

# Chapter 1

## The POWER Hiring Approach to Hiring Top Talent

Hire smart, or manage tough.

Red Scott

### ■ A RUDE AWAKENING—WHAT IT REALLY TAKES TO GET AHEAD

I still remember this like it was yesterday. I got the call sometime in the morning on a mid-October day in 1972. It was my first management job, Financial Planning Manager at Rockwell's Automotive Group in Troy, Michigan. At the time, I was working on my first presentation to the Group President and Vice President of Finance, due the next day. It was going to be a very long night. I didn't mind, since my new wife hadn't made the move yet. My boss, Chuck Jacob, and the reason for my being in Detroit, was on the phone with a desperate plea. Chuck was a 29-year-old Harvard MBA whiz kid, just out of Ford Motor Company, trying to prove to everyone that he deserved his position as Controller for this \$900 million truck-axle business. He was also my idol. I listened. He was at the University of Michigan interviewing MBA students for planning analyst positions to fill out our department. We needed these people

## 2 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

urgently. The good news—too many had signed up for the interview, and Chuck needed me there to interview the overflow. We were going head-to-head with Ford, P&G, IBM, and every other top Fortune 500 company, who wanted the best candidates from this prestigious MBA program. He told me there were stars in this group that we needed on our team. The bad news—I didn't have a minute to spare. I protested, vehemently, pleading 14-hour days, a long night, and a critical presentation the next day. There was a momentary delay. Chuck's response still blasts in my ears today. *"There is nothing more important to your success than hiring great people! We'll somehow get the work done. Get your \_\_\_\_ over here now."* He then hung up.

I was there within the hour. Together we interviewed about 20 people, took eight of them to dinner that night in Ann Arbor, and hired three of the top MBA students within two weeks. I've lost track of Russ, Joe, and Vivek, but I want to thank them and Chuck (who passed away at too early an age) for an invaluable lesson: There is nothing more important to your personal and company's success than hiring great people. Nothing. Chuck and I got back to the office at 10 P.M. that night and worked together until about 3 A.M. to finish the report. The handwritten version was presented the next day to Bob Worsnop and Bill Panny. We apologized for the format and lack of preparation, but told them we were doing something more important. They agreed.

### ■ BENCHMARKING THE BEST

I learned 50 percent of what I needed to know about hiring that day. Since then, I've been trying to understand the rest. I'm not quite there yet, but close. For the past 25 years, I've been fortunate to be able to work with other people, like Chuck, who always seem to hire great people, year-in and year-out. Few have had any formal training. They learned through trial and error. Equally important, I've lived and worked with managers who've made every possible hiring mistake in the book. This is their book, too. It's the collective stories of the good and the bad. What to do and what not to do. You'll find some great techniques in this book, but none are more important than your

belief that hiring great people is the single most important thing you can do to ensure your own success.

Many years later, I heard Red Scott's adage, "*Hire smart, or manage tough.*" This said it all to me. I've never met anybody who could manage tough enough. No matter how hard you try, you can never atone for a weak hiring decision. A weak candidate rarely becomes a great employee, no matter how much you wish or how hard you work. Instead, hire smart. Use the same time and energy to do it right the first time. Brian Tracy of Nightingale-Conant fame said on one of his recent tape programs that effective hiring represents 95 percent of a manager's success. This seems a little high, but with what I've seen, 70 percent to 80 percent seems about right to me. This is still enough to keep hiring in the number one position.

Every manager says that hiring great people is his or her most important task; however, few walk the talk. Although important, it never seems urgent enough until it's too late. When it comes down to the actual hiring process, our words don't match our actions. Test yourself and see how you score as a hiring manager. Rank the performance of every member of your own team. Are most of them top-notch and exceeding expectations? If they are, consider yourself a strong manager. Unless you're hiring people like this 80 percent to 90 percent of the time, you need to throw out everything you've learned about hiring, and start with a fresh slate. If you're already in the elite 80 percent to 90 percent, this book reinforces how you got there, and gives you a few new techniques that will boost your performance even further.

You might try a similar exercise with your next candidate for a management position. This should become part of your standard interviewing practices. When you're hiring a manager, make sure he or she has a track record of hiring good people. Have the candidate draw an organization chart and rank each person's performance. Ask him or her to describe all hiring successes and failures. Do this for the last two or three management positions. You'll quickly discover if the person is a good manager or not.

