

Navigating the Emerging Cybersecurity and IT World

*Run
away!*



Hey you job
applicants, get
off my lawn!

Now~~t~~
Hiring!



-Matt Scheurer

PDF

<http://slides.dfirmatt.com>

About Me

I work for a big well-known organization...



As Vice President (VP) of Computer Security and Incident Response (IR). However, I have many years of hands-on technical experience, including Digital Forensics & Incident Response (DFIR).

I am also a Podcast Host for

ThreatReel

<https://threatreel.com>

Connect / Contact / Follow Matt:



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mattscheurer>



<https://x.com/c3rkah>

Where I volunteer...

I am an Official



Advocate

<https://www.hackingisnotacrime.org>



Advisory Board: Information
Technology and Cybersecurity

<https://www.mywccc.org/>



Women's Security Alliance
(WomSA) Technical Mentor

<https://www.womsa.org>

Disclaimer!

Yes, I have a day job.
However...

Opinions expressed are based solely on my own independent security research and do not express or reflect the views or opinions of my employer.



Agenda

This talk is about navigating the **current** cybersecurity career landscape for employees and employers alike!



Target Audiences

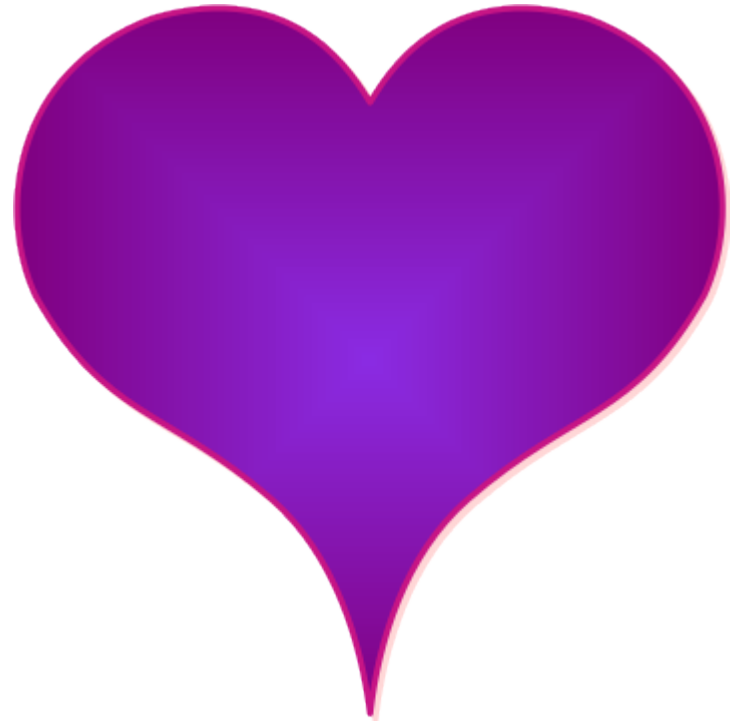
- For the recently laid off Tech/InfoSec worker(s)
- For the aspiring Information Security hopeful(s)
- For the Hiring Managers
 - Still looking for top technical talent

Target Audiences

- For the recently laid off Tech/InfoSec worker(s)
- For the aspiring Information Security hopeful(s)
- For the Hiring Managers
 - Still looking for top technical talent
- Or anybody that knows someone in any of the situations above

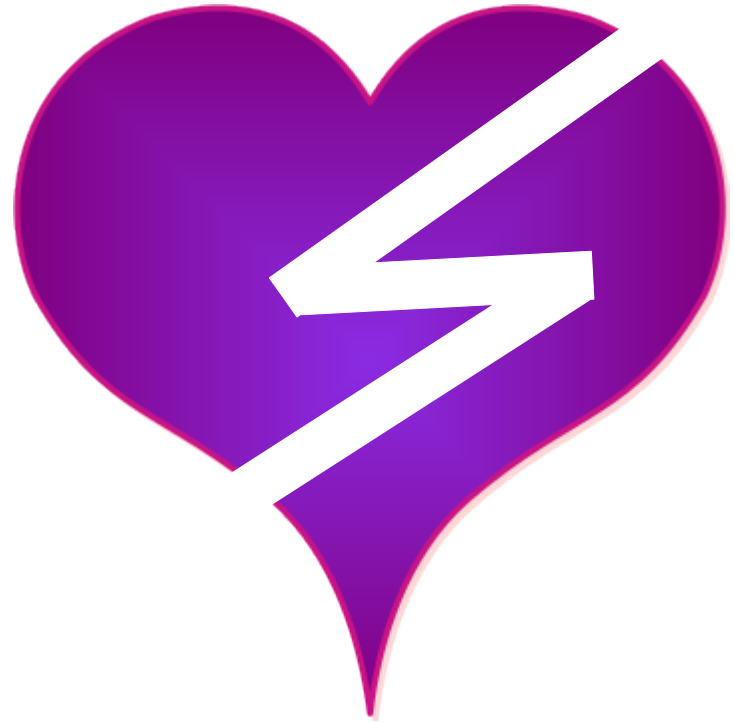
Why this Talk

- Because this warms my purple team heart!



Why this Talk

- But this breaks my purple team heart!



*Recently Laid Off
Tech and InfoSec
Workers*

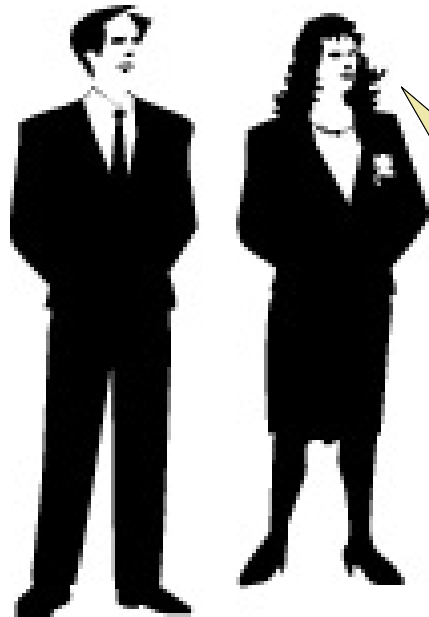
In my own personal opinion

We are in the
midst of a tough
job market.



