STANDARDIZED APPROACH TO HIRING

When you have the wrong people in the wrong position it affects the entire company. It’s a hard lesson to learn. It has a ripple effect.
—Tory Burch

One of the most important jobs as a new CEO is to put a great team in place. This begins with hiring the best people. If you don’t start with top talent, your subsequent efforts won’t matter. Yet few do this well. In the United States, one-third of all outside hires fall short of expectations. In any other endeavor that’s an unacceptable failure rate. Most of us, however, assume that hiring is an art, not a science, and simply make do with that failure rate.

But there are reasons why the rate is so high. Companies rarely train managers on how to excel at hiring (e.g., formal interview training), and most interviewing takes place privately. The result is that hiring managers usually receive with little to no feedback on their interviewing skills from their supervisors. Additionally, companies seldom review hiring failures to evaluate what went wrong. Can you imagine a product development team that had no training program, never observed its employees, and then when things failed didn’t talk about what went wrong?

Even worse, most interviewers would admit that they “wing it” going into their interviews and take few notes. Also, data shows that many spend fewer than three minutes reviewing the candidate’s resume in advance of the interview.

Too often we give lip-service to the importance of building a team and how important hiring is, yet for many organizations, they don’t back this up with action. The most common reason is that to hiring correctly requires a greater time commitment. Unfortunately, trying to save time on hiring in the short-term reduces productivity and company performance in the long term. It’s estimated that the full “round-trip” for an unsuccessful hire—when taking into consideration the time required to terminate the employee and hire a replacement—is 44 hours.
To solve for these problems, it is best to create a standardized practice across the company for the same reason that companies standardize most operating procedures. By standardizing, companies immediately eliminate the risk that a hiring manager will follow an incorrect approach. Standardizing also provides a feedback mechanism to review both hiring successes and failures. If managers hire using different processes, it’s almost impossible to review “what went wrong.” Only through standardizing can an organization iterate and improve its hiring practice.

Standardization does not remove a manager’s knowledge and discretion from the hiring process. While there should be a uniform approach to the process of collecting data, your team interprets that data using their own judgment and experience. That’s where your managers apply their unique skills.

There are five proven tactics for hiring well which your company can immediately implement:

- Use a team approach
- Focus on performance and data, not personality
- Systematic preparation
- Standardized interviews
- Reference checking.

**Use a Team Approach**

The hiring process should be done as a team to create a common set of data. While many companies conduct interviews one-on-one, followed by group consultation afterward, this means that your team is not reflecting on the same information. For example, Mike and Candice both interview Larry separately, and compare results. The problem with this approach is that Mike and Candice are evaluating the candidate using *separate sets of data*. Mike didn’t hear what Candice heard, and vice versa.

A team approach also saves time and allows for a faster process (which can be valuable when attracting the best candidates). Rather than having three managers separately interview an individual for 1.5 hours for a total of 4.5 hours over three sessions, the three managers can interview the candidate together.

It also allows for better listening. When interviewing a candidate by yourself, a portion of your attention is wrapped up in crafting your next question. During a team interview, while your colleague is asking questions, you can focus on listening and taking careful notes.

However, if improperly organized, a team interview becomes a free-for-all. This is why it is important to follow a set procedure. Begin by keeping a single team consistent throughout the hiring process so that the same people have seen all the candidates. Designate one person as the “Primary,” (which can change throughout the process), and that person should plan to do most of the questioning. When the “Primary” takes the lead, it is very important that the other interviewers avoid the temptation to interject. Doing so not only may disrupt the Primary’s line of questioning, but also creates the situation where instead of listening intently, the other team members are looking for opportunities to jump in. Before moving from one line of inquiry to the
next, the Primary should first ask each of the other interviewers if they have any questions. One by one the other team members can ask their questions, uninterrupted by their colleagues.

**FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE**

Internal personnel moves have an 85% success rate; external hires have a 65% success rate. The enormous disparity is not because internal candidates have more experience. Most internal moves are promotions; by definition, such candidates are being asked to “step up” into roles for which they won’t immediately be ready.