Most managers find the hiring process frustrating and time consuming. With this built-in negative bias, it's not surprising

## 4 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

we're easy prey to the energetic, attractive, affable, and articulate candidate. This is the one who eventually falls short of our lofty expectations once on the job. Knowing we're prone to this problem is the first step to overcoming it.

We have developed many of the techniques presented in this book by observing people who consistently hire top people. This is a process called *benchmarking*, and much of the book has been developed this way. Just do what the best interviewers do, and you'll get similar results. In fact, modeling good interviewers this way is similar to modeling good performers for any type of job. Just find out what the most successful people do that makes them successful, and find other people who can do the same things. This principle of benchmarking is a theme of the book and is at the heart of the POWER Hiring performance-based hiring system we present. You don't need to be a trained psychologist to hire good people. Psychologists look for the underlying traits of high performers. Why bother? Just look for high performers. They possess the necessary underlying traits.

One critical factor has been observed through our benchmarking: The best interviewers use two different critical thinking skills, one for the hiring decision and another for information gathering. They recognize that the hiring decision must be intuitive, since there's never enough information to match abilities, needs, and interests completely. Instead, they substitute a broader group of 8 to 10 generic and job-specific factors to assess competency. Despite this intuitive approach, they recognize that an analytical, fact-finding method is needed to collect as much appropriate data as possible about these traits before making the hiring decision. These great interviewers also have the ability to suspend their personal reaction to the candidate long enough to make an unbiased assessment.

From my observations, it appears that weaker interviewers, those who make many mistakes, fall within three broad categories. A large percentage of them are too emotional. These people make quick, simplistic judgments based largely on first impressions and personality. Not unexpectedly, their hiring results are random. The overly intuitive interviewer short-circuits the process, superficially assessing only a narrow group of important traits. Every now and then, they'll hire a star, but more

often it's a person strong in only a few areas and not broad enough to handle the whole job. I call these the partially competent. The technical interviewers are at the other extreme. These people are good at the fact-finding part of the process, but weak at decision making, believing they never have enough information. As a substitute, they overemphasize the need for years of experience and an abundance of skills. The result is a solid, but often unspectacular staff, since they ignored hard-to-measure potential. The key to hiring both competent and high-potential people is to collect enough of the right facts. Trouble occurs when this delicate balance is broken.

## ■ HIRING IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LEAVE TO CHANCE

If you want to hire superior people, use a system designed to hire superior people, not one designed to fill jobs. The emphasis of too many hiring processes is to reduce costs and fill jobs as rapidly as possible. Somehow the idea of hiring the best is an afterthought. Hiring the best must dominate every aspect of a company's hiring process. This is the clear theme of the latest McKinsey Consulting research project, *The War for Talent*.<sup>1</sup> The authors surveyed over 200 major companies. The conclusions were obvious—hiring the best is an essential component of long-term success, requiring a comprehensive and well-executed plan. Talk by itself, no matter how eloquent, is not enough.

In the mid-1990s, everyone thought the Internet was going to be the new tool that allowed everyone to hire great people quickly and at low cost. What a terrible forecast. For 2001, surveys indicate that less than 10 percent of all hires were made as a result of job boards on the Internet.<sup>2</sup> And this was the best year ever! Trends indicate that this number won't grow much more. There's much more to hiring great people than posting an ad.

Hiring the best requires a system designed around the needs of hiring the best people. This is what POWER Hiring offers—five steps to hiring great talent every time. Part of the reason a formal

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## 6 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

hiring process is so important is that the people involved in the hiring process are generally untrained and unsophisticated when it comes to hiring. Some of the biggest problems—the weakest links—are the people involved in the hiring process: candidates, recruiters, hiring managers, and interviewers.

Setting up a fancy hiring system with all the latest database, Internet job sites, and filtering and tracking software does not address the problems of hiring top talent. It hides them. Systems are about managing data and preparing reports, not hiring the best. These weakest links are the cause of our biggest problems, and, as a rule, we ignore them. If these problems aren't solved first, everything else is just wasted activity. Not understanding the needs of the people involved in the hiring process, what motivates them to act, how they make decisions, and their biases and prejudices makes all of us the weakest links in the hiring process. Hiring processes will not improve until these issues are understood and addressed.

Here's how these issues affect the hiring process:

- ▶ It's too hard for the best candidates to apply for your job openings.
- ▶ Recruiters and hiring managers are looking for different candidates.
- ▶ Emotions, biases, prejudices, and first impressions dominate the hiring decision.
- ▶ The best candidates have different needs that aren't addressed.

