

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes



Contents

Recruiting Today.....	2
Recruiting for Well Established Roles is Only Part of Recruiting	3
Recruiting For Well Established Roles and the Evolution of Human Abilities	3
How Do Recruiters Load Recruiting For Well Established Roles for Success?	4
Recruiters Scan Résumés Quickly To Reject Candidates, Not Select Them	5
Recruiters Need to Determine if the Person Behind a Selected Résumé is Real	6
The Core Purpose of Résumé Based Recruiting Interviews.....	6
Final Candidate Interaction with A Hiring Decision Maker	7
Good Enough Recruiting Works for Millions of Well Established Positions	7
Résumé Based Recruiting Do Not Work Well for New and Rapidly Evolving Roles in Innovative and Rapidly Growing Organizations	8

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

Searching for Candidates for New and Rapidly Evolving Roles	8
A Different Kind of Interview	9
Other Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques.....	9
Implications for You - The Hiring Manager and Decision Maker	10
Avoid Making Hiring Mistakes.....	11
The Author – Contacting Him	11

Recruiting Today

If you google “recruiting interviews” as I did, you will get more results than you can cope with. That is a lot of words and videos about recruiting. If you look at the top 10, you will find that they are focused on résumé based recruiting For decades, during the Baby Boomer era, that was ‘good enough’. Then the Internet was born, and alone with it “résumé spam” – hundreds of irrelevant résumés sent in response to job posting at the click of a button. The vendors response key word résumé to job description word matching algorithms. These days they promise that AI will make all the difference. The promises are endless. But they are not based on an underlying root cause understanding of the broad realities of recruiting.

There is an overwhelming amount of advice on what to do as a recruiter or a person looking for a job available on the Internet. But I do not need to follow up on these more than 230,000,000 Google results to know very few of them provide deeper insight into the underlying reasons about recruiting as is practiced today. Even worse, I also know that only a few of these Google links will present you with the process insights that you as a hiring manager need to keep from making damaging [bad hires](#).

Somewhere between 80% and 90% of the recruiting which happens today is for well established roles in well established organizations. The recruiting that remains is for new or evolving roles in either well established or new / growing organizations. The actual split is hard to figure out, because very few of all of these Internet pieces on recruiting make this distinction.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

Recruiting for Well Established Roles is Only Part of Recruiting

The recruiting process that works for well established roles DOES NOT work for new or evolving roles. Yet the vast majority of recruiting gurus write, talk, and give advice as if recruiting is a mono-bloc practice.

Most of this advice focuses on the recruiting interview – which questions to ask, and how to ask them. But systematic research has shown that there is very little correlation between happens in a recruiting interview and what the hired person eventually does on the job. So why do the vast majority of us, in the vast majority of organizations, continue to recruit in this way?

When people do the same thing over and over again, even when research suggests that it may not be effective at its apparent goals, I believe that one or both of two things is true.

One, the behavior meets important human needs that are “below the surface” – it satisfies secondary benefits.

Or two, the behavior lines up with human abilities, many of which evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, and are hard wired as instinctive capabilities in our brains.

In the case of recruiting for well established positions, I see the second as more true than the first.

Recruiting For Well Established Roles and the Evolution of Human Abilities

MIT professor Alex (Sandy) Pentland makes clear in his book “Honest Signals” that human beings evolved to make rapid decisions about the nature of another person who they just met (should I flee or should I fight). We developed fast, pre-conscious ways of making this evaluation, based on seeing and acting on a wide variety of body language and verbal cues, that are hard wired into our brains.

(See <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4439706-honest-signals>)

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

These instinctive, fast, first impression people evaluating abilities evolved in life situations that had little to do with the people processes essential to our modern business world – like making good recruiting decisions. These abilities met our needs when we were a hunter-gather species. We have been so for the vast majority of our existence as Homo Sapiens. But today few of us live by hunting-gathering. However, we still employ the people evaluating abilities we developed as a hunter-gather species on a day-to-day basis when we make business decisions about people.

Evolved instinctive decision making abilities are really tough to move beyond. They dominate the way we decide all kinds of things they did not evolve for – including recruiting. Recruiting is not an activity that occurs on a savannah or in a forest. It is not a meeting between two strangers which has immediate “Will I survive the next few minutes” consequences. Yet these instinctive abilities are still ones that business people use when they make business decisions about people, as Pentland so very clearly shows.

