



This Is How Google Hires Their Talent

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A photograph of Larry Page, former CEO of Google and current CEO of Alphabet, speaking into a microphone. He is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

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My job as a leader is to make sure everybody in the company have great opportunities, and that they feel they're having a meaningful impact and are contributing to the good of society. As a world, we're doing a better job of that. My goal is for Google to lead, not follow that.

Larry Page

Former CEO of Google
Current CEO of Alphabet



3 Takeaways

Adapting recruitment strategies to fit your recruitment needs

While their recruitment strategy may be unique, it is not necessary to follow it process by process but simply adapting and incorporating their practices. Google's hiring is an example of survival of the fittest. How do you survive? Adapt.

Using tech for recruiting

Google uses big data and analytics to search for potential talents. Using this strategy will potentially maximize a company's hiring timeline and drastically minimize bad hires.

Keeping the end goal in mind

Learning that recruitment is not simply hiring for quantity but for quality. Bringing in people who can not only do the job but do a good job are the ones who will move your company forward.



Over the last decade, Google has been topping the lists of top companies to work for in both Forbes and Fortune (rank #1, seven out of ten years from 2006 to 2016). The multibillion-dollar technology company founded in 1996 became known as a powerful search engine, but two decades later and they have expanded their product and service catalogue. Needless to say, a bigger company requires a bigger employee base.

Photo by Google/Connie Zhou



Google

and its hiring needs

Every year, Google receives over one million resumes and applications. Only 4,000-6000 applicants will actually be hired — that's less than a 1% hiring rate. With over 60,000 employees spread across 70 offices in 40 countries, there has to be set measures when it comes to bringing people into the company. Years of practice and experimentation have allowed Google to narrow their acquisition of the best talent to a near science.

Hiring managers at Google used to spend 10 hours a week on recruiting and top executives would dedicate a full day to it. Google wanted to make this process more efficient and through extensive research, experimentation, consultation, note taking, and note revisiting, they've found their winning formula. **With this, they have cut 10 hours into 1.5 hours a week accomplishing the same amount of work for recruiting.**

It sounds like a dream but it wasn't one that came easy. Years of work went into making that time slash and process possible. That said, it's important to remember that the work Google put into their hiring process may not all directly apply to you and your company either. The strategies they have uncovered, while all great, are applicable to the needs of Google, the pace at which Google is growing, and the profiles that Google is looking for.



Google

on how they hire

“Set a high bar for quality. Before you start recruiting, decide what attributes you want and define as a group what great looks like. A good rule of thumb is to hire only people who are better than you. Do not compromise. Ever.” That’s what Laszlo Bock, Google’s SVP for People Operations, uses as a guiding principle for recruiting.

With his years of experience and success in recruiting, Bock has an eye for strategies that work and those that should be tossed. Many companies often deploy misleading questions like how many golf balls would it take to fill an Olympic swimming pool which supposedly gauge the candidate’s ability to think creatively and under pressure. In reality, Bock says “They don’t predict anything. They serve primarily to make the interviewer feel smart.” It will definitely not uncover a gold star employee.

The success rate of a recruiter also comes into question. Bock says that no one is good at hiring. A revisiting of tens of thousands of job interview footage allowed Google to come to that conclusion. “We found zero relationship [between good employees and their hiring responsables],” he said. “It’s a complete random mess.... Rather than having each interviewer just make stuff up,” Bock says, the company makes use of a consistent rubric to assess candidates. This made the company realize that a strict recruitment process with

uncompromisingly high standards is what would filter the cream of the crop. After this, the applicant pool is significantly narrowed and one of the main tasks of the recruiter would then be to sift through the best of the best and find a Googler.

“

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“Before you start recruiting, decide what attributes you want and define as a group what great looks like,” says Bock, “Include subordinates and peers in the interviews, make sure interviewers write good notes, and have an unbiased group of people make the actual hiring decision.”

Google used to be the Ivy of companies and accepted only the top performing applicants with school credentials that shined off their resumes but today, they look further beyond GPAs. “After two or three years, your ability to perform at Google is completely unrelated to how you performed when you were in school, because the skills you required in college are very different. You’re also fundamentally a different person. You learn and grow, you think about things differently.”



Google

on picking the best people

The reason why Google is among the best, if not the best, place to work is because they invest in operations, products, services, acquisitions and in the quality of the people they bring in. Ultimately, these people are the driving force of the company.

Brock has four principles that he believes will help even the smallest teams become much better at hiring:

4 Principles that will help
you become better at
hiring

1. Set an uncompromisable high standard

If you enter the recruitment game knowing what you want and not settling for less, your pool of candidates will sort themselves out. Google's fallout rate is insanely high, yes, but their high standards leaves them with only the applicants that have the strongest qualifications, determination, and potential.

2. Find candidates among your own people

Google does its hiring internally. On occasion they will make use of third party recruiting firms when they build new teams or expand in new, unfamiliar territory. For the most part, however, they've found success in finding their own people. When you have 60,000 employees who are considered the best in their fields, they are bound to have like-minded and similarly incredible networks that you definitely want to tap into.

3. Make use of the entire team, not just HR

Large companies like Google can afford to delegate hiring to an entire team or department. Smaller companies aren't so lucky and the burden usually falls to one or two people. Make use of the rest of the team—borrow a couple of hours from BD or Marketing to help with interviews and get a fresh set of ears and opinions. This collaboration also comes in handy when gauging the candidate's fit with the company.