Economic Slowdown Indicators

Conference Organizers



<silence>

Who wants
to sponsor
our event?

</silence>

- Vendor Swag

Q1, 23	
Q2, 23	
Q3, 23	
Q4, 23	
Q1, 24	
Q2, 24	
Q3, 24	
Q4, 24	

Quality, Quantity, & T-Shirts

Job Seekers



- Recently let go from an employer?
 - Most of these situations are beyond your control
 - Get help if you need it!

Great Time to Reevaluate

- Is your heart still in Information Security?
 - *Really?*
 - There's nothing wrong with considering a career transition!



Otherwise, press onward!

...If InfoSec is still your passion,
...If InfoSec really is in your blood,

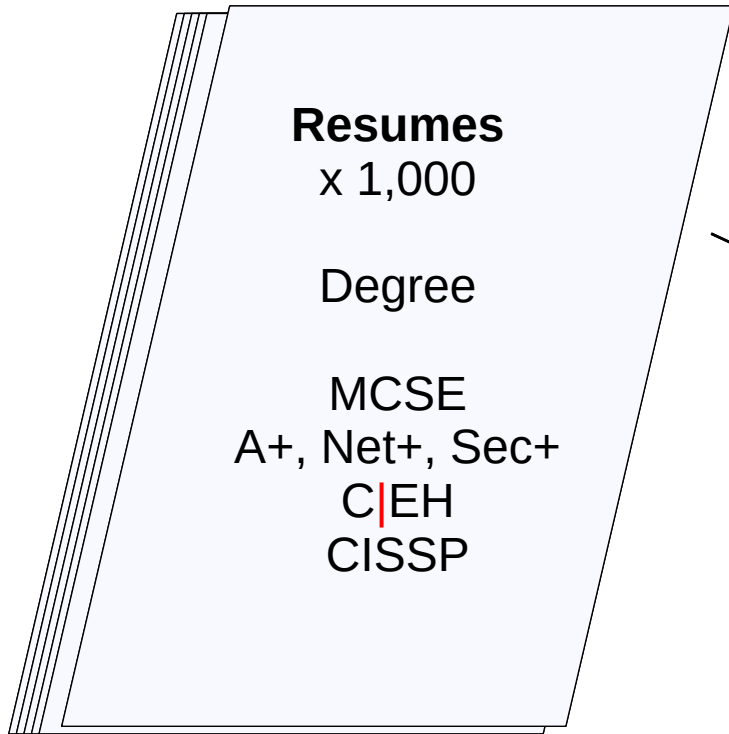
We've seen times like these before!

1997 – 2004 (The bubble years+)

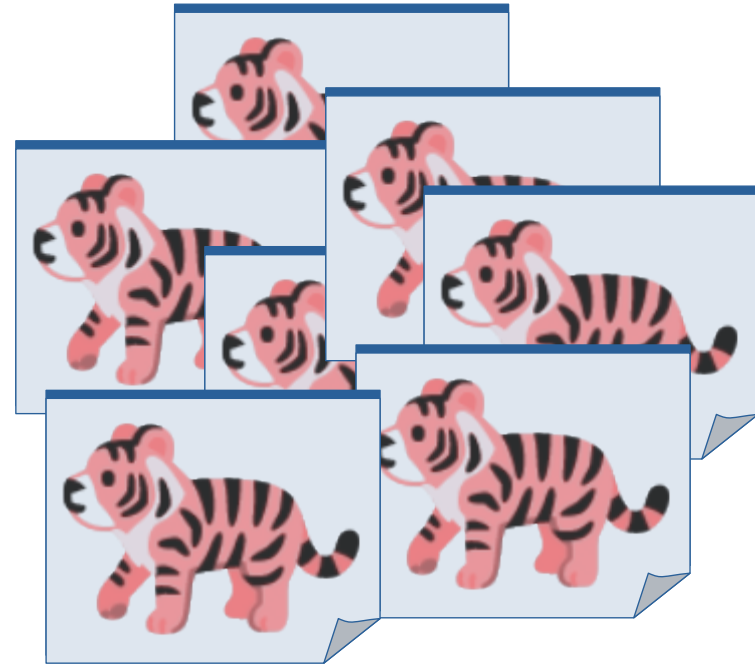
Colleges & Universities

- *“Big shortage of tech workers!”*
- *“Great careers & salaries working in IT!”*
- *“High-demand, jobs of the future!”*

Paper Tigers



Job Applicants



2002 to 2012

Some applicants had a true passion for IT work!
...Or learned to love it along the way.

But the job market stalled!

Schools stopped pushing IT courses ~2004/2005.

Many by 2002-2004...



- *This is really hard!*
- *What do you mean this job isn't 9 to 5?*
- *After-hours patching?*
- *On-call?*
- I'm done, **I quit!**

2008 to 2012...

The Economy

However...

- Most paper tigers washed out of tech work
 - Creating a newfound good job market by 2012
 - Ample opportunity for those who stayed the course
 - Especially those with a true passion for tech work!

It might be 2024...

But it reminds me an awful lot of 2002:

2024 == 2002

And if that is the case...

Things will get better, eventually!

What can you do?