Without enough good candidates, nothing else matters. If you look closely at your hiring process, you'll see plenty of these weak links. Here are a few I found on some recent client engagements. It takes only one or two of these problems to negate everything else you're doing. Do any of these common problems sound familiar?

### Classic Hiring Problems

1. *Can't find the ad.* One of our clients was hiring 20 sales reps. The 30-day-old ad was on the 37th of 40

pages of monster.com listings. The top 20 percent won't spend the time going through every ad. Listings must always be on the first one or two pages wherever they are posted.

2. *Boring ads.* When I finally found the ad, it was boring, exclusionary, and demeaning. Ads need to be compelling—fun to read and inspiring.
3. *Skills-based ads that turn off the best.* “Use your CPA to see the world,” is much better than, “Must have a CPA and be willing to travel 70 percent, including international.” Most ads ask for too many skills. It's better if you include just a few, with more attention devoted to the challenges.
4. *Skills-based filters.* The best candidates have 60 percent to 70 percent of the skills, lots of potential, and the motivation to grow. You filter out the best if you ask for 100 percent of the skills. They won't even apply if you insist on them in the ad.
5. *Web-based applications that are negative or exclusionary.* As a test, I applied for a customer service job the other day directly on my client's Web site. The questions were sophomoric. Would I take a drug test? Would I be willing to work overtime? Would I be willing to travel? Did I live within 50 miles of the facility? They never asked if I wanted a great job, if I would be willing to put in extra effort if the company offered a challenging career opportunity, or if I would be willing to relocate for the chance to work with a company creating Six Sigma customer service.
6. *Incompetent recruiters.* Passive or active, the best candidates always have more than one opportunity. Recruiters must be career consultants, not used car salespeople.
7. *Emotional assessments.* You'll never build a great, diverse team if assessments are filtered through first impressions, personality, stereotypes, and prejudices.
8. *A flawed voting system.* Hiring the best is challenging enough. It's impossible if one “no” vote based on a

## 8 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

superficial interview can outweigh three or four solid “yes” votes.

9. *Selling too soon.* In our haste, a great resume and a great first impression are often all it takes to begin the sales job on an apparently great candidate. A job has more value when it has to be earned. You’ll drive away the best if you give your jobs away too soon.
10. *No one knows the real job.* The best candidates accept offers based on what they’ll be doing, learning, accomplishing, and becoming—not on the use of their skills. Everyone on the interviewing team must agree to the deliverables upfront and not worry about degrees, years of experience, and industry. The best candidates can spot an unprofessional team during the first round of interviews. The clues: Everyone describes a different job, nobody asks challenging questions, everyone is selling, and no one’s listening.
11. *It’s not just about the money.* The best people are looking for careers, not just jobs. If your close is more about the money and the benefits, and less about the comparison of career growth opportunities among various job alternatives, you’ve lost. For the best, compensation is always third or fourth on the list. A great career opportunity is always more important than everything else.

If you can eliminate these problems, you need only a pretty good applicant tracking system, a pretty good Web site, and a pretty good interviewing system. But you’ll still wind up with a great hiring system. The weakest link is people. Don’t ignore these problems. They won’t go away, even with the greatest technology money can buy.

It has been my experience with hundreds of different hiring situations that the performance profile—the P in POWER—is the common denominator of all effective hiring processes. Once you know what the real performance needs of the job are, hiring is relatively easy. When you don’t know what’s really required, you substitute your biases, perceptions, and stereotypes in assessing candidate competency, not the person’s



ability to do the work. This is why different people can all meet the same candidate for the same job and each come up with a different assessment.

For the past 12 years up through 2001, we have trained over 20,000 people in our POWER Hiring workshops. Some of these workshops have been in 90-minute online mini-sessions; most have been half-day classroom workshops. In these sessions, we always take a quick survey of hiring processes and attitudes. The following is a summary of the results. Not much has changed since 1990. How does your company compare?

### **The POWER Hiring Survey of Hiring Practices and Attitudes**

- Ninety-five percent of hiring managers said they've made bad hiring decisions.
- Ninety-five percent of hiring managers indicated that hiring is number one or number two in importance.
- Ninety-five percent of hiring managers don't like the hiring process.
- Less than 10 percent of the companies indicated that they have formal hiring processes used by all managers.
- Just about everybody felt that the interview process isn't very accurate. Few were surprised to learn that a study conducted by Professor John Hunter of Michigan State indicated that the typical employment interview is only 57 percent effective in predicting subsequent success, 7 percent better than flipping a coin.<sup>3</sup>
- There are as many different assessments of the same candidate in a one-hour interview as there are interviewers.
- It takes at least three weeks to three months after a candidate starts to determine true competence for most jobs.

