

# Hiring the Amazon way: Ten best practices for hiring at scale

Jonno Southam,  
Venture Capital Business Development Manager, AWS

# Amazon's growing head count

# The mis-hire challenge



"I think choosing great people is much more difficult than picking great markets because we have always understood the technology and understood the markets. Picking great people is a less than 50 percent proposition, and if you are right 52 percent of the time, they ought to build a statue to you."

**Don Valentine**  
Sequoia Capital

# How does Amazon mitigate the risks of a mis-hire?



# 1. Always be hiring

“Great companies are not going to wait; they are going to execute and hire talented candidates opportunistically. They know that great engineers are not tethered to a tech stack and can freely move about from tech stack to tech stack in less time than it takes a company to hire someone that fits the exact specification.”

**Thor Bucy**  
Rivera Partners

# Biggest challenge = Finding people

#1 Customer pitch deck

#2 Investor pitch deck

#3 Employee pitch deck

## 2. Always keep your company vision and values clear

“The culture is what creates the foundation for all future innovation ... If you break the culture, you break the machine that creates your products.”

**Brian Chesky, CEO**  
Airbnb



## 2. Always keep your company vision and values clear

“Our vision is to be Earth’s most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online.”





# Amazon Leadership Principles

**Have backbone; disagree & commit**      **Customer obsession**

**Invent and simplify**

**Think big**

**Dive deep**

**Bias for action**

**Ownership**

**Deliver results**

**Insist on the highest standards**

**Learn & be curious**

**Hire and develop the best**

**Are right, a lot**

**Earn trust**

**Frugality**

### 3. Always hire the best people



“Setting the bar high in our approach to hiring has been, and will be, the single most important element of Amazon.com’s success.”

