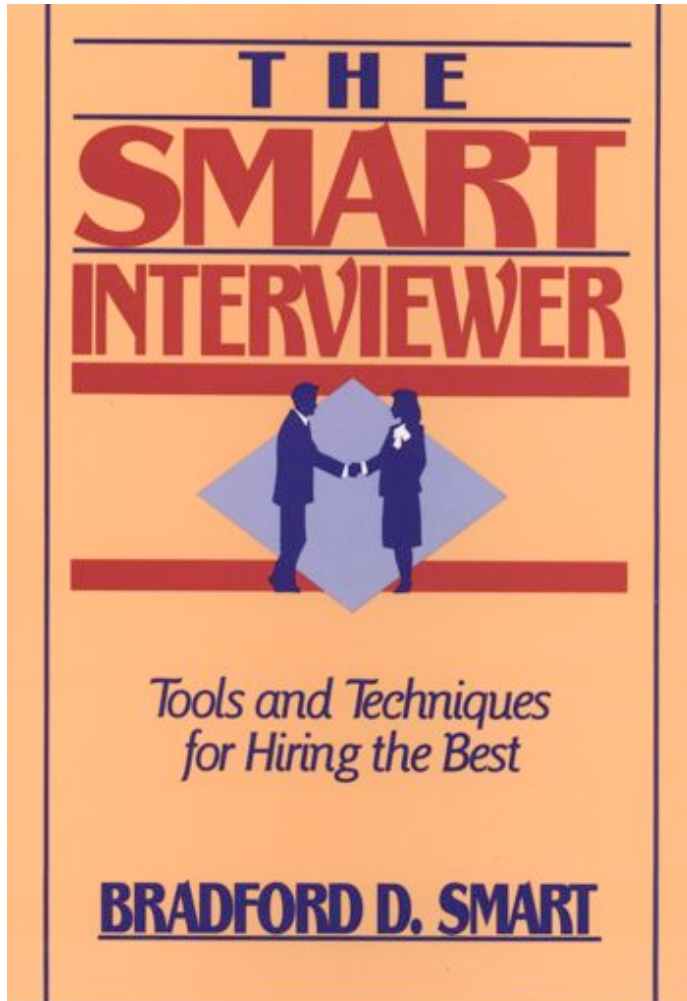
Read *at least* the first 2-3 chapters **before** you begin this interview process.

(The 2nd Tip is on the next page.)

Tip 2. Read [The Smart Interviewer: Tools and Techniques for Hiring the Best](#).

Also written by Brad Smart, he describes in great detail 2 tactics

to accomplish this goal:



* *CIDS Interview*

* *TORC Interview*

CIDS stands for **Chronological In-Depth Survey**. This is a systematic process to interview your best candidates to review their chronological progress from school to work, in-depth, to identify the repeating patterns of their behavior in success, failure, with work situations, with their bosses, with people they manage.

Read my blog testimonial for the CIDS Interview approach: [*Small Business Resource of the Week: CIDS Interview.*](#)

TORC stands for **Threat of Reference Check**. It's a very powerful question to ask your candidate would they mind if you called any of their former managers or co-workers as a reference. Their answer, yes or no, will decide for you

whether you invest any further time with their interview. A *yes* will signal that your further time is well-spent with this candidate.

Tip 3. Customize the CIDS Interview. You'll need to customize the CIDS Interview for each position, but not for each candidate. The full extent of the CIDS Interview is outlined in great detail in **The Smart Interviewer**.

There's no 'trick question of the month' involved here. There's no standard interview questions everyone now knows how to answer. It's a consistently applied survey of their responses to stress and change, opportunity and setbacks, success and 'learning opportunity' as they faced these throughout the stages of their adulthood.

Tip 4. Invest Your Time. CIDS interviews can take 1 1/2 hours (sales rep with 5 years of experience), 3 hours (individual contributor with 10 years of experience), 5 hours (upper manager with 15 years of experience). I've even taken 8 hours and it was time well spent .

Question: Is half a day, or more, of your time worth the expense of a bad hire?

Answer: Of course not.

Tip 5. Invest Your Greatest Asset #1: Use two interviewers. Brad Smart told me that *Jack Welch (former CEO of GE) approved two interviewers at GE, and GE doubled its success picking high performers. The hiring manager and one other A player become a "tag team," as they ask all the important questions throughout the candidate's education and career.*

Tip 6. Invest Your Greatest Asset #2: Insure everyone participates in the interview. This is vital in a small company. It's obvious why. But...obvious truths need reminding.