Despite all of the books, articles, and the wealth of evidence supporting the importance of hiring the best, little has changed. Everyone is still looking for the magic fix. The Internet wasn't it. While hiring the best is not easy, it's no harder than setting up a worldwide distribution or accounting system, or designing a new disease-fighting medical product, or launching a new Web

## 10 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

site, or starting a business. It's just a process that needs to be implemented, like any other process. Most important, it requires a commitment from the executive management of the company that hiring is important, and that the resources and time will be devoted to making it happen.

While the solution to hiring revolves around the performance profile, the primary problem revolves around the interview itself. This is a random process that doesn't work very well. It's one reason most managers find the whole process frustrating. Consider this: Hiring, the most important thing we do as managers, is based on a random process. When you think about it, there are no other processes in our organizations that are random, much less one of this importance. Companies will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, even millions, to reengineer a flawed process that has a 5 percent to 10 percent error rate. One with a 20 percent failure rate would be considered out of control and shut down! Yet the one that is considered most important has a 40 percent to 50 percent error rate. This is unacceptable. Something can be done. To begin, shut down your current hiring process and start over.

### ► It Starts with Sourcing

The best candidates want careers, not jobs. Unfortunately, most companies are just offering jobs. If you want immediate proof, look at 10 random ads on any job board. Each describes a job in terms of skills, experience, and requirements. They don't describe career challenges or opportunities for growth. If you want to attract the best people, you need to attract them with the best jobs.

Even a top candidate who is looking for a job has multiple opportunities. In a slow economy, there are more top people looking, but you still need to offer something more than just another job if you want to attract their interest. In normal economic times, you'll want to attract top candidates who are not actively looking. They'll be willing to explore a better opportunity, but they won't even consider just another job. Companies lose out on hiring the best by not understanding what the best want—careers, not jobs. If you're not an employer of choice with top candidates knocking down your door, you'd better

offer a job of choice. As you'll discover, this is the performance profile, the P in POWER. It describes a job in terms of challenges, major accomplishments, and team-building needs. Describing a great job is the first step in finding great candidates.

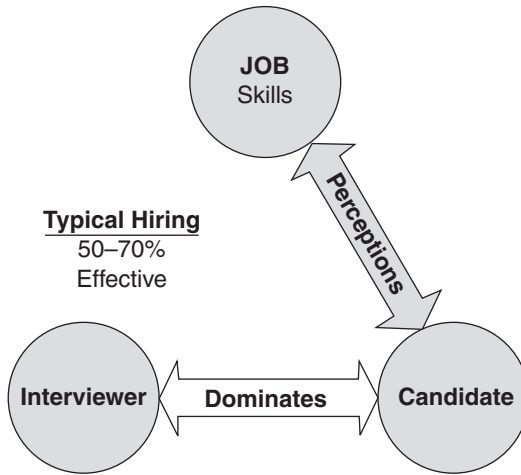
In this book, you'll discover some great ways to find great people. When you start seeing these top people, something else will become readily evident. Top candidates don't evaluate jobs the same way average candidates do. For the best, the job is the start of something—a great job, a new career opportunity. For the rest, a new job is the end of an ordeal. For these candidates, accepting a job is about the salary, the job itself, and the location. For the best, accepting the job is a more strategic decision. It involves outside advisors including friends and family. They take longer to decide and want more information. Recruiting these top candidates is more a career management counseling session than a transaction. This is the R in POWER, recruiting right. You can't oversell these candidates. You'll either lose them or wind up paying an unnecessary premium. Instead, you must demonstrate how your open opportunity compares favorably to all other jobs under consideration. Top candidates need a consultative sales and assessment process, not a transactional one. It's just like trying to sell a custom product through the Yellow Pages. It can't be done.

## ■ WHY YOU SHOULD THROW AWAY EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT HIRING

The common interview, the one used by most managers, is a flawed means to hire anyone. Emotions, biases, chemistry, and stereotypes play too big a role. The competency of the interviewer is questionable. True knowledge of the job is weak. Some candidates give misleading information because they're not asked appropriate questions. Others are nervous. Standards fall as desperation grows. Some of these problems can be eliminated just by knowing their causes.