Internal candidates are more successful because the hiring team is reviewing the candidate’s past performance. When we hire from the outside, we tend to rely on experience. We substitute academics and job titles for accomplishments and tangible performance. Part of our blindness around external candidates has to do with “likability.” If we get along well with a candidate in the initial interview, it can be easy to look past that candidate’s weaknesses, while amplifying his or her strengths. In explaining an external hiring decision, how many times does an interviewer say, “I really like this candidate,” as if that is reason enough? We rely on our connection with the candidate, rather than do the hard work of collecting and sifting through the available data. By contrast, never do we justify an internal because for “likability,” because we have mountains of data.

The goal is to apply that same standard for external candidates by accumulating a similarly strong data set on past performance. It’s been repeatedly demonstrated that the best indicator of future performance is past performance. This requires looking at objective data while minimizing likability as a hiring factor.

An effective way to focus on performance is to think of hiring like a game of poker. If you draw an ace and a king, your odds of success increase—but there’s still no guarantee you’ll win the hand. If dealt a three and a six, the odds drop considerably. In poker, you’d stay in the hand with your ace and king, and fold with the three and six. People who place poker bets based on “instinct” or “feel” will lose in the long run. There are no exceptions to this rule—good poker players dispassionately evaluate the facts and make reasoned decisions about what to do next. The same is true with hiring decisions. People who rely on gut instinct weigh luck over facts, and they will lose in the long run. They will consistently hire candidates who are good interviewees instead of great employees.

For example, if a candidate changed jobs every two years, and has been looking for work for three months, you just got handed a couple of “low cards.” Conversely, if you find someone ranked at the top of his or her class at a prestigious school, with a terrific military career, you now have a few “high cards.” In hiring, the standard is not to be right 100 percent of the time—instead, the goal is to improve the odds.

To provide structure and discipline, rather than form an emotion-based point of view as you listen to the interviewee’s responses, keep track of “high cards” and “low cards.” At the end of the interview, you’ll discover you’ve created an objective data set as a basis for your decision.
SYSTEMATIC PREPARATION

Interviews require preparation, but because people cut corners, this step is seldom completed thoroughly. The result is often a meandering conversation where only a fraction of the time is spent accumulating useful data. Instead of a targeted interview, the hiring manager asks generalized questions hoping to bump into some useful data.

This not only reduces how much data is gathered but also wastes time. There’s a 5-to-1 time benefit to preparation. For every minute you prepare, you save five minutes in interviewing time by avoiding unnecessary questions or untargeted fact-finding. An organized forty-minute interview is far more valuable than an hour-long unstructured conversation.

The first step to preparation is to review the resume, which by itself is of marginal value. Nonetheless, the resume creates the basis for asking the right questions during the interview. Start by reading it back to front (chronologically) so you can follow the progress of the candidate’s life. Then answer the questions on the resume checklist (Exhibit 1). Ask whether the candidate shows an upward trajectory at every stage of his or her career, or are some moves lateral or downward and whether the career progression makes sense. You’ll want to form a view on whether the position enhances the candidate’s career or represents a lateral or downward step, which generally speaking, high-quality candidates do not want to take.

STANDARDIZED INTERVIEWS: FIRST INTERVIEW

There are four steps in the first interview. While this approach may appear overly structured, by following a specific format more data is collected in a shorter period of time. At the same time, the structure does not limit or inhibit creativity but instead replaces inefficient time with time spent efficiently collecting “high and low cards.”

Remember to resist the temptation to form an opinion on the candidate during the first 45 minutes. First impressions are often wrong; they’re typically based on “chemistry” as opposed to facts. Once you begin to anchor around an outlook, you’ll emphasize facts that support that conclusion.

Step 1: Introduction

Begin by telling the candidate what to expect in terms of schedule and set ground rules for how you and your team will ask questions. It’s helpful to say at the outset that you have a lot of questions, and in the spirit of getting to know the candidate, you may interrupt at times to refocus the discussion. Promise that there will be an opportunity for him or her to ask questions at the beginning and end of the interview. Finally, explain that the team will regroup near the end of the interview to ensure each member got all the answers needed for this stage of the process.

Step 2: Clarifying the Resume/Application

Walk through the candidate’s life in chronological order. Most good interviewers believe you should begin as early as their high school record as most high performers demonstrate those characteristics early on. Especially for management candidates, look for early signs of ambition,
goal setting, and energy that reveal “high cards.” These come in the form of after-school jobs, extracurricular activities, sports, student government, awards, high GPA, etc. While there are certainly exceptions, most energetic and competitive people show those tendencies as early as high school.