- Take care of yourself!
- Study/train/skill build
- Reconnect with others
- Professional Networking

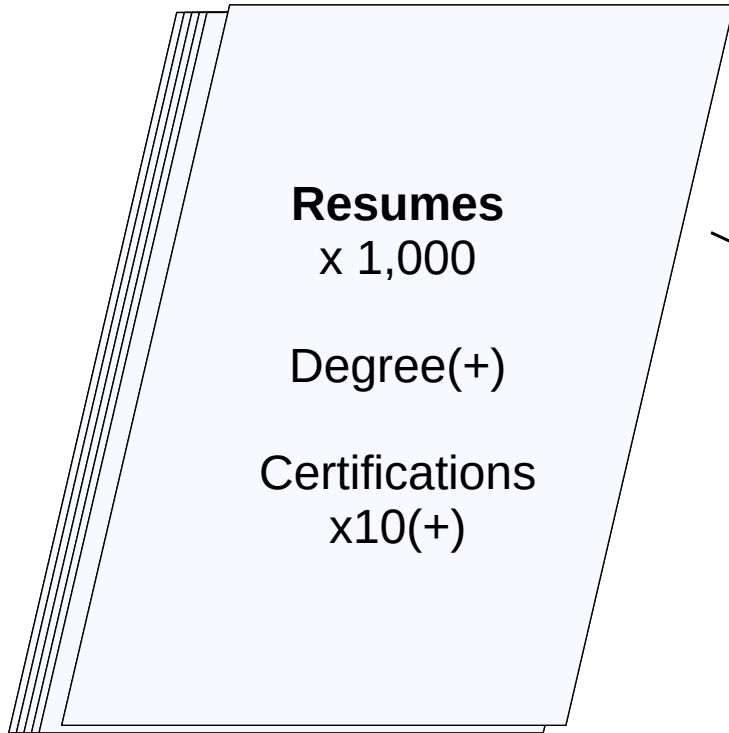
Aspiring Hopefuls
(first-time job seekers)

Aspiring Hopefuls

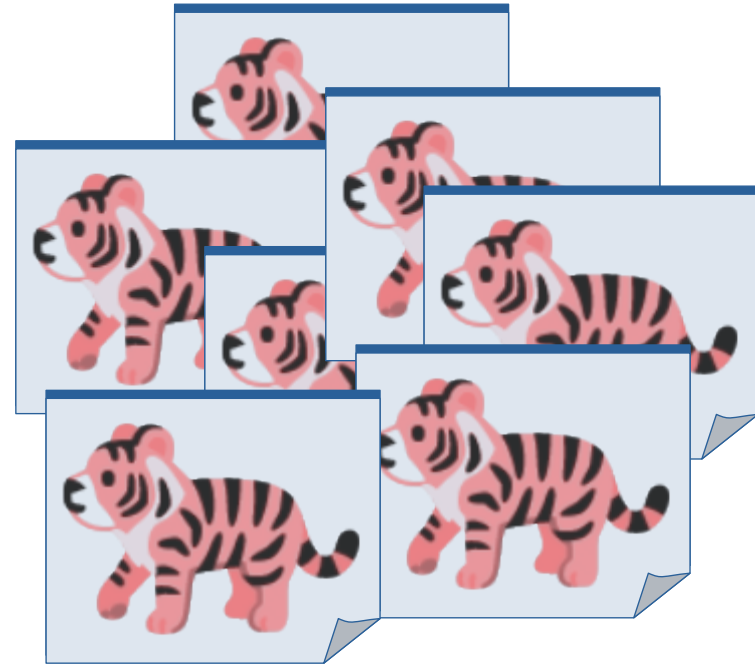
Common pathways to an InfoSec career

- 1) Luck into a good internship or co-op
- 2) Slog things out in the job market for a long time
- 3) Get out and network professionally (*in-person*)!
 - IMHO, this is the best & easiest path to landing a job...
 - And the one most candidates seldom ever take!

Today's InfoSec Paper Tigers



Job Applicants



At least write a decent resume

Resume

Email Address
Phone Number

Something the
hundreds of other
resumes don't
have, showing
a true passion for
InfoSec!

- Cool extras
 - Home Lab
 - GitHub
 - Social Media (selectively)
 - Blog Posts / Articles
 - Bug Bounty or CTF's
 - Etc.

Prepare for your interview

Before you Interview

- Learn about the business
- Learn about the job role
- Learn about the tools
- Learn about the interviewers

During the Interview

- Be on-camera (if virtual)
- Smile!
- Don't type on a keyboard
- Have 3 quality questions

Getting experience

- Volunteering
 - Conferences, Meetup Groups, etc.
- Bug Bounty
 - Write about your findings
- Dabble and publish stuff!

The old-fashioned way

- Start out with Security-Adjacent careers
 - Help Desk
 - Systems / Network / Cloud Administration
 - DevOps
- Work on making inroads (InfoSec Managers)
 - Gain experience now, find advancement later!

Hiring Top Technical Talent

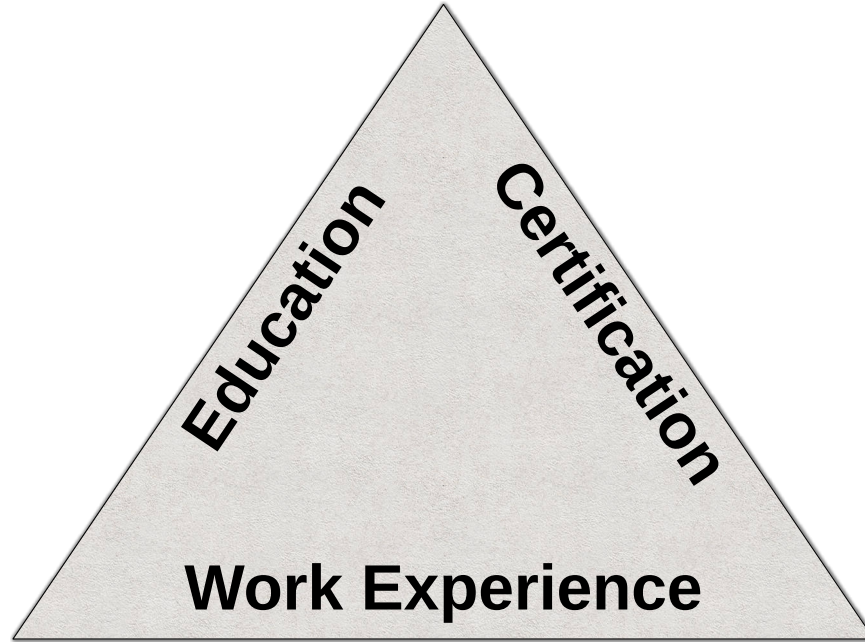
Finding & Hiring
highly-technical
Cybersecurity
Unicorns