A). It Removes Blind Spots.

You have blind spots. You co-workers have blind spots. We all have blind spots. With everyone's participation, you help each other avoid their blindspots, collectively or individually, and their negative impacts

Many hands make light work. Many eyes make more seen.

B). More Participants Insure More Endorsements.

Their participation increases their engagement and endorsement of any decision. Their voices have been heard. They understand why a decision is made. And they know, at the end of the day, all the steps done to generate the desired result.

C). More Endorsements Builds Greater Engagement.

Engaged employees welcome new hires with open arms. The decision is theirs. They're faces are familiar on the first day. Smiles are seen on both sides of the front door as the new employee walks in. Their desk is prepared. Everyone's invested, tangibly, to make the new hire a success. And all this leads to greater success for themselves and their company.

Here's how:

Let's assume you'll invest 8 hours with interviews. Your first 3-4 hours of interviews can focus on a few of the candidate's core competencies.

Assign a different department/team or group to conduct the CIDS Interview with the candidate for a different period of their career. Brad Smart advises one plan could be:

- *Your sales manager* might ask questions about **Customer Service**
- *Your operations manager* might ask questions about **Execution**
- *Your finance manager* might ask questions about **Teamwork**
- *You might ask questions* about **Leadership**

He goes on to advise:

The interviewers should invite the candidate to ask questions the last 15 minutes, and you can bet that A players will have lots of questions about the organization, decision making, what you're like as a leader, and lots more!

Then gather feedback from all interviewers. If they give thumbs down, cancel the CIDS interview. If it's thumbs up, the last portion of their interview series is devoted to the CIDS interview -- the tandem CIDS interview.

The keys to this approach are:

- You create a schedule with your team that meets everyone's needs and time.
- Everyone's engaged creating a wave of collaboration and participation.
- Everyone is your most important asset: your people.
- You leverage your most important asset by investing it, most efficiently, to create more.

Going back to the surfer metaphor here's what you've done:

- You've created a wave of momentum from your collaboration in creating the job description and its requirements for the person to fill that job. - Chapter 1
- You've hired the best of the best, your A-Player, who best fits the needs of this job - Chapter 2.

Now, you've decided who is your A-Player and where they will join you on this wave you've created.

And that takes us to the next step in this process: the new employee's first day. The moment they join your wave. And that's our next chapter:

Welcome Them with Open Arms!

Chapter 3: Welcome Your New Employee with Open Arms...at the Front Door

Well-begun is half done.

You are 2/3's done, now. And this last step, is what makes it all work.

But first, let's review what you've earned reaching 2/3's done:

- 1) A clear, thorough job description with precise job qualifications. The hiring process for this position will move faster in the future.
- 2) A roster of A-players ready to interview for future openings in your company. These are the candidates you recruited and interviewed now, but did not hire.
- 3) Cohesion, engagement and excitement in your company from collaboration reaching these goals
- 4) Employees excited, motivated, for this next challenge: helping this new employee make a contribution.
- 5) A new A-Player who's ready to join your very engaged employees.

The A-player you hired is your crowning achievement from this process. But, the 4 other gains will create a foundation for future growth in your company.

And now, the first day of this new adventure with your company and this new, A-player, employee has arrived.

Remember: *Well-begun is half done* and **you are 2/3's done**. Execute this last step the well and you've created a powerful wave to ride smoothly to the shore.

Here's how to make sure the first days with your new hire serve as a perfect beginning for you both.

You want to make sure they leave happy after their first day. And they'll be well on their way to returning the next day, just as happy.

Make sure you welcome this new employee with open arms even before they walk in the door.

Here's a checklist to make sure your A-Player is setup for success with a sincere and well-planned welcome starting even before their first day.

Prepare a welcoming committee. That welcoming committee is everyone on the team where this new hire will work. In a smaller, startup, company that might be everyone in the company. And it might be just one person: you.

Assign tasks, schedule meetings, prepare training materials with the members of your committee. These tasks should be welcomed...while recognizing it does add to their workload.

Why?

This new hire is going to help them. And they've participated in the recruiting and interviewing to choose this person.

Balance the added work. Training a new person effectively doubles the workload of your existing employees.

You can avoid taking 1 step forward with hiring a great new person while taking 2 steps backward when one or two current employees grow resentful from an inordinate share of the work dumped on them. Regardless, if it's real or perceived, the result is the loss of the returns from a long-term investment (your current employee's engagement) and the assumption of more risk with a long-term investment/expense (your new A-Player).