While probing the candidate’s history, understand any resume gaps. To do this you’ll need to ask for the month of each job change. If the employee doesn’t know the month, then ask how many months there were between the candidate’s departure from one job and their start with the next. Resume gaps may reveal important “low cards,” so try to get to the bottom of what happened. A candidate may try to deflect revealing a “low card” by saying something along the lines of: “I just wanted to take some time off and be with my family.” This may be true, but it’s also an answer you’d hear if the candidate was dismissed suddenly and had a difficult time finding a new position. If you want to hire well, you’ll need to dig deeper. You can test the reliability of the candidate’s explanation by following up with a question such as, “What was the motivation for taking time off at that particular time?”

Get salary or wage information, going back as far as possible if state laws allow such questions. It may feel uncomfortable, but it can be one of the most objective and tangible data points you gather. A resume may imply that the candidate was a star at his or her former employer, but if over five years compensation increased only 10 percent, you should question that claim. On the other hand, if over that period compensation increased 150 percent, it’s almost certain the organization valued the candidate highly.

There should be a clear pattern of compensation growth, since most achievers see their incomes rise, not remain stagnant, over time. If you see a flat or downward pattern, be sure to ask for clarification. If you don’t ask, you may miss exceptions to this rule, such as a candidate taking a compensation cut to move closer to a specialty hospital for an ill child, or a potential “high card” for accepting a drop in salary for an equity position or a chance to participate in a management training program. Likewise, through your questioning, you may discover that a candidate was terminated and took a lower-paying job out of an urgent economic need.

In this first interview draw the organization chart for the candidate’s current position and, if applicable, previous position as well. Make sure you get the names of the candidate’s supervisors and subordinates as this will help you with your eventual reference checks. Also, note, if applicable, the revenue or budget for each department. This provides context for later questions and a better idea of the candidate’s scope of responsibility.

To the extent that the candidate mentions accomplishments, separate indicators of past performance from ambiguous or exaggerated claims. For example, if the resume states that the candidate increased revenue by 108 percent to plan, ask: “I was impressed with the way you grew revenue above plan. Tell me specifically what you did to accomplish this.” You may find that revenue increased for reasons unrelated to the candidate’s actions, such as an acquisition that he or she had nothing to do with. On the other hand, the candidate may have taken over an ailing department and turned it around impressively.

Look for patterns of success. Visualize a line graph of the person’s career and decide whether the graph shows a steady and upward progression of responsibility, or instead reveals flat or
downward growth. In the case of a management candidate, look for increases in compensation, budget size, department size, organizational complexity, and other indicating factors. You’ll need to collect the facts diligently at each point in the person’s career—it will not be possible to compare growth in department size if you never ask the candidate for empirical details.

**Step 3: Begin the Process of Deepening and Narrowing**

Having sketched the candidate’s career trajectory, the interview shifts to identifying specific moments over time that may reveal “high cards” or “low cards.” To understand the concept of “deepening and narrowing” let’s look at a typical exchange:

**Q:** What’s your greatest strength?
**A:** I’m very good at motivating people to reach their highest potential.

Many stop here, especially if the candidate delivered the answer smoothly and with polish. But consider the added depth if you follow up with specifics:

**Q:** That’s great. Can you give me an example of when you motivated a particular person and those actions increased that person’s potential?

You should continue to probe with each follow-up question. Go deeper and narrower into a few specifics until you’re convinced you have the complete story. Strafing at 10,000 feet generally does not differentiate star employees from great interviewees; going into detail though on a number of concrete accomplishments often provides the needed information to distinguish among candidates.

Interviewing is not about coming up with clever questions but instead relentlessly acquiring facts for later consideration. With that in mind, below are useful questions to ask during the first interview which would be followed by a series of follow-ups.

- You strike me as a competitive person. Can you give me an example when you used your competitiveness to the company’s advantage?
- Can you give me an example of when you were criticized for something and that criticism was justified?
- How about an example of when you were criticized unfairly for something you did at work?
- What are the words that best describe your personality? Can you give me an instance where [aspect of the candidate’s personality] helped you in your work? Can you give me an example where [aspect of the candidate’s personality] hurt your work?
- Describe a situation when you failed to reach a goal.
- What is the reason you’re planning on leaving your current company?
- What kind of people do you like to work with?
- What do you feel is the easiest type of person to deal with? The most difficult?