The number one cause of hiring mistakes is over-reliance on the interaction between the candidate and the interviewer, and too little on the candidate's ability and motivation to do the job. See Figure 1.1 for a graphical presentation. Over the past 25 years, I've been personally involved in over 4,000 different

## 12 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

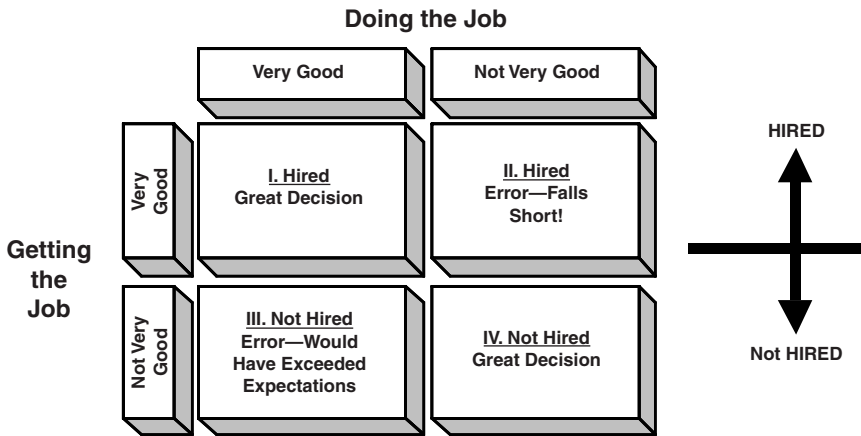


**Figure 1.1** Why hiring accuracy is low.

interviewing situations. Most of the hiring decision is influenced by the interpersonal relationship developed early in the interview between the applicant and the hiring manager. Sometimes this can be in just a few minutes. This has to do with chemistry, first impressions, emotions, biases, stereotypes, the halo effect (globalizing a few strengths), and the tendency to hire in your own image.

In most cases, real job needs are poorly understood, and even if they are well understood, they're filtered through these interpersonal relationships and biases. This is how randomness enters the hiring process. If you like a candidate, you tend to go into chat mode, ask easier questions, and look for information to confirm your initial impression. If you don't like someone, you put up a defense shield, ask tougher questions, and try to end the interview quickly. You go out of your way to find information to prove your initial impression that the candidate is incompetent.

In both cases, the hiring assessment is inaccurate because the wrong things are being assessed. The candidate's ability to get the job is what's really being measured, not the candidate's ability to do the job. Presentation is more important than substance. Getting the job includes things like personality, first impression, handshake, affability, social confidence,



**Figure 1.2** The impact of doing versus getting the job.

assertiveness, appearance, extroversion, and verbal communications. Doing the job includes initiative, team skills, achieving objectives, technical competence, management and organizational skills, intellect, and leadership, to name a few. We all overemphasize the “getting the job” part when assessing a candidate. The impact of this is shown in Figure 1.2.

### ► **What Happens When Getting the Job Is More Important Than Doing the Job**

When the hiring decision is based more on a candidate’s ability to get the job rather than do the job, two bad things happen. One, we frequently hire people who fall short of expectations (situation II). These are the people who are good interviewers, but weak performers. We also don’t hire people who are strong candidates, but weaker interviewers (III). Two good things can happen, but they’re inadvertent. We hire people who are good at both the getting and the doing (I), and we don’t hire those weak at both (IV). You don’t even need to read this book or take a single training course to get these two parts right. It’s all luck. As my former partner once said, “Even a blind squirrel finds a nut every now and then.” It’s how you handle the other 50 percent that will improve your hiring effectiveness.

## 14 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

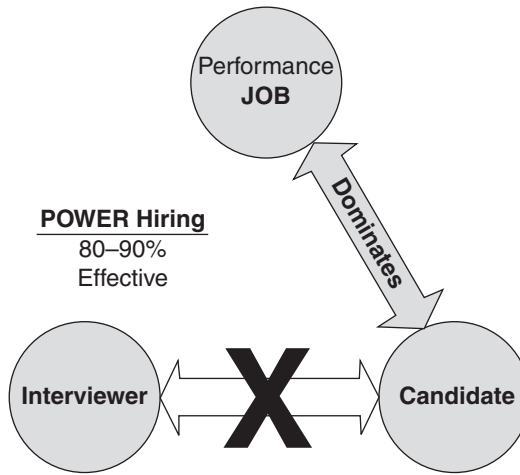
When the hiring decision is based primarily on the candidate's ability to do the work, everything changes. You still hire those good at both (I), and don't hire those bad at both (IV). More importantly, you also eliminate the other two major hiring errors. You stop hiring those that always fall short of expectations (II), and you start hiring those that are really great but might be a little weak on the interviewing side (III). You need to hire people who are very good at doing the job, not those just very good at getting the job. Making this shift is what POWER Hiring is all about.