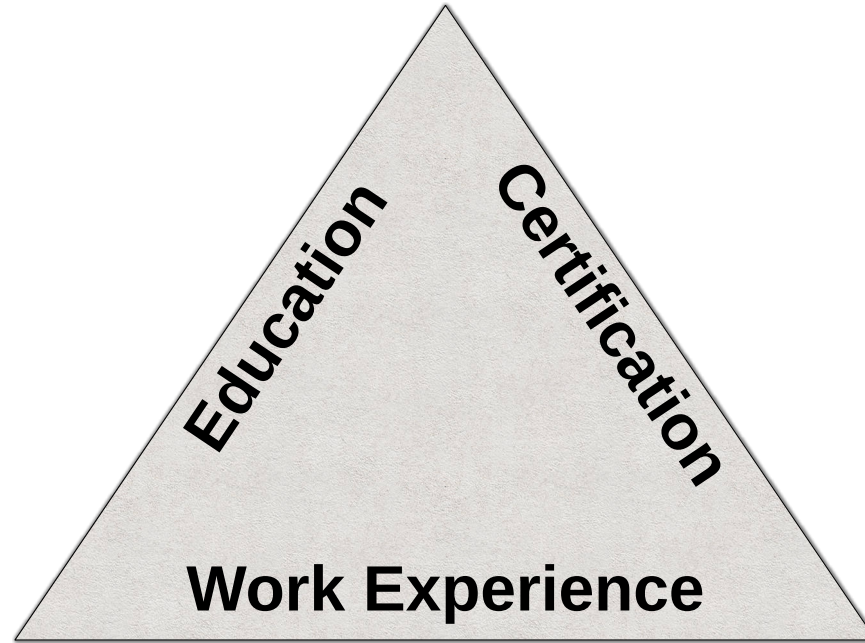
Interviewing & My Results

- Conducted Interviews
 - Peer level candidates
 - One level above mine
 - One to several levels below mine
- Helped Others
 - Get job interviews
 - Get hired
 - After coaching & mentoring them

Traditional Qualifications



Traditional Qualifications



Most Valued?

Where Unicorns Often Live



Candidate Credentials

- Some possess
 - Fancy Degrees
 - Plethora of Certifications
 - Or Both!



Showing of Hands



*How many of you
know a CISSP?*

Job Postings

- Sometimes I see this
 - Requirements
 - Four Year Degree in “X”
 - Four Year Degree in “X”, or a related field
- But I’d rather see this
 - Requirements
 - Degree, or equivalent experience

Unicorn Self-Learning Activities

- Likely not on LinkedIn
 - Books read
 - Educational videos
 - Documentation read
- Not seen on resumes
 - Home Lab
 - Home Network
 - Hands-on practice

Work Experience

- Strong indicator of skill level
 - But not always truly representative of actual skill

Where to Look?



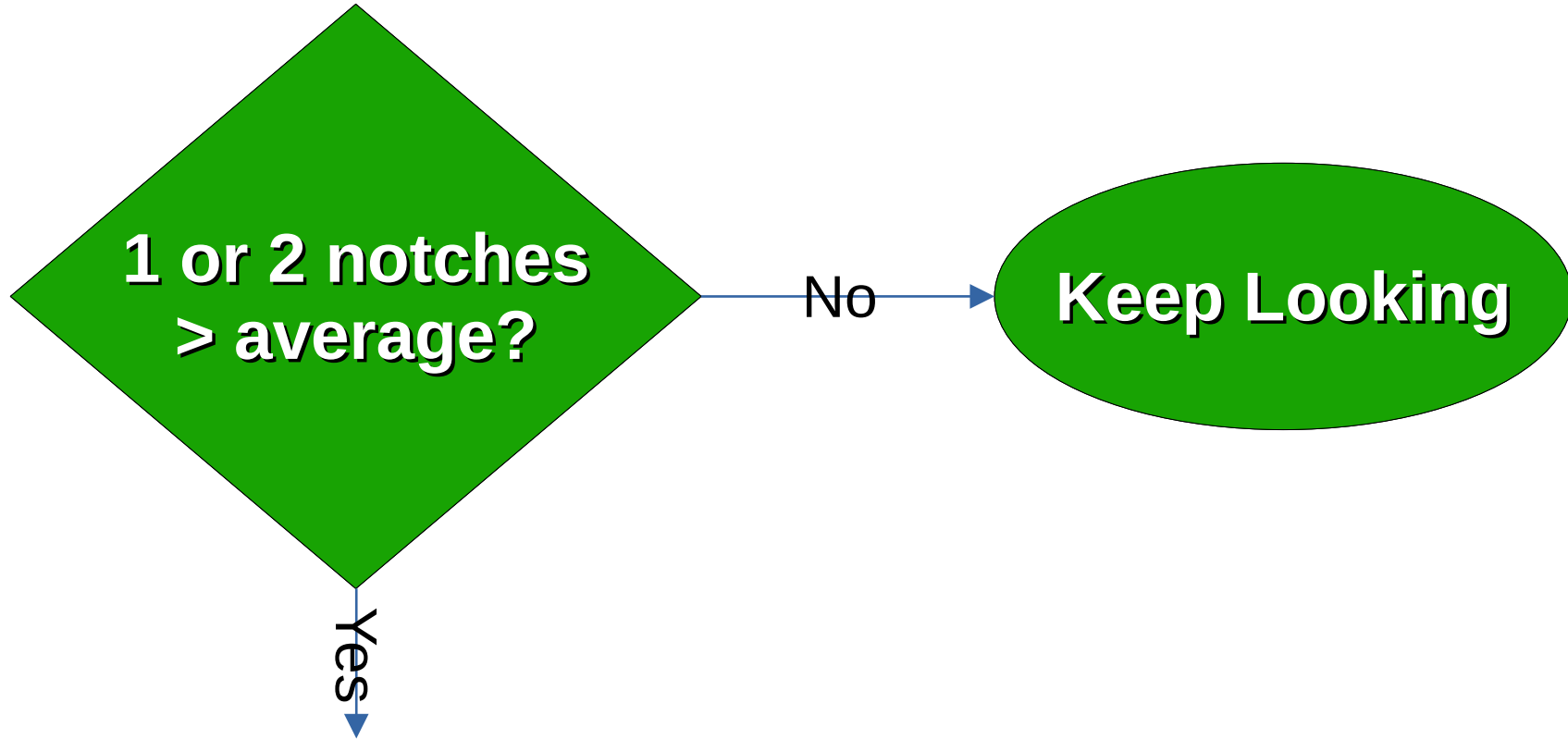
- Ask your current top performers
- Hacker and other Technical Security Conferences
- CTF Events
- Area Meetup groups