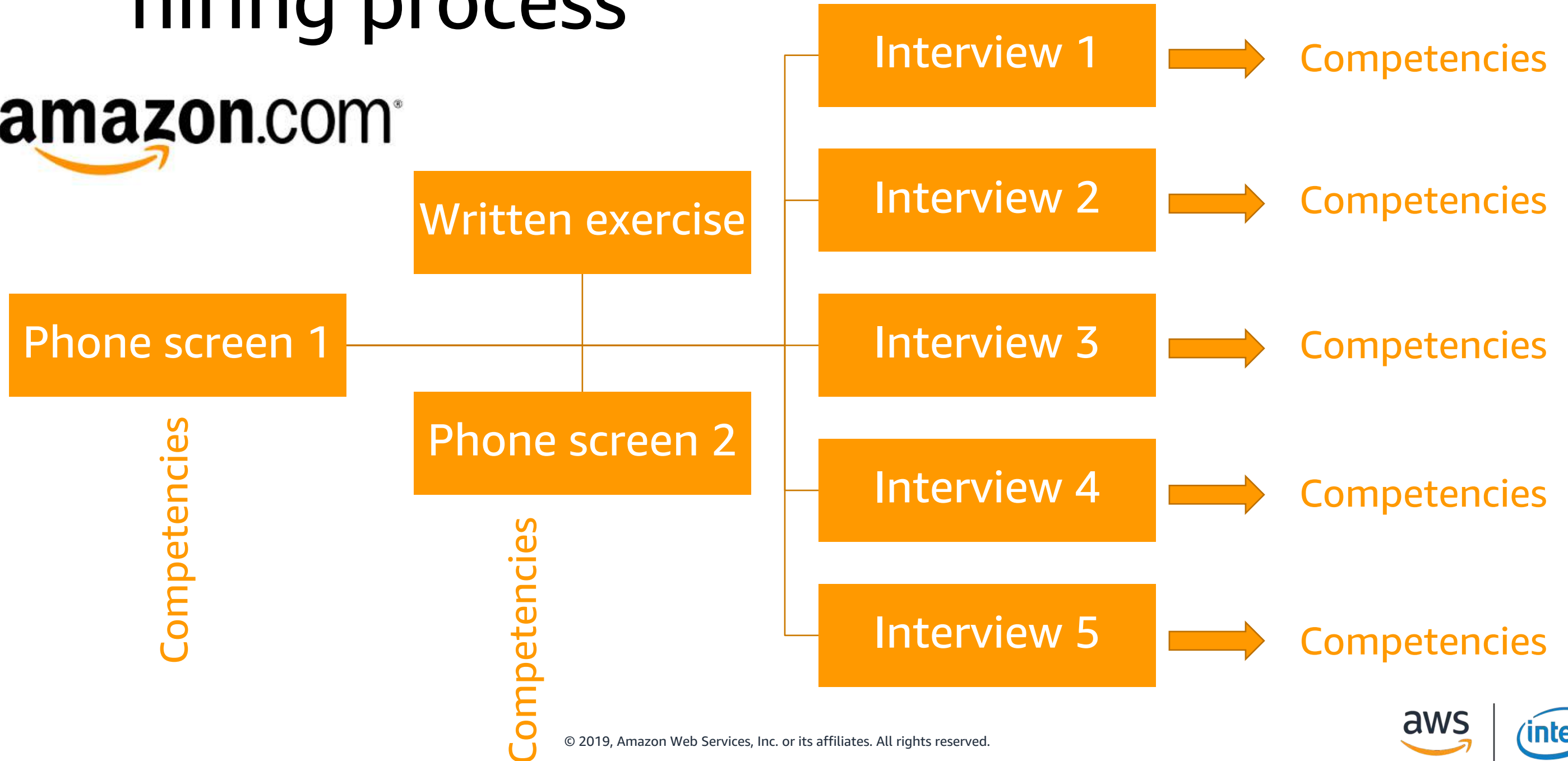
**Jeff Bezos**

1998 letter to shareholders

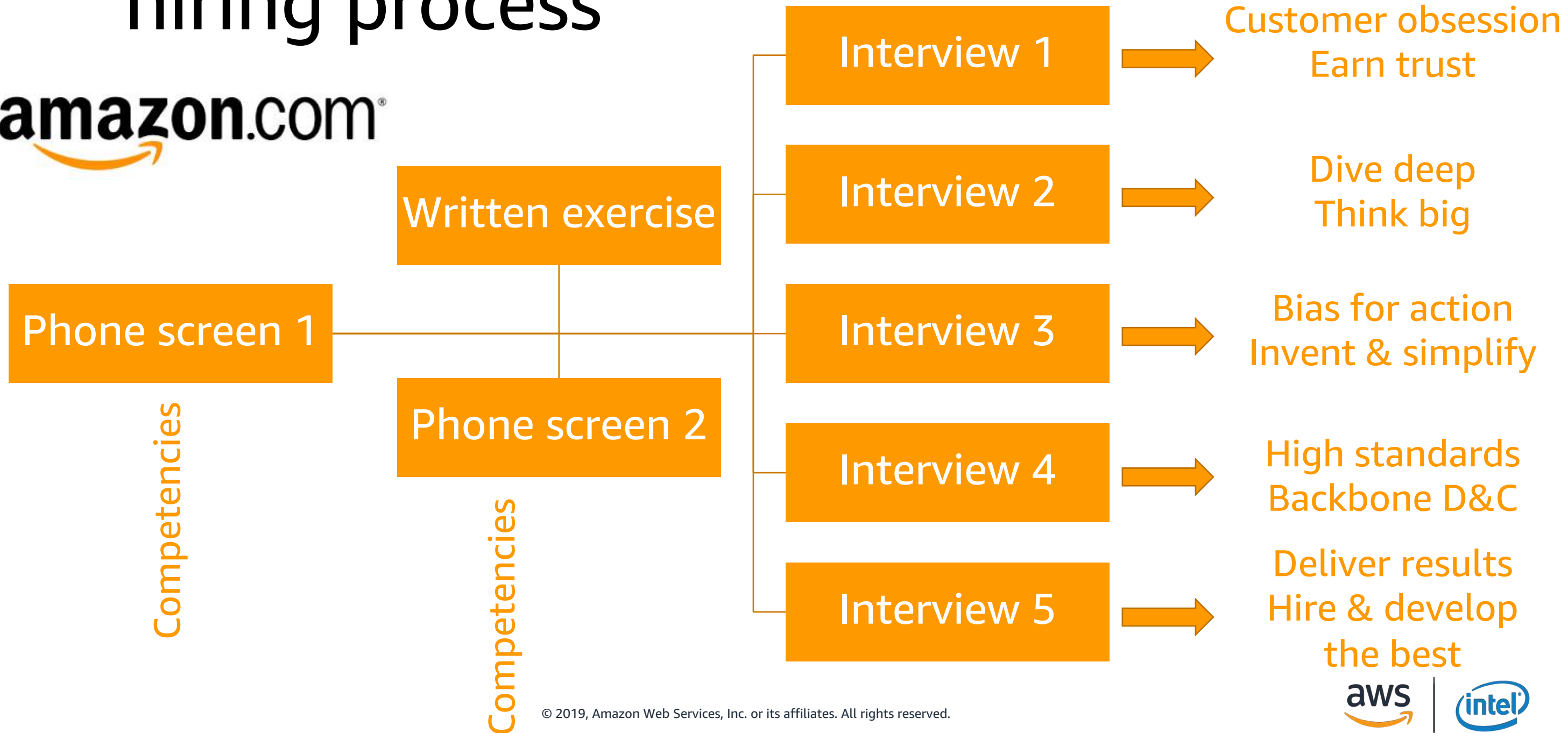
# 3. Always hire the best people



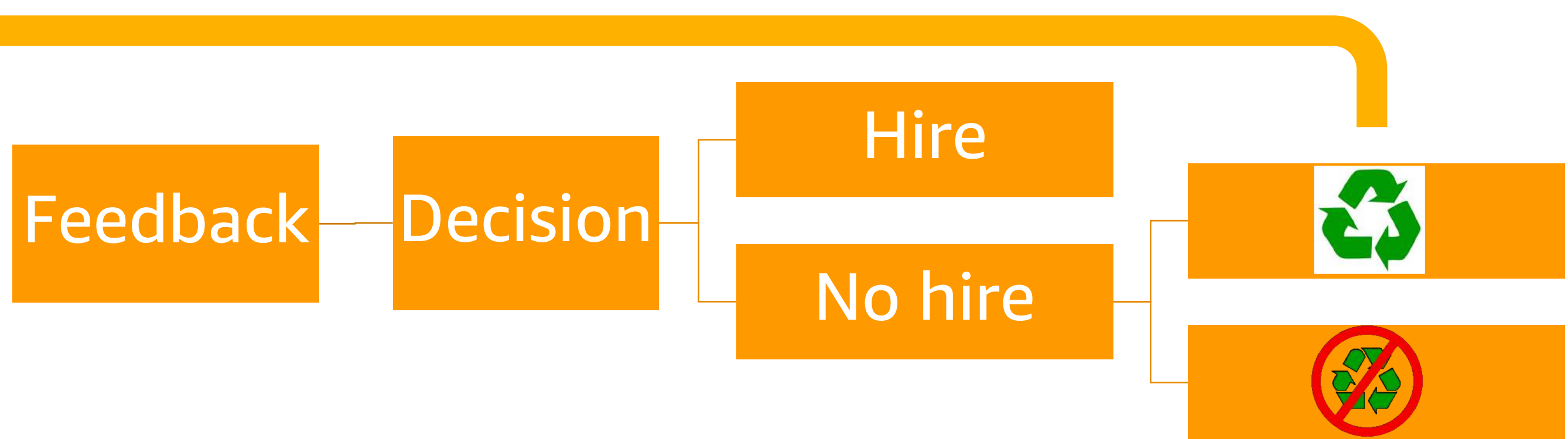
# 4. Always have a robust and repeatable hiring process



# 4. Always have a robust and repeatable hiring process



# 4. Always have a robust and repeatable hiring process



**amazon.com**<sup>®</sup>

© 2019, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

# 5. Always use data and evidence during interviews



## 6. Always dive deep





# 7. Never be “on the fence”



## 8. Never compare candidates



“I’d rather interview 50 people and not hire anyone than hire the wrong person.”

