

# Evaluating your candidates further with other tools

**W**hen evaluating candidates in order to determine which ones are the top talent that you want on your team, you will need to use some additional methods before making the final decision. The truth of the matter is that the more testing you do the better assured you can be of your decision before ever making it.

## EVALUATING ALL COMMUNICATION FROM THE CANDIDATE

Every piece of communication that you receive from the candidate should be evaluated and highlighted, red flagged, and otherwise marked to ensure that they are included in the evaluation process. This includes the resume, cover letters, emails, the Skills Survey, and any other correspondence.

Any communication received from a candidate should be looked at as another piece in a puzzle that presents a little clearer piece of the picture. From a resume, for instance, you can get a glimpse of the level of professionalism



the candidate has, as well as whether or not they have an eye for detail. Always keep an extra unmarked copy of all of the candidate's communications so that team members can get copies without your notes on them.

As your team approaches the time to make a selection, you will have a file full of information on each candidate you are seriously considering. Just prior to the decision meeting, you should take another look at the candidate's material and run it through the Candidate's Scorecard one more time to ensure an up-to-date grading of the candidate. This will help to ensure that you are looking at the candidate through eyes that have all the facts – and not on any subjective opinion.

Another thing that you want to include in the candidate's evaluation is their "social networking" presence – their online reputation. This will enable you to see another side of the candidate that may not be visible in the communications they have already had with you. Since a candidate is going to post personal material about himself online, it is worth it to you to learn what you can about the candidate to determine if his or her character is something you want in this role. It will also help you see other dimensions of their character that you would not otherwise see – such as how funky, weird, or how extreme the candidate can be. It is likely that it will let you see more about whom and what they really are

more than a carefully crafted and sanitized resume could provide.

The additional information that you will receive about the candidate from sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, etc., means that you need to print out everything you find about the candidate. Then, mark it with your red pen and highlighters the same as you did the other documents. If you find red flags, then this is the time to inform your team members – not after the candidate has started the job.

## IDENTIFY THE BEST

Benchmarking enables you to have an ideal that you will compare others to in order to determine if your candidate is of the same quality. In this case it refers to getting an individual with an ideal resume to fit a specific job description. At the Ropella Group, clients often say, "If you can find us a person with a background just like Bob's, he's exactly what we are looking for."

The next step is for us to get Bob's resume from our client and use it as a benchmark with which to compare other candidates to. When a candidate does not come up to the benchmark standard – figure out from your client why not. Have your client point out specific information that indicates why the candidate does not measure up or what more information would be needed to make a fuller assessment.

If there is a benchmark resume involved, then use it along with your Smart Candidate Scorecard to compare resumes and sort them into A, B, and C piles. Remember that a resume does not need to scream out "Hire me!" in order to be considered as an A candidate. Upon first glance, you may realize that if you knew more about a person, that they could easily become an A candidate.

Create a separate pile of resumes where more information is needed that might let you move them into the A or B level. You can then use the Skills Survey, a cover letter, or a phone interview, to learn



**Patrick B. Ropella**  
Chairman & CEO, Ropella

Tel: (850) 983-4777

Web: [www.Ropella.com](http://www.Ropella.com)

Patrick Ropella is Chairman & CEO of the Ropella Group an international Executive Search, Leadership Transformation, and Corporate Consulting firm. He authored the book and web-based training program, *The Right Hire – Mastering the Art of SMART Talent Management*, and has seen his content featured in many trade magazines, business publications, and industry journals. Patrick regularly speaks at webinars, career fairs, and conferences.

more. Do not assume anything. Also, if red flags pop up on candidates that look potentially good, you do not want to reject them outright without giving them a chance to explain.

Another mistake you do not want to make is to assume that, if information about a particular skill is not present on the resume, they do not have it. If the individual otherwise looks good, then at least do a quick phone screen and ask the candidate to prepare a Skills Survey to answer any questions.

As you use the Skills Survey and the Candidate Scorecard, you need to continue to make notes and adjust your evaluation. When it comes time to make a final decision, these data will enable you to make wise decisions in your hiring choices.

### SETTING A STANDARD AND USING IT AS PART OF THE HIRING PROCESS

Many companies have certain behavioral or performance standards that are part of the organizational culture. All employees need to agree to those standards after they are hired. Quint Studer, in his book, *Hardwiring Excellence: Purpose, Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference*, recommends using your company's standards as part of the screening process. You can do this by having potential candidates read and sign these standards before they enter into the interview stage. The document needs to say that they understand and will agree to abide by those standards.