In any of these cases, the initial question is only the beginning of a fact-finding mission to identify “high cards” and “low cards.” Each question should lead to approximately ten minutes of description and follow-up questions. To do this, you’ll probe into names, dates, and specifics. For instance:
Q: Can you give me an example of where you used your competitiveness to the company’s advantage?
A: I always fight to hit my quarterly numbers. I’m as competitive as any person about reaching my targets, and I hate it when someone beats me.

So far, the candidate’s answer is useless. It does not provide any specifics and does nothing to reveal a “high or low card.” Any well-prepared interviewee could have made that claim. You’ll need to deepen and narrow the questioning:

Q: That’s terrific. Now, can you tell me about a specific quarter where you were very close to the missing plan and what you did about that?
A: Three quarters ago we were close, and I had this wager with my west Pennsylvania counterpart. So, I got the troops really rallied, held some contests, and sure enough, we made the numbers.

This answer gets us closer, but it’s still hard to figure out exactly what the candidate did. Your next question might look like this:

Q: Interesting, what contests did you hold in that quarter that you did not hold in the prior quarter?
A: (Low Card) Well, we ran the standard company contest, but in this case, I got everyone really excited about hitting the numbers.
A: (High Card) I decided to do something different. I paired each technician against another technician and told them that based on an individual number of calls per day the “winner” of each pairing would be eligible for a $50 gift certificate (which I paid for myself), then I…

If the candidate continues to redirect toward generalizations or platitudes, he or she may not understand your intent. Don’t give up, the stakes are too high. Instead, consider using your own experience as an example to help guide the conversation. This also can set the candidate more at ease:

You strike me as a competitive person. Can you give me an example of when you used your competitiveness to the company’s advantage? For example, I recently was given a project to re-design the on-call procedures for our company. Since I knew that my peers would view the results when I presented them at a staff meeting, I wanted to do an especially good job. I ended up creating a presentation which…

Step 4: Caucus to Discuss the Candidate

Once you reach the end of the initial questions, the Primary should tell the candidate the team needs to adjourn to determine if any questions have not yet been covered. Since leaving the candidate alone is a somewhat awkward position, get right down to business to minimize the time he or she is left alone.
Begin by identifying any missing data. Do not poll the group on whether they “like the candidate” and avoid any discussion that borders on reaching conclusions. This step is to find any areas that require further questioning or probing. Each team member should discuss what they thought were the candidate’s “high and low cards.” Determine if there are additional questions that need to be asked. Either quickly resolve differences in perspective between your team members or document those differences for the next meeting. Return within ten minutes out of courtesy for the prospective employee.

After addressing whatever items remain outstanding from your team, then offer to field any questions or concerns the candidate may have.

Once the candidate leaves, reconvene with your team and list out the “high and low cards” that were identified. Then, apply your judgment against the person’s past performance and accomplishments to decide whether or not to invest company resources in a second interview. Avoid the temptation to make a hiring decision—the only question is whether to take the next step. This mindset helps you avoid anchoring and will lead you to bring back candidates you might not be 100-percent sold on, but about whom you are curious.

**STANDARDIZED INTERVIEWS: SECOND INTERVIEW**

The second interview continues the process of information gathering, provides a fresh look at the candidate to see if your previous image still holds, and offers a chance to evaluate consistency in his or her answers. It is critical that everyone reviews the notes from the first interview. It is often longer than a week between interviews, which makes it very easy to forget details and by doing so you’ll likely waste valuable time with unnecessary lines of questioning. Again, there is a 5-to-1 savings in time by preparing well. Review the areas where the group wanted further clarification and form a strategy to resolve your open issues or concerns.

Strongly consider for this round providing the candidate with some questions to prepare in advance of the interview. Classic interviewing over-emphasizes the ability to think on one’s feet, but that is not a skill used in most management decisions. Also, you’ll learn information by assessing the extent of the candidate’s preparation. If the person shows up with notes and even some work-product examples, that’s a “high card.” If, on the other hand, they appear to be answering on-the-fly, that may be an important “low card.” Here are some example questions, and in each case, the candidate’s response serves to begin a line of questioning that takes you deep and narrow.