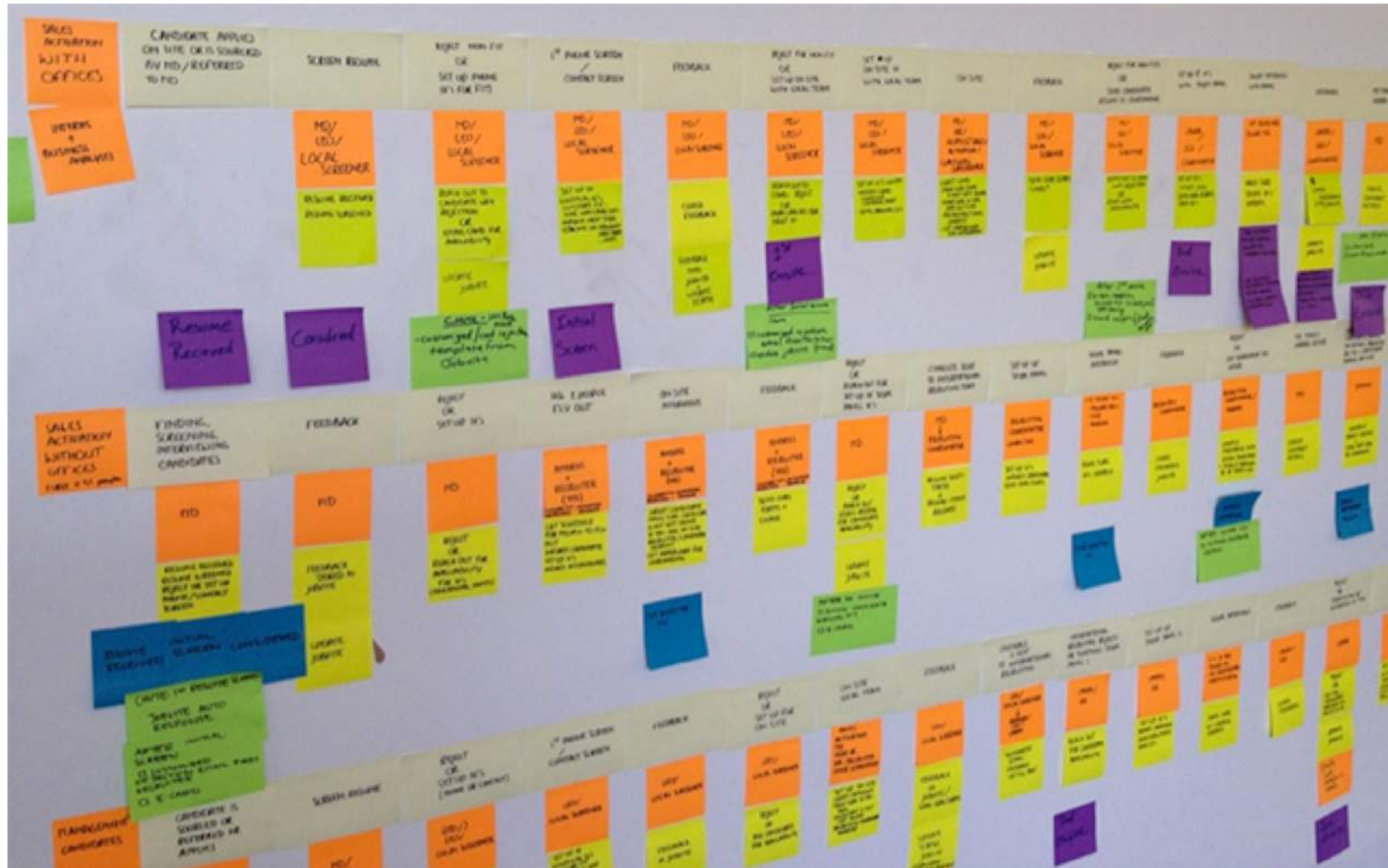
**Jeff Bezos**

# 9. Always ensure the right decision is made

1. Performance bar: Is the person better than 50% of the current team?
2. Long-term impact: Does this candidate have upside growth potential to have long-term impact?



# 10. Finally, always give all candidates a great experience regardless of outcome





# Hiring the Amazon way: Ten best practices for hiring at scale

Jonno Southam  
Global Startup Business Development & Amazon Bar Raiser

# Learn from AWS experts. Advance your skills and knowledge. Build your future in the AWS Cloud.



## Digital Training

Free, self-paced online courses built by AWS experts



## Classroom Training

Classes taught by accredited AWS instructors



## AWS Certification

Exams to validate expertise with an industry-recognized credential

**Ready to begin building your cloud skills?**  
**Get started at: <https://www.aws.training/>**

# Why Work with an APN Partner?

**APN Partners** are uniquely positioned to help your firm at any stage of your Cloud Adoption Journey

- Share a common end goal 'focused on your success'
- Help you take full advantage of all the business benefits that AWS has to offer
- Provide services and solutions that support any AWS use case across your full customer life cycle

## APN Partners with deep expertise on AWS



### **AWS MSP Partners**

APN Managed Service Provider Partners with cloud infrastructure and application migration expertise



### **AWS Competency Partners**

APN Partners with verified, vetted, and validated specialized offerings



### **AWS Service Delivery Partners**

APN Partners with a track record of delivering specific AWS services to customers

Find the right APN Partner that meets your need: <https://aws.amazon.com/partners/find/>

# Thank You for Attending AWS Innovate

We hope you found it interesting! A kind reminder to **complete the survey**.  
Let us know what you thought of today's event and how we can improve the event experience for you in the future.



[aws-apac-marketing@amazon.com](mailto:aws-apac-marketing@amazon.com)



[twitter.com/AWSCloud](https://twitter.com/AWSCloud)



[facebook.com/AmazonWebServices](https://facebook.com/AmazonWebServices)



[youtube.com/user/AmazonWebServices](https://youtube.com/user/AmazonWebServices)



[slideshare.net/AmazonWebServices](https://slideshare.net/AmazonWebServices)



[twitch.tv/aws](https://twitch.tv/aws)