### ► **Substitute the Job as the Dominant Selection Criteria**

Moving the decision-making process from "getting" to "doing" is hard work and mentally challenging. It's especially difficult when we need to counteract the natural tendency to judge people based on first impression, personality, and a few select traits. If you can overcome this problem, you'll quickly eliminate 50 percent of all common hiring errors. The lack of real job knowledge represents much of the balance. The majority of hiring errors can be eliminated when both issues are addressed together. Over the past 25 years, I've had an opportunity to work with more than 1,000 different hiring managers on a variety of different search and hiring training assignments. Most, including me, fall prey to the personality bias just noted. A few don't. This select group of managers have the ability to suspend their emotional reaction to the candidate until they've determined competency. They also know what real competency looks like. Once they find out if the person can do the work, they then find out if they can work with the candidate. Figure 1.3 shows this fundamental principal, which is a more effective decision-making process.

### ► **Get Candidates to Give Good Answers**

One other issue needs to be addressed to improve hiring effectiveness. It took me about 10 years before I figured out that the best candidates aren't the best interviewers. In over 1,000



**Figure 1.3** How to increase hiring accuracy.

interviews, I have found no correlation between interviewing skills and job competency. The best candidates aren't generally the best interviewers, and the best interviewers aren't generally the best candidates. Most interviewing methods measure interviewing skills, not job competency. This is a huge problem and can be minimized by controlling our biases and the impact of first impressions. This is only a partial solution. Interviewers need to proactively take responsibility for obtaining complete information about job competency from each candidate. Interviewers need to train candidates to give complete information. If you leave it up to candidates to provide this information on their own, you're measuring interviewing ability, not job competency. We show you how to do it right in this book.

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Interviewers need to proactively take responsibility for obtaining complete information about job competency from each candidate.

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## 16 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

### ■ KEY STEPS TO EFFECTIVE HIRING

Here's the short list of what's needed to get hiring right:

1. Target the best. Create careers, not jobs. Hiring the best is a solution, not a transaction.
2. Be proactive. Hiring requires forward-looking planning. This gives you the time to use all available sourcing options.
3. Clearly understand the performance needs of the job. Define success, not skills.
4. Control the impact of first impressions. Emotional biases are the number one source of hiring errors.
5. Measure job competency, not interviewing skills.

This requires new sourcing and advertising programs, new ways of thinking, changes in writing job descriptions, emotional control, and different interviewing and recruiting techniques. At CJA Executive Search, we've made over 1,500 placements using these techniques in a variety of positions, from staff accountant to division president. It's been our collective experience that when using POWER Hiring, our overall hiring effectiveness has been greater than 95 percent. This is based on fall-outs, or people being terminated during the first year. When mistakes were made, they could always be traced back to someone having short-circuited one of the basic principles of effective hiring. At POWER Hiring, we've trained over 200 different companies since 1990. Those that use the process report similar findings. The conclusion: Good hiring is a system, not an event. To consistently find and hire top people, a company must make the hiring process a core business process, planned and designed around its strategic initiatives.

### ■ FIVE STEPS TO GETTING HIRING RIGHT—AN INTRODUCTION TO POWER HIRING

Five basic themes are always present when a company or manager consistently hires top people. These become the five basic principles of the POWER Hiring methodology.



**P**erformance Profiles

*... if you want to hire superior people, first define superior performance*

**O**bjective Evaluations

*... past performance is a best predictor of future performance*

**W**ide-Ranging Sourcing

*... sourcing is marketing, not advertising*

**E**motional Control

*... measure personality and performance, but measure performance first*

**R**ecruiting Right

*... recruiting is career counseling, not selling. Candidates then sell you.*

The P in POWER stands for **P**erformance Profiles. This is the most important of all of the principles, since it impacts all of the others. I've read over 2,500 different job descriptions. Most of them were no more than lists of skills, duties, responsibilities, and required experiences. At best, they defined basic competency. At worst, they defined the person, not the job. Yet in these same 25 years and over one thousand assignments, no client has ever asked us to find them anything other than a superior candidate. If you want to hire superior people, you first must define superior performance. Traditional job descriptions are not effective for finding, assessing, or hiring top people. Define success instead. This will represent a major step in improving your hiring decisions. Once superior performance is defined, it's much easier to find superior people. If you don't clearly define superior performance, everyone will substitute his or her own perceptions and stereotypes. This is how the hiring process begins to fall apart. Unfortunately, the way most job descriptions are now written precludes you from ever hiring the best.