Help your employees balance the added workload for training and welcoming this new employee. Make sure you balance this added work among your employees.

Offer to help.

Why help?

1. As a leader, you communicate its priority.
2. Your employees will appreciate the help.
3. You show, by example, you ask only of others what you, yourself, are willing to do.
4. And, this time spent with the new employee starts your relationship off strong.
5. Any ripples can be smoothed over immediately.

Assign a buddy. For want of a better term, assign one person from the team of the new A-Player to insure all the items on the welcome committee's to-do list are complete before the new A-Player arrives. And, this same person should be the new A-Player's go-to person for questions like:

- * Where's the coat closet? Is there a coat closet?
- * Where's the coffee?
- * Where do they park?
- * Where's the bathroom, including needed keys or doorcodes?
- * Where are the office supplies? How do I get more office supplies?
- * Training schedule

- * Network passwords
- * Office layout

Contact them the night before. Call them and email them before their big first day. Communicate to them how excited you are about their first day. Here's some suggestions on what to say:

- Point out their qualities that make them a perfect fit for the job.
- Highlight some of your plans and preparations for their first few days.
- Point out any logistical details like time to be there, lunch schedule, parking spots, doors to enter, or materials to bring.
- For a really big impression, have everyone who's met them do the same!

Greet them at the door. Make sure your new A-Player is greeted at the door before they enter the building. Nothing creates a warmer feeling for a new employee relationship than being greeted at the door on their first day. It shows how important they are and how excited you are to have them join your company.

Some added flourishes include:

- Meet them for coffee before they arrive at work.
- Decorate their parking spot.
- Decorate their work area.
- Have everyone greet them at the front door.

Have their work area prepared and clean. It's a *doh!* point. And it happens too often. A new hire arrives to find their work area isn't prepared. That communicates nothing positive about their decision to join this company. It deflates their excitement.

That includes all the equipment they'll need to be productive and engaged from the moment they reach this area. Computers networked and loaded with proper applications; desk, chair, pens, notepads are available...an ATV, too, if it's required.

- *True Story:* My first days as a Marketing Director with one company included no desk, no chair, no computer. And no one to ask. I got through it.

Prepare their training schedule in advance. Have it ready, in writing, to show them when they arrive. It should answer these questions:

- Who is training them?
- What is being trained?
- When are they being trained?
- Where will the training take place?
- Why?
- What are the goals of this training?

And it should include all the materials they'll need.

Why?

It shows you are organized, ready for their arrival and serious about their success. Their first impression of you will be one of respect and trust, free from any possible buyer's remorse for joining your company.

They'll see a broader perspective for their role. That adds comfort and confidence to their psychology.

Feed them. When and where should be left to them and your current colleagues. Ask them and your current employees for what works for them.

Issue a press release. Consider this example and how it made her feel.

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Tuesday, Oct. 16

Sweetest Day
Saturday, Oct. 21

Mother-in-Law's Day
Saturday, Oct. 21

Halloween
Saturday, Oct. 21

Floral Shop

Do you think she felt more appreciated, more valued, more recognized as a result? And how did that change her loyalty and engagement with this company? (Trick questions)

- *Issue a press release internally.* Use email or your company newsletter or employee forum. Celebrate what makes them special, so prized, as a new member of your team. Personalize it with their picture and interests.

- *Blog about it.* 37Signals, the makers of the wiki Basecamp, welcomed their newest employee with an introduction on their very popular blog: [Introducing our new designer: Jamie Dihiansan.](#)

- *Announce it to your partners and vendors.* Your vendors will appreciate the close communication that insures a smooth start for this new relationship. It's flattering to the new hire. It builds their confidence. And it will smooth their first interactions with your partners and vendors. That will make them effective from their first call or email.

Well-begun is half done. Follow these steps and you're half-way to your goal of sending your employees home every night happy. And that's the half-way mark to insuring they want to come back the next day and the day after and the day after....

ADDED BONUS!