Much of the advice that lies behind those millions of Internet postings I found above assume that **résumé review based face to face interviewing** is the best way to do recruiting. Our instinctive ability to make a fast judgment about certain aspects of another person does not work against us in recruiting for well established positions. The fact that we like “like or dislike”, at least on a first level, another person in the first few seconds we meet is one of the things that hiring managers use to pick a final candidate out of a short list group presented to them by a recruiter. But first, the recruiter has to come up with a credible short list of candidates.

How Do Recruiters Load Recruiting For Well Established Roles for Success?

Why does résumé based face to face recruiting work for so for the majority of recruiters faces with this task? After, all millions of people get added to candidate short lists using these processes every year. The vast majority of hires are from such short lists. They work out. Very few people are let go or fired during their probation period.

When a recruiter is reviewing a candidate to add to a short list for a well-established position in a well established organizations, that candidate’s past work experience really counts. Having done work that is very close to the work that will be done in the new well established position is a good predictor of future on-the-job performance. So recruiters

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

focus on finding a number of short list candidates who have done work that is the same, or almost the same, as the work that needs be done. It may look and feel like check list recruiting to the candidates. But it is a proven success tactic for recruiters filling well established positions.

If a solid, stable over time, accurate job description exists for a job, then that is highly likely that the job is a well established one in a well established organization. Job descriptions are an important tool for recruiters. Job descriptions are a tool that defines, stabilizes and establishes positions in the work flow of highly structured organizations.

Recruiters who do a good job at recruiting for well established positions are great at matching the words on the résumés they review to the words in the job descriptions with which they work. It does not take them very long to do so.

Recruiters Scan Résumés Quickly To Reject Candidates, Not Select Them

In fact, most recruiters can scan a candidate's résumé in a few seconds to determine that this needed match DOES NOT EXIST. This explains why an experienced recruiter spends an average of six seconds scanning a résumé, another research finding. That is just enough time to do the word based matching that tells the recruiter that the person behind the résumé in all likelihood DOES NOT have experience which matches the recruiter's understanding of the job description.

There is no negative consequence for being wrong about résumé scans. False negatives simply do not matter.

- A false negative occurs when the person does have work experience which closely aligns with the future performance requirements of the well established position.
- A false positive may occur because the résumé does a poor job of describing the person's experience. It may happen because the words on the résumé do a good job, but are simply not the ones that this recruiter is using to determine that a match exists. Or it may be the result of poor recruiter judgment, when the recruiter decides there is no such match when in fact there clearly is one. It really does not matter.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

The person behind the résumé never makes it to the next step – a résumé based face to face interview with the recruiter. The recruiter's job is present a creditable list of candidates for a well-established position, not the best candidates from all of the candidates who may happen to be a good match. Wide spread recruiting efficiency metrics like average time to recruit and average costs to recruit strongly reinforce this reality.

Computer based résumé words to job description extracted key word matching algorithms simply automate the matching process for well established positions have recruiters have been using for decades. The fact that such algorithms exist and are used to weed through the hundreds of résumés submitted on Internet based job boards simply point out the fact that word based matching is a core element in almost all recruiting processes, automated or human.

Recruiters Need to Determine if the Person Behind a Selected Résumé is Real

Recruiters spend more time with the résumés of people who pass their word based résumé to job description scanning. For these people, recruiters add a résumé based face-to-face (or these day, over the phone, or via Skype or Zoom) interview. Recruiters need that personal contact to determine that the person is in fact presentable to the hiring manager. Résumés are not people. The words on résumés these days are often produced by professional résumé writers. Sometimes, people even lie on résumés. So recruiters cannot simply rely on résumé scanning to produce a creditable short list set of candidates.

The Core Purpose of Résumé Based Recruiting Interviews

Recruiters use these résumé based person to person interviews to investigate candidate creditability, not to determine if the candidate can do the job. In many cases, the recruiter simply does not have the job experience or career background to make such a determination in any case. This does not matter, much as a recruiter might believe that she or he does. The résumé to job description matching process has already taken good enough job of making such an evaluation. For well established positions, past experience in similar jobs is an effective predictor of potential future performance on-the-job.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

Instead, the recruiter uses the person to person interview to do two things.

First, the recruiter makes sure that the candidate does in fact have the experience described on the résumé.

Second, the recruiter makes sure that the person is presentable in terms of this organization's culture. Résumé based face to face interviewing is well suited to do both of these tasks.