The O in POWER stands for **O**bjective Evaluation. Once performance expectations are defined, the interviewer must use an objective, performance-based approach to determine if the candidate is both competent and motivated to do the work. This needs to run the gamut from the one-on-one interview to

## 18 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

reference checks, testing, panel interviews, and take-home tests. The interview is only one part of a multistep evaluation process. Despite the need for a comprehensive assessment, we'll show how you can distill the one-on-one interview to four essential questions. With these alone, you'll have 75 percent to 80 percent of what you need to get it right every time.

The W in POWER stands for **W**ide-Ranging Sourcing. The quality of the hiring decision first depends on the quality of the sourcing program. If you're seeing only the bottom third of all possible candidates, that's whom you'll hire, even if you're great at using all the other techniques. On the other hand, if you're seeing only the top 10 percent, you'll eventually hire one of these great people, even if you're the worst interviewer in the company. For most organizations, sourcing falls somewhere between these extremes. As a manager, don't assume that your current sourcing programs are adequate. Be proactive. Stay on top of what's going on. A good multi-tiered sourcing program is a critical component of an effective hiring program, including compelling advertising that offers careers, not just jobs, and a strong employee referral program. Sourcing also must be proactive. Most hiring is needs driven. If you start looking only when you need someone, you've just lost the advantage of time. Desperation is the second most significant cause of hiring mistakes because standards fall. To prevent this you need to start sourcing at least 90 to 120 days before you need the candidate.

The E in POWER represents **E**motional Control. While desperation is the second basic cause of hiring mistakes, it directly impacts the primary cause of hiring errors—the lack of emotional control. More hiring mistakes are made based on emotional reactions and gut feelings. First impressions and affability are unfortunately more important than competency in deciding to bring a candidate back for a second interview. The emotional link between the interviewer and the candidate must be broken to remain objective. We're programmed to make major decisions based on first impressions. If positive, we tend to be less discriminating. If negative, we hold the applicant to a higher standard, or ignore their responses entirely. This double standard is the primary source of most bad hiring decisions.

The R in POWER stands for **R**ecruiting Right. Eventually, you'll meet a candidate you want to hire. Good recruiting skills

then become essential. Recruiting is the process of persuading a candidate to take the job and then closing all of the details. Most managers believe recruiting is the ability to sell or charm a candidate about the merits and terms of the position. This is the least effective form of recruiting. Emotional control is a critical need at this point. Once we meet a great candidate, there is a tendency to start selling. If you oversell, you cheapen the job. That's why good recruiting is more counseling than selling. By creating a compelling career opportunity, the candidate is more likely to sell you, rather than the other way around. Recruiting is an essential aspect of a well-developed hiring program. It's the final piece toward building a great team.

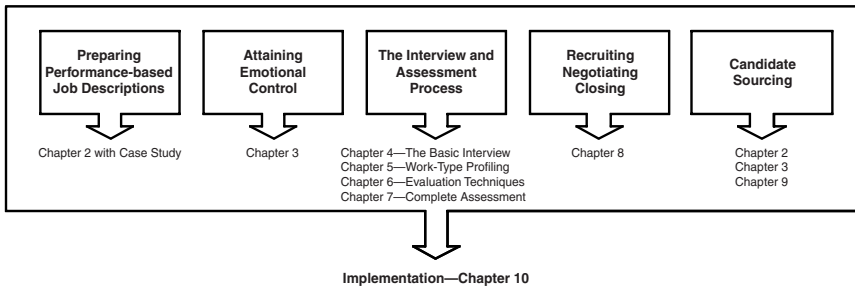
It took 20 years for POWER Hiring to emerge. It started with the desire to find out what it took to make one great hiring decision, then another, and then another. During this time, I've sat between hundreds of hiring managers and a few thousand candidates, listening and observing. Sometimes it took a few months or a few years to learn about a mistake that could have been prevented much sooner. After a while, patterns emerged from all of these hundreds of small mistakes repeated over and over. By modeling the successes and avoiding the failures, we discovered a realistic process that could be documented, learned, applied, and repeated. As you'll discover in these pages, POWER Hiring is practical, natural, and based on common sense. You'll also discover how to hire one great person, over and over again.