4. Give candidates a compelling reason to join your company

Google's former SVP for Products, Jonathan Rosenberg, used to keep 200 employees resume on file. "If a candidate was on the fence about joining Google, Jonathan would simply give them the stack and say: 'You get to work with these people,'" Bock says. The applicant would then sift through the pile of employees—from the inventor of JavaScript to Olympic athletes—the strategy would always seal the deal.

Brock says, "Make clear why the work you are doing matters, and let the candidate experience the astounding people they will get to work with."



Google

on using their own products to recruit

For a company that probably knows more personal information about you than your own mother, it's only right that they use their own product (a.k.a. big data analytics) to find the best and the brightest talent in the world.

“

...we can learn about using big data and analytics and be more proactive in how we identify and approach talent candidates.

Big data is the concept of transforming massive structured and unstructured data sets into actionable intelligence. So how does Google use big data to their advantage? Here's one concrete example:

When Max Rossett googled the keywords “python lambda function list comprehension,” he was surprised to be presented with an alternative interface on

the search engine results page. Below the search bar, a text appeared saying “You’re speaking our language. Up for the challenge?” Unsure of what it really meant, he accepted it anyway.

It was actually Google’s programming challenge. He submitted his challenge and a few days later, a recruiter from Google requested for his resume. And then he got phone interviews, and much later on an on-site interview at their Google headquarters.

Using Google Search, Google was allowing its algorithms to do the work in searching and identifying potential candidates based on their search keywords. It’s probable that other forms of data were used to determine if Max was a candidate worthy of even interviewing for a highly coveted Google engineering job.

While we can’t always follow how Google does it, we can, however, we can learn about using big data and analytics and be more proactive in how we identify and approach talent candidates. After all, the data at hand is only growing, and how effectively it’s used is left to the discretion of recruiting organizations.

A little something before we move on...

Google has created products and services with codes and algorithms that a small population can understand but their recruitment strategies are a little easier to digest. Google hires the best. What does it mean to be ‘the best’? What do they look for in new employees, the newest batch of ‘the best’?

5. Expertise.
4. Ownership.
3. Humility.
2. Leadership.
1. An ability to learn.

It’s not rocket science.



Google

and their hiring process

It's not that different from how other companies probably recruit, but it is a rigorous process. The lengthy but thorough process is to make sure they hire someone no less than brilliant and promising, someone who will make an impact to the company (and the world).

9 Stages of Google's thorough hiring process

1. Recruiter Screen

The recruiter looks through every resume to find a potential fit.

2. Phone Screen

The recruiter then contacts a potential candidate, explains the process, and let's them know what to expect.

3. On-site Interview

The on-site interview will be with a panel of 4-5 people for 45 minutes each. If they are interviewing for a technical role, they will be asked to

solve a technical problem in real-time, and quizzed about unconventional questions.

4. Interview Feedback

Each interviewer submits their individual feedback in a standard format about the candidate and assigns a numerical ranking to the candidate. A search is done to match the candidate's resume to an employee's resume based on school or companies. An email will be sent to that matched employee asking for an opinion on that candidate.

5. Hiring Committee

The hiring committee reviews all the feedback as well as the resume and experience. Independent hiring committees are made up of Googlers at various levels of the company to review your candidate packet. For detail on what actually happens during a Hiring Committee meeting, see <http://qr.ae/RFWpii>

6. Executive Review

Senior level management reviews every offer.

7. Compensation Committee

The committee that determines the appropriate compensation for the offer.

8. Final Executive Review

The top executive reviews the employment offers before they are extended to the candidate.

9. The Offer

The recruiter will notify the candidate of the offer and will explain the details of the offer.



Google

on questions they ask and why

Recruiting for Google is not completely rocket science. They still undergo the same processes most companies go through and ask the same questions you might have already been asking. However, every company can have its unique sets of interview questions, and here are some of them:

**“Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult manager?
What did you do?”**

This question will help you see how a candidate handles difficult situations and pressure in the office, how they overcame the challenges, and how they improved themselves during or after the situation.

“How would you go about setting up flu vaccination stations across Google campuses... and then how would you expand internationally?”

This is a scenario-based question, and the purpose of it is to find out how a candidate thinks, how they would they gather data, and how they would move through this process to get them to a solution.

“What is your favorite Google product? What would you change?”

This question will determine how knowledgeable a candidate is with the products you are selling. It is also a way for you to see how creative or innovative a candidate is when he/she suggests changes to a product.

“If you have 90% of the market-share, how would you grow your business?”

This question will show you the entrepreneurial, sales and marketing skills of the candidate. This will also show you how the candidate would approach the situation, and the kind of steps they'll take to make a business grow given the huge budget.

“What makes you GOOGLEY?”

This is basically a cultural fit question Google asks their candidates to see if they fit well in the organization. It is a chance for the candidate to let his/her personality shine, at which the recruiter finds hints of their personality and work ethic based on their answers.



Lessons from Google

DIY your hiring process.

It's integral that you build your recruiting strategy to satisfy your hiring needs.

Hire people smarter than you.

Recruiting is not about making yourself feel better but making the company work better.

Do not compromise. Ever.

If you adhere to specific standards, the progress and quality of work you produce has little reason to decline or slow down.



“

When Larry and Sergey founded Google Search, one of the things that struck me is that it was available for everyone to use. We deeply desire our services to work for everyone. And that inherently means we have to work with partners. That is the thesis underlying everything we do.

Sundar Pichai
CEO of Google



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Kalibrr is an online job matching platform that transforms the way candidates find jobs and companies hire talent. Kalibrr helps recruiters source, select, and connect with the right talent so they can hire efficiently and make smarter hiring decisions.

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Google