Evaluating Talent

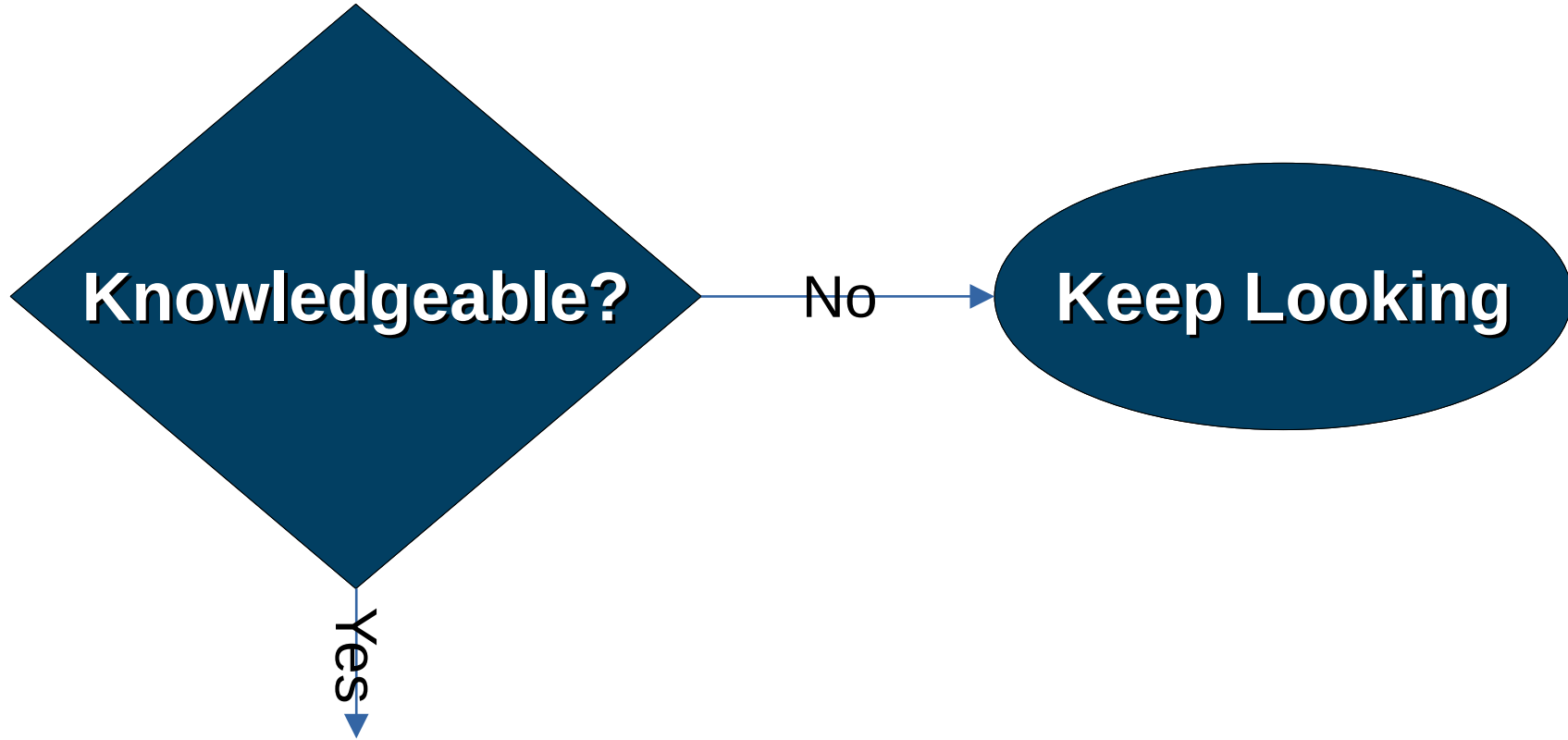
- In my experience, the only way to evaluate somebody's skill and suitability for a position is to simply sit down and talk with them