- Come prepared to describe a time when you were totally committed to a task.
- If you could, what would you change about your current position?
- What did you do in the last year that makes you the proudest?
- If you could, what would you change about this position?
- We’d like to accomplish [name an objective] during the next year. Tell me about your most significant accomplishment that might relate to this goal.

**Step 1: Introduction**

Just like in the first interview, begin the second interview by telling the candidate what to expect in terms of schedule. Let the candidate know that he or she will be allowed to ask questions both
at the beginning and end of the interview. Also note that, like last time, your team will caucus near the end of the interview. Answer any questions the candidate has at the outset. Since your goal in this interview is to determine whether or not you want to hire the candidate, dig into new areas that you may have missed, or skimmed over, in the first interview.

**Step 2: Going Deep and Narrow**

Begin with a reminder to focus on specific examples:

I’m sure you remember from last week how specific examples are far more useful than generic ones. I’d like to jump right in with specific questions and thank you for being concrete in your answers.

Focus on turning generalities into specifics through targeted follow-up questions and continue to search for examples. For example, if you were trying to assess the candidate’s skills at building a team, some useful starting questions might include:

- Describe the steps in your hiring process. (You are looking for rigor in the way the candidate hires subordinates. The answer should highlight how many interviews he or she conducts per candidate, any testing required, and the personality traits sought).
- You said that you look for [leadership qualities] in a candidate. Can you tell me specifically what questions you ask a candidate to assess along that dimension?
- How would you discover [leadership qualities] by asking a candidate that question?
- What would be a good example of an answer to that question that indicates strong [leadership qualities]?
- Repeat the preceding three questions with another quality (good or bad) that the candidate mentioned (e.g., integrity, work ethic, adherence to customer service, intelligence).
- About how many people were you directly involved in hiring each year?
- How many of those “work out”? (If he or she gives you a nearly 100-percent success rate, ask: “Of those, what percent are A’s and what percent are B’s?”)
- Please describe what went wrong with one of your recent hiring mistakes? (If they didn’t have any, ask about the B players on the candidate’s team, and what he or she has done to develop and coach them).
- What, if anything, are you doing differently—please be specific—based on that hiring mistake?
- Have you ever had to fire someone? Please describe the circumstances of your most recent termination [if it is too straightforward a decision (e.g. the person in question was stealing from their company), continue until you find a more challenging example].

If you were assessing the candidate’s ambition and work ethic, you might consider asking:

- We’d like to accomplish [objective] during the next year. Tell me about your most significant related accomplishment.
- How did you rank among your peer group (e.g., number 2 out of 13 districts for sales, number 1 technician for add-on sales, rated “5” at last review)?
- Describe a time when you were totally committed to a task.

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1 Any of these questions could be provided to the candidate in advance.
• Give an example of where your personality negatively affected your work performance.
• In an annual review, it’s essential that a manager identifies developmental opportunities for each employee. [Candidate will say yes]. So, let’s assume you’re reviewing yourself. What would be your two most important developmental needs?
• [If the candidate provides a vague response]: I’m not sure how you, as the employee, can truly act upon that developmental suggestion. Since feedback and coaching are an important part of the job, can you please provide a developmental need you have that is actionable?
• If you could, what would you change about your current position?
• What do you like most about this position?
• If you could, what would you change about this position?
• What did you do over the last year that makes you proudest?

Step 3: Caucus and Discuss the Candidate

As before, get right down to business to minimize the time the candidate is left alone. In this meeting, you are on the edge of making a hiring decision, so stick to the facts alone; set aside your likes or dislikes of the candidate. Go through the same review of “high cards” and “low cards.”

Step 4: Conclude the Second Interview

After asking any additional questions, offer to answer questions the candidate may have. If applicable, schedule a third interview and have the candidate prepare a list of references (you will need to reach out to at least two of them). To the extent that some questions were answered unsatisfactorily, and if you want to see the candidate again, ask for clarification on specific points.

If you have an interest in the candidate, make sure to sell him or her on the position. Good candidates have multiple options to choose from, including staying where they are. At this point, you do not want to lose the candidate. You may also want to find out where you stand competitively. Below are some questions to ask in that regard:
• How would you react if your current employer offered you more money to stay after you gave notice?
• Are you conducting a full-scale job hunt or being selective and opportunistic?
• What other offers do you have in hand or are you anticipating?
• How does this position compare to those?