16 Ways to Invest in Your Employees...and They Won't Cost a Dime!

1. **Encourage Company Gossips.** (Yes. Encourage company gossips.) The big difference is...encourage them to spread good news. The good news are the accomplishments and heroic acts and beyond-the-call of duty type efforts that too often go unnoticed, unrecognized, uncelebrated. Lead the way. Spread gossip, openly and frequently, at company meetings: I heard so-and-so did this wonderful thing for this customer...or It's come to my attention that x heroic deed was done by Y person. I wrote on this in more detail at [Can Company Gossips Serve to Inspire?](#) at Small Business Trends.
2. **Say Thank-you 5 times more per day.** Use any means necessary: email, voice, voicemail, phonecalls, skype, handsignals....just say *thank-you* more.
3. **Be specific.** Thank the person specifically for what they did and how that made you happier, your day easier or your burdens lighter.
4. **Make it a habit.** Make sure appreciation is an agenda item in all your meetings.
5. **Publicize your employees' exploits.** Tell your customers, partners and vendors.
6. **Talk about them right in front of their face.** Tell others about what they did, while they are standing right there in front of you.
7. **Send hand-written thank-you's.** My wife just received one today. It made her day and mine, too.
 - *Note to self:* Your employees have spouses. Make your employee happy and you've made two people happy.
8. **Flowers, candy, pastries, coffee...**paid out of your pocket, work wonders.
9. **Help them do their job.** I regularly answered the calls on our sales or customer service line when they were busy. (But, I stayed away from our servers.)
10. **Be their defender.** Always, always, always do this. Do it more.
11. **Listen, listen : talk.** Honor the 2:1 ratio of ears to mouth.

12. **Find their strengths.** Then organize their job description to showcase them.
13. **Find what makes them happy and do the same.** If they like talking with customers, make sure they talk to customers every day. If they like programming...make sure they program something every day.
14. **Make connections.** Connect what they do with what it does for the those around them and for the other departments. Show how their achievements make a difference with the company's performance, overall and specifically in their area.
15. **Document their successes.** Put it in writing for them to show others. Use it to remember and celebrate later.
16. **Make their reviews a celebration.** If their reviews are not cause for celebration...take responsibility and ask yourself have you done everything here and more to insure they are a success. At the very least, everyone in the company will see your commitment to that person's success. At the best, you will find the proverbial diamond-in-the-rough at a cost much lower than hiring a new employee.

This Process Created This Book

This book shows the results of the process I've just described for you.

Communicate.

I began to communicate my thoughts on hiring and the tools and processes that helped me reach my goals as a CEO. I communicated them on:

- my [blog](#)
- Anita Campbell's [Small Business Trends](#) as a guest [small business expert](#)
- guest posts at [Employee Engagement](#) community.
- [guest post](#) at AMEX's OpenForum Community for small business.
- guest posts at Becky McCray's [Small Biz Survival](#) blog

And I talked with Becky McCray from [Small Biz Survival](#) about this book and how it could be a resource to offer with her community of small businesses in rural communities.

And I studied Becky's booklet, [20 Small Business Ideas for Small Towns](#), to understand both the power and ease of preparing a booklet. (Honesty requires me to say writing even a short booklet like this isn't easy.)

Collaborate.

That started the collaboration process with feedback and ideas from them, their community of readers and commenters at my blog.

Each person listed here as shared their time to help make this book better. They've collaborated generously with their insights, critiques, questions, feedback, etc. And the book has benefited. I've benefited. And I hope you'll benefit, too.

Create.

With their help, I've created this booklet for you.

And I hope it helps create a wave of small business success, with thousands or millions of new jobs created that create another wave of wealth creation for any economy.

Thank You's

Anita Campbell. Your support, friendship and allowing me to guest post at your wonderful site, [Small Business Trends](#) helped start this process.

Brad Smart. Your knowledge offered lifelines in this critical area. Without it, this humble book would not have happened. Thank you for sharing your additions for this book.

Conference Calls Unlimited - Where and with whom I had the pleasure of using these tips, tools and resources. You taught me much I share here.

Becky McCray. Your support, friendship and opportunity to guest blog at [SmallBizSurvival](#) and your introductions to your many fans, friends, heck, even your mom, helped move this process along much faster.

Steve MacGill - Your support and insight and wit are always appreciated

Dawn - Thank you for your editing, support, humor, questions...in all areas.

Eban, Dani. Thanks, guys, for your support and feedback!

You, the Reader, in all your forms:

- **the reader.** Thank you for reading this far.
- **the sharer.** Thank you for risking your reputation sharing it with others.
- **the commenter.** Thank you for your comments, suggestions, insights.
- **the blogger.** thank you for blogging about this book.

Thank all of you. Contact me if I can help you ride your wave.

Zane Safrit,
Fairfield, IA,
Fall - 2008
<http://zanesafrit.typepad.com>
zane.safrit@gmail.com
641-919-0964

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