## ■ PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER—A ROAD MAP TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

A little about the organization of this book is in order. POWER Hiring involves five separate stages, many conducted concurrently. Some of the processes, like sourcing, take place earlier than others, but you need to know something about the later stages before you can be effective at it. The book is organized with this learning and implementing process in mind, as shown in Figure 1.4.

The hiring process starts by first defining superior performance, which allows you to measure substance, not style. Controlling emotions and understanding the performance needs

## 20 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD



**Figure 1.4** The POWER hiring system overview.

of the job are prerequisites to hiring with your head. Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to these critical subjects and form the foundation of this book. The balance of the book is geared toward implementing POWER Hiring.

The complete interviewing and assessment process is presented in Chapters 4 through 7. The basic performance-based interview is introduced in Chapter 4. This powerful interview is built around four core questions. Once you try them, you'll see your accuracy soar.

The candidate assessment starts in Chapter 5 with the introduction of a new concept, work-type profiling. This categorizes work into its four basic components—technical, managerial, entrepreneurial, and strategic. With it, you can easily compare job needs to a candidate's abilities. This will improve job fit and prevent some of the classic mismatches. Additional evaluation techniques including reference checking, testing, and panel interviews are described in Chapter 6. Collectively, these techniques broaden the effectiveness of the performance-based interview. The candidate assessment is pulled together in Chapter 7, which includes checklists covering all-important points.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with good recruiting and sourcing. Getting the candidate to join the team is critical. We describe how to negotiate and close an offer, and what to do when things go wrong. By the time you get to the sourcing chapter, you'll discover that you've already eliminated 50 percent of your sourcing problems. You'll be able to broaden the candidate pool by defining the performance needs of the job (Chapter 2) and

eliminating your own personal biases (Chapter 3). The sourcing chapter presents a literal grab bag of tips, techniques, and methods you can quickly use to find the top 10 percent.

The last chapter shows how implementing POWER Hiring can create a talent-driven culture. This is based on a 20-step program covering all critical aspects of hiring. The basic program can be implemented in days with a little effort and training.

With the introduction of POWER Hiring, every manager now has a chance to hire great people using the same techniques as the most seasoned hiring pros. POWER Hiring is as much about good management as it is about good hiring. The two are inseparable. You become a better manager in the process of hiring better people. Hiring better people, in turn, makes you a better manager. Creating a performance profile is the first step in hiring great people.

To *Hire with Your Head*, you need to combine emotional control with good fact-finding skills and intuitive decision making. This whole-brain thinking provides the critical balance to match job needs, the interviewer's personality, and the candidate's abilities and interests. This needs to be combined with sourcing. Without enough good candidates, everything else is futile. Once you start meeting strong candidates, good recruiting skills become essential. Recruiting starts at the beginning, not the end. It must be part of an integrated interviewing and assessment process to work effectively. This is the strength of POWER Hiring. It brings all of the critical hiring processes together. While each step is easy to use separately, its effectiveness lies in the integration. Overlook any aspect and the whole process collapses. Do them all and you'll get consistent great hiring results.

#### POWER HIRING HOT TIPS: MAKING HIRING #1

- ✓ There is nothing more important to a manager's personal success than hiring great people. Nothing.
- ✓ Management is easy as long as you clearly know the performance needs of the job and hire great people to do it.

(continued)

## 22 ◀ HIRE WITH YOUR HEAD

*(Continued)*

- ✓ Hiring is too important to leave to chance.
- ✓ Hiring is the only major process in a company that's random. Any other process that's this unreliable would have been redesigned long ago.
- ✓ The key to better hiring decisions—"Break the emotional link between the candidate and interviewer and substitute the job as the dominant selection criteria."
- ✓ Hiring is a whole-brain activity. Collect enough unbiased facts to make an intuitive decision.
- ✓ Measure a candidate's ability to do the job, not get the job. Determine if you like or dislike the candidate after you've determined his or her competence. Substance is more important than style, but it's sometimes hard to tell the difference.
- ✓ Great hiring requires more than just good interviewing skills. POWER Hiring brings everything together into an integrated, systematic core business process.
- ✓ *"Hire Smart, or manage tough."*—Red Scott