Step 5: Discussion of the Candidate

It is important the team talks about the candidate immediately following the interview. Notes are imperfect and memories of the interview fade quickly once the team returns to their other duties. Therefore, make sure the follow-on meeting is part of the original schedule.

After reviewing “high and low cards,” the Primary should direct everyone to answer this question: “If I was hiring in advance of need instead of filling a vacancy, would I hire this person, or would I wait and see more candidates?” This one question centers the group on
whether decisions are being influenced by the desire to finish the process or if you’ve gotten the results you were looking for.

Do not be afraid to hire someone that is making a stretch in responsibility. To quote Lou Adler, a proponent of performance-based hiring:

To me, the worst is to hire people with the same type of experience in the same type of job in the same industry [this goes for management as well as front line workers]. While this is easy to do and logically comfortable, you’ll continually under-hire. People who are willing to do the same old things over and over again are just cruising along. They aren’t top performers.²

If the candidate is someone you may like to hire, begin checking references. If you are not sure, decide whether to invest time in your reference checks and invite the candidate back for a third interview. Do not give up on a candidate solely because you are on the fence. You are on the fence because you need more data, and it’s a better use of your time to see more “cards” than to fold and start from scratch.

REFERENCE CHECKS

You cannot make a good hiring decision without checking references, and you cannot delegate this work to an outside recruiter. Some people find reference checking the richest part of evaluating a candidate, while others do it only to confirm their previous conclusions. The latter is especially true when the reference checking occurs toward the end of the hiring process. Because you have invested so much time in the candidate, most of us desperately hope the candidate about whom we’re most excited “checks out.” To quote Lou Adler again:

You can get any answer you want from a reference check. If you don’t have an open mind and are not willing to change your opinion, it’s a waste of time even to contact the reference. It’s hard and always embarrassing to admit you’ve made a mistake in judgment and eliminate a candidate at the last moment. It’s a much bigger mistake to go forward.³

The best defense against this pressure is to complete your reference checks when you’re still considering more than one candidate. Use references to help you choose between the candidates, instead of using the reference check to confirm a decision you’ve made in your head. If you’re struggling to decide among more than one great candidate, you’ll ask probing questions, hoping to identify a reason to eliminate, not a confirmation to hire.

As with the candidate, do not let the references off the hook without providing examples. While you may need to be more diplomatic, generalities from a reference are no more useful than generalities from the candidate. Here’s how you might start the conversation with a reference:

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³ Ibid.
Needless to say, we’re enthusiastic about [candidate], so what I’m hoping to explore with you is more a question of “fit” versus capability. We think [candidate] is more than capable of doing a terrific job. Neither of us would be doing them a favor by steering them into a new career that did not work out. On a confidential basis, can I ask you some questions?

Here are some examples of initial questions to ask, which would be followed up by a process of deepening and narrowing:

- What role did you play in the organization, and how did the two of you interact?
- How did [candidate] rank among his/her peers?
- What did [candidate] do differently than his or her peers to achieve that ranking?
- Can you offer an example of [candidate] doing that?
- In an annual review, it’s essential that a manager identify developmental opportunities for an employee. Let’s assume you’re reviewing [candidate]. What would be [candidate’s] two most important developmental needs?
- Can you give me an example of how this developmental need affected [candidate’s] performance?
- Why do you think [candidate] is looking for a new position?
- What types of work environments does the candidate work best in? For example, I do the best in [example].
- How would you rank this person among other employees you know at this level? What criteria do you use for that ranking?
- What keeps this candidate from being at the very top? [After the reference provides an answer] Can you give an example?

You can’t build a winning team if you don’t start with the best people. You’ll end up wasting your training efforts and paying underperformers whom you’ll eventually replace. Cutting corners costs you in the long run. No successful CEO has ever said hiring wasn’t the first or second most important part of his or her job.
Exhibit 1
Resume Checklist

When reviewing the resume with the candidate, be sure to take the following steps:

- Review back to front
- Review gaps (pay attention to months)
- Talk about every job change. Do these changes make sense?
- Ask about high school
- Discuss beginning and ending compensation
- Draw organization charts with names
- Clarify the boasting (e.g., grew the division to $100 million in revenue)
- Look for a pattern of success/trajectory
- Get school or company rankings where available
- Ask details of military experience.