Evaluating Potential Unicorns

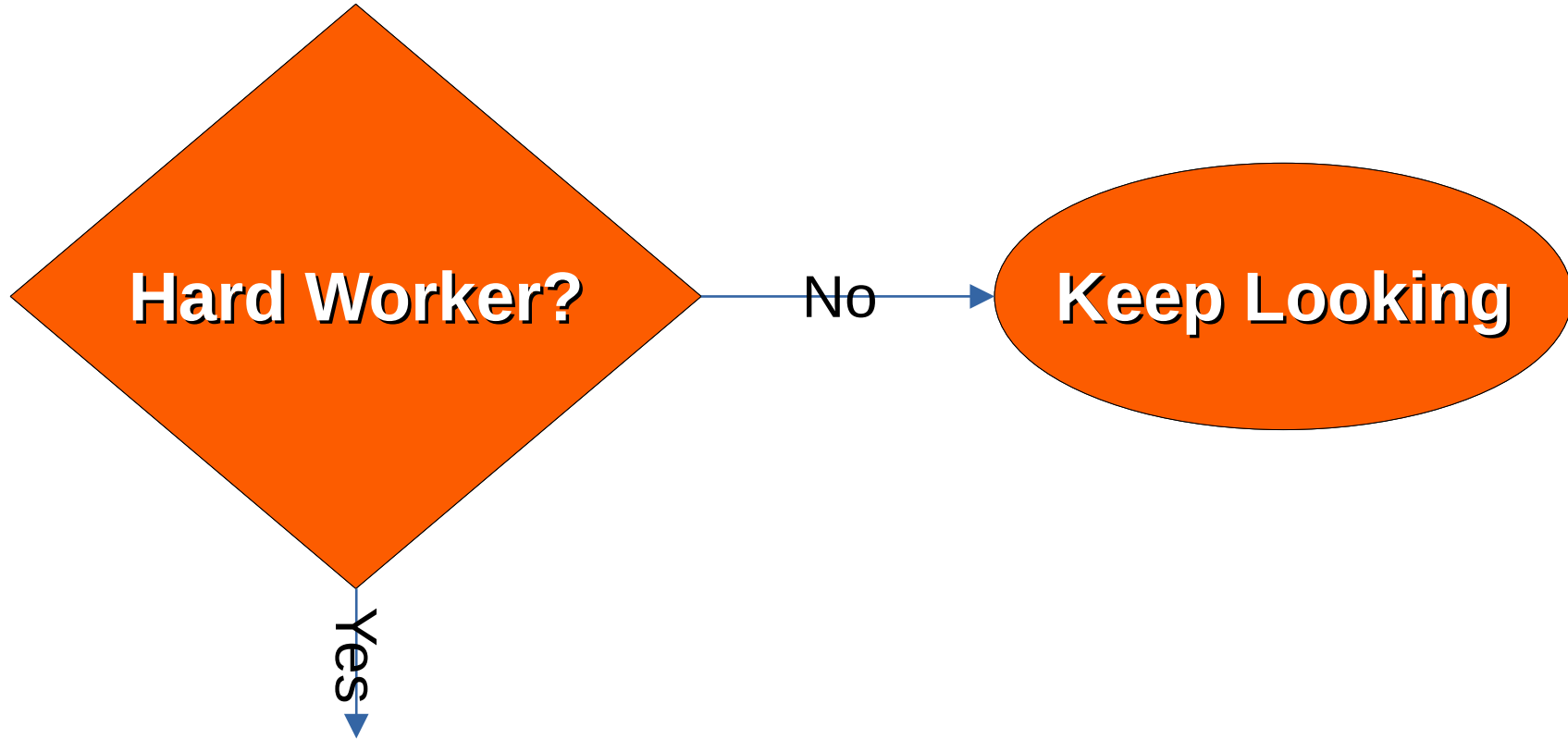
Candidate Comparisons



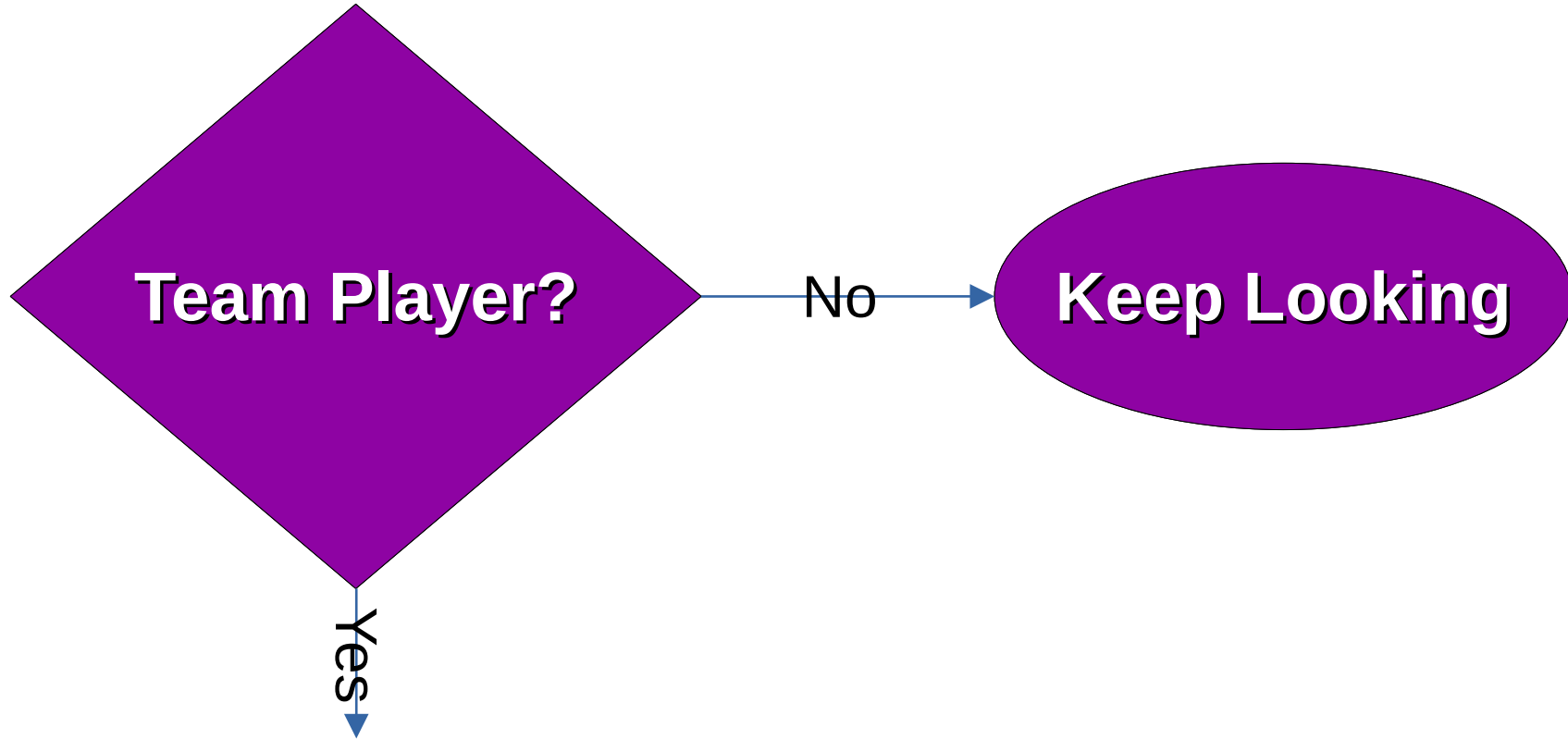
Candidate Aptitude



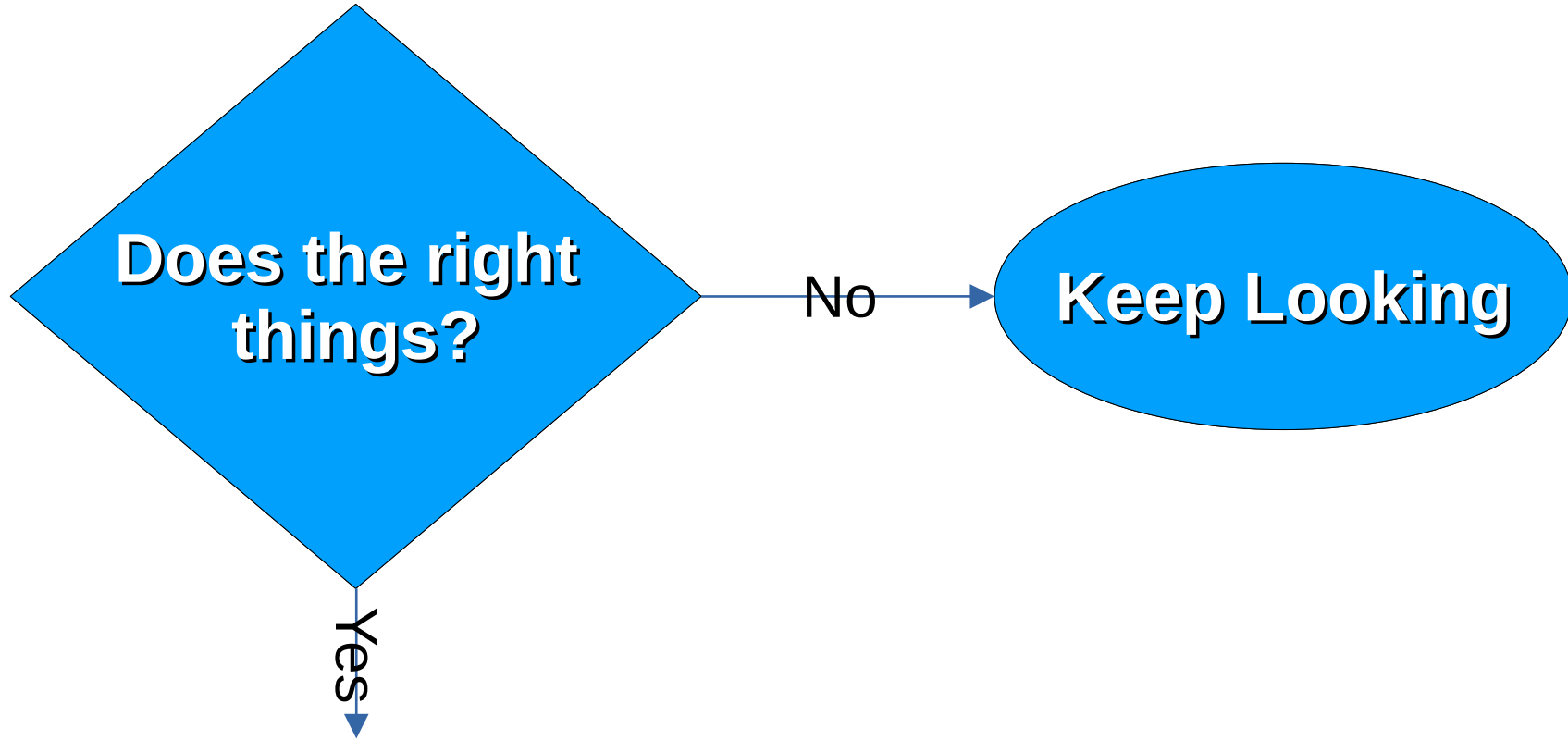
Candidate Output



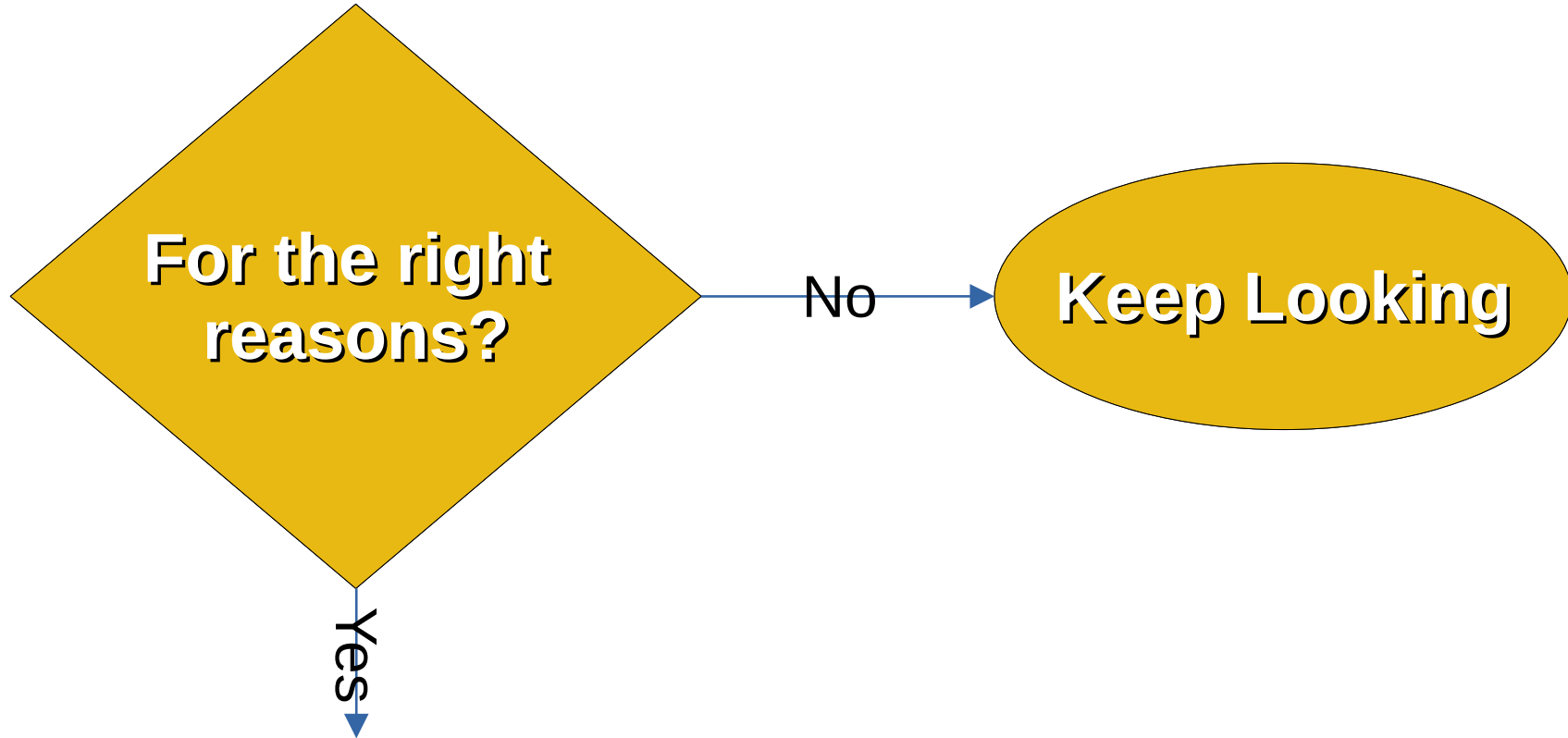
Candidate Participation