Final Candidate Interaction with A Hiring Decision Maker

Once the recruiter has a number of presentable candidates, the recruiter passes these candidates on to the hiring manager. The hiring manager's "I will know the right candidate when we meet" dynamic takes over. Many hiring managers make this judgment using their instinctive "meet a stranger" people evaluation abilities. Few have moved beyond that. It takes special training and personal awareness to get beyond our instinctive abilities.

The hiring manager is bound to like at least one of the candidates more than the others. There is an excellent chance that this person will perform at the average level required in this well established position. Making a job offer to the most liked individual has little risk of being a hiring mistake, with all its potentially negative consequences.

Good Enough Recruiting Works for Millions of Well Established Positions

When recruiting for well established roles in well established organizations, résumé to job description work matching and résumé based person to person interviews do a good enough job. Herbert Simon won a Nobel Prize for making clear to the world that "satisficing" (= the combination of the words "satisfy" and "suffice", in other words, "good enough") dominates much of business practice.

(See <http://www.economist.com/node/13350892>).

That is why these hiring practices continue to be so wide spread, and pervade the advice about hiring that you are likely to find on the Internet.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

Résumé Based Recruiting Do Not Work Well for New and Rapidly Evolving Roles in Innovative and Rapidly Growing Organizations

But, if you are a hiring manager, or if you are professional recruiter, you need to know that the recruiting processes used for hiring for well established positions ARE NOT the best way to hire talented people for new, evolving roles. Performance based hiring practices are required in such recruiting assignments

Although résumé review is often still the first step, recruiters need to look for different things in such scans. Evidence of rapid advancement, high levels of performance, personal flexibility, and the ability to create structure and process where none existed before are far better cues that this candidate has the potential for future on-the-job performance in such positions. Scanning for such cues is very different than résumé word to job description word scanning.

Searching for Candidates for New and Rapidly Evolving Roles

The recruiters who handle this type of recruiting well do not rely on job descriptions. They best act as consultants to the hiring manager. They help the hiring manager prepare a performance profile that describes successful performance at various points in the first year the new hire is on-the-job. These profiles answer the classic what, when, where, how and why questions. They describe the metrics – what the hiring manager will see and hear – that are evidence of an incumbent's successful performance in this new, evolving role.

In the best of all possible worlds, such performance profiles are written documents. When they are, they allow the hiring manager to engage in the performance contracting with the new hire that shapes that person's work in the first year. But these performance profiles do not need to be written. All that is essential is that the recruiter works with the hiring manager to a clear, shared picture of future successful performance in this role.

Based on such target performance profiles, the recruiter scans résumés, searching for potential candidates. The recruiter may also reach out and network, or use a tool like Linked In as a research tool to find possible candidates. Such individuals will need to be contacted, and sold on the opportunity, especially if they are already engaged in a satisfying role.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

The Performance Challenge Recruiting Process™ goes a step further. The recruiter uses a structured process to produce a shared view of the role among all the key players who are involved in it. That process is fully described in this e-book.

“Recruiting Realities: Avoiding Bad Hires”

Note: If you want to know about the Performance Challenge Recruiting Process™, click on the e-book title below to get your PDF download of it.

[“Recruiting Realities: Avoiding Bad Hires”](#)

Or click on the [Performance Challenge Recruiter YouTube channel](#) to get to the videos which describe it.)

A Different Kind of Interview

The person to person interviewing of potential candidates by the recruiter for new, evolving roles is also very different. Past performance in a similar well established position is NOT a good predictor of future performance in such new, evolving roles. Evidence of the ability to shape, to structure, to persuade, to convince, to define for others, and to deal with high levels of uncertainty are much better predictors.

Evaluating such abilities in a potential candidate takes résumé reading and interviewing depth and experience. Past industry experience and past career history may play a part, especially if the new, evolving role is one in an established organization under pressure or in crisis. But such past experience is often far less important than evidence of the ability to proactively shape the future in past roles which had the same, or somewhat less, scope and scale as the role for which the candidate is being considered. In fact, the most creditable of these candidates are often the ones who will need some increase in scale and scope in order to challenge them.

Other Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques

Role plays, simulated job situations, in box and other such techniques are far better at predicting the future on-the-job performance of these candidates. Shaping such techniques so that they are relevant and invigorating to the potential candidate requires

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

creativity on the part of the recruiter. Structuring them so that they are immediately connected to the level of the role - professional to executive to C-suit – requires insight and past experience on the part of the recruiter. Aligning results of such candidate evaluation techniques with presentation of short list candidates to the hiring manager also has its own communication challenges.

Peer based interviewing, when well structured, and well debriefed, can also make a contribution in these new, evolving recruitments. Structuring such peer groups requires facilitation and group management skills on the part of the recruiter.

(See my Linked In post [“The Toughest Recruiting Interview I Have Ever Conducted”](#) for a recruiting situation which uses some of these techniques.)

Psychometrics may also play a part in some types of new, evolving role recruiting. The psychometrics developed for sales recruiting, for instance, have a clear history of strongly predicting some aspects of future sales performance. The recruiters who consider using psychometrics, or hiring professionals to conduct them, need special training that makes clear the strengths and the limitations of psychometrics in all recruiting. There are no general purpose psychometric tests which are useful in all new, evolving, or even well established, role recruiting, despite some of the marketing claims that you may find on the Internet.

Implications for You - The Hiring Manager and Decision Maker

As a hiring manager, you need to make solid decisions about the recruiting process you use and ensure that it is the right one for your hiring situation. You need to work with recruiters who understand your needs. Chances are that you are hiring for a well established role. The “good enough” process described above will meet your needs in this case.

But if you are hiring for a new or evolving role, or you need top flight performance in a well established role because your organization is in crisis or under pressure, then these recruiting process will not do the job. You need to work with a recruiter, in-house or out-of-house, who can guide you through performance based recruiting processes. You will benefit from an e-learning program which clarifies the differences between the two types of recruiting.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works? Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques To Avoid Hiring Mistakes

“Talent: How Do I Find What I Need? –
an e-learning program for hiring decision makers
<https://www.ktkhkw.com/courses/How-Do-I-Find-The-Talent-I-Need>

Avoid Making Hiring Mistakes

Hiring mistakes hurt. They demoralize all of the people involved – the hiring manager, the person who was hired, and the people who have to work with the person who has been hired. When you make a hiring mistake for a new or evolving role, or for a well established role requiring top flight performance in an organization in crisis, you might also seriously damage the future of the organization.

Do not make hiring mistakes.

Understand the difference between recruiting for well established roles and recruiting for new, evolving roles. Insist that your recruiters are skilled in the recruiting process that works for your hiring situation, whatever it might be.

Doing these two things will keep you from hurting yourself, the people who work for and with you, the person you hire, all of whom suffer if you do make a hiring mistake.

The Author – Contacting Him

Roelf Woldring has hired, and directed the hiring, of thousands of professionals in his career for both well established and new, evolving roles. He has made more than one hiring mistake, and paid the price for doing so. He hopes that he as at least learned some things that will be useful to you from his past hiring mistakes and successes.

Roelf is the founder of **Know That | Know How | Know Why** – www.ktkhkw.com – which delivers soft skill e-learning to working professionals.

Roelf is a former strategic organizational transformation and change executive and consultant. Earlier in his career, he was a turnaround CIO and information technology executive.

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

**Why Résumé Based Recruiting Works?
Moving to Performance Challenge Recruiting Techniques
To Avoid Hiring Mistakes**

Roelf has been fascinated by human behavior in the work place all his life. His post graduate studies are in the psychology of the work place.

Roelf is passionate about e-learning, its profound social implications, its huge potential contribution to the youth of the developing world, and its future as a personal development tool for working professionals. He e-writes on Linked In on e-learning and talent management.

You can find out more about Roelf's recruiting experience
in [this table on the website.](#))

**Intrigued – reach out and
(or have a staff member)
arrange a Zoom meeting.**

[Book a Zoom discovery meeting with Roelf](#)

Roelf Woldring
The Performance Challenge Recruiter
Roelf@performance-challenge-recruiter.com
www.performance-challenge-recruiter.com

People perform on-the-job, not résumés!

Roelf's Guiding Mantras

People perform on the job, **not résumés!**

People perform on the job,
not performance appraisals!

“**TALENT** trumps everything.
No matter **how great your vision,**
or **how powerful your technology,**
without **the talented people**
needed to execute,
YOU HAVE NOTHING.”

[Book a Zoom discovery meeting with Roelf](#)

Roelf Woldring
The Performance Challenge Recruiter
Roelf@performance-challenge-recruiter.com
www.performance-challenge-recruiter.com

People perform on-the-job, **not résumés!**