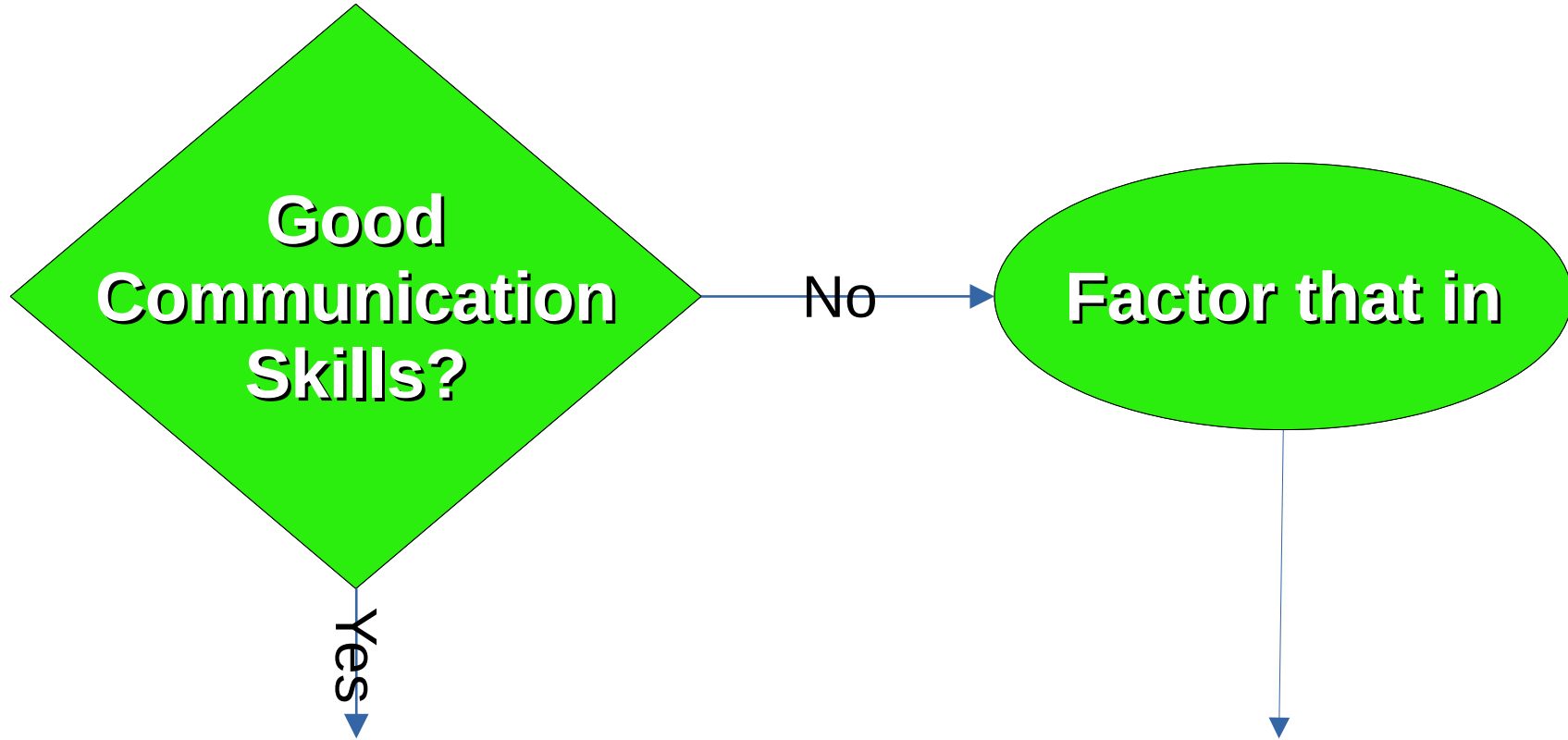
Candidate Ethics



Candidate Morals



Candidate Collaboration



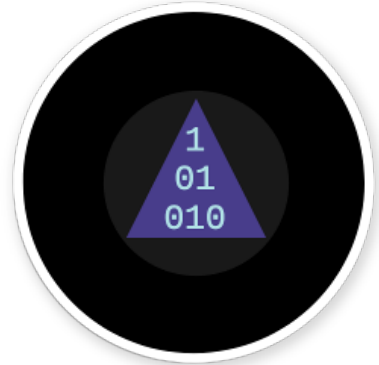
Unicorn Candidate or not?

```
if (thoseAnswers == "What you hoped for?") {  
    var Candidate = "Cybersecurity Unicorn";  
}  
else {  
    var Candidate = "Debatable";  
}
```

Questions



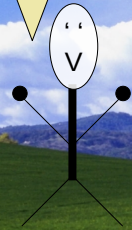
Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
How?



Navigating the Emerging Cybersecurity and IT World

Thank you for
attending!

Now
Hiring!



-Matt Scheurer

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