– To download the sample SMART Performance Standards Agreement Card for Prestige Medical Center in complete form, please go to The Right Hire ResourcePage at [www.ropella.com/therighthire](http://www.ropella.com/therighthire). By using this process, it informs prospective employees that you only want those who will agree to the values of the company, and are willing to align themselves with those values.

Having them read the document and signing it lets them see exactly what you expect in terms of behavior and performance, and also lets you see if they are willing to agree to it. The same time that you give a candidate your standards of behavior, you want to also let them know that they can ask any questions they want about it. This will encourage them to discuss issues that they might have, and it may even cause them to

back away and not agree – ending their candidate position. It is better to have them back out now, rather than find out after they are hired that they won't live up to it. Make it known to the candidate when the standards document is handed to them that it does not mean that you are going to hire them. Rather, it is another step you are going to use in aligning expectations to ensure that you make the right hire and the right fit. Many professional groups use performance standards as part of the daily regimen of the way they conduct their business. This would include professional licensing associations such as the legal and medical professions. In those groups, candidates must agree in advance to the required ethical and behavioral standards, and it also applies to groups of police and other law enforcement agents, to nurses, attorneys, and many others. There are also state agencies that have standards as well, and each association also has in place a way to address complaints and remove those who do not conform to the standards. Churches and civic organizations also have doctrinal statements and charters that must be followed – and agreed to before becoming a member.

Regardless of what you want to call them, whether they are your performance standards, your core beliefs, or your guiding principles, they serve to establish a baseline for company expectations. Koch Industries, which is one of the world's largest privately held companies, has built their core values into what they call their Market-Based Management (MBM) Guiding Principles. Their principles are one of the best examples I have seen of how a company can drive its core values into a management system. Charles Koch says: "The need for talent is obvious. However, as Thomas Jefferson noted, virtue is at least as important as talent. To be a truly successful organization, one that excels and stands the test of time, virtue as well as talent must be emphasized." He adds, "For a free society to function, beneficial norms of behavior, such as honesty, respect for others and their property, making a contribution, being responsible, and taking initiative must be widely practiced."

### Here is a sample of one hospital's standards of behavior. Aspen Medical Group Behavior Standards

- I am focused on our patients/customers/clients.
- In every interaction, I acknowledge the patient, introduce myself, provide explanations, set expectations, and thank them.
- I protect their personal privacy and information privacy.
- I make every effort to address their needs and wants while promoting a positive Aspen experience.
- I show them that I care by expressing concern, empathy, and taking initiative to solve their problems.
- I conduct myself professionally.
- I take responsibility for my work and follow through with all tasks.
- I show respect by actively listening, showing empathy, and being considerate.
- I support and recognize positive qualities of Aspen providers and staff.
- I come to work on time.
- I follow the Aspen dress code.
- I wear my name badge at all times while working.
- I hold in confidence all private information and interactions.
- I recognize and reward the contributions of others.
- I treat everyone with respect.
- I respect diversity.
- I value the contributions of all members of the team regardless of job, role, or title.
- I recognize and encourage positive behaviors.
- I passionately pursue excellent performance.
- I bring enthusiasm to the work I do.
- I show that I enjoy my work.
- I perform my job with excellence.
- I seek out learning opportunities to enhance my skills & ability to serve.
- I share my knowledge with others.
- I follow all policies and procedures.
- I recognize that change for improvement is necessary.
- I ask for help if a concern is beyond my knowledge, ability, or scope of authority.
- I accept ownership of the organization's success.
- I work towards Aspen's financial success.

- I use resources (time, personnel, equipment) wisely.
- I am a positive member of my team.
- I take personal responsibility for Aspen's successful fulfillment of its mission and goals.
- I stay current with Aspen communication.
- I promote cooperation between departments/sites.
- I take the initiative in maintaining the cleanliness and safety of Aspen's facilities.
- I communicate effectively.
- I listen openly and acknowledge others' ideas and concerns.
- I smile, make eye contact, greet others, and speak in ways that are easily understood and show concern and interest.
- I recognize that body language and tone of voice are as important as verbal communication.
- I remain calm and caring when dealing with pressure situations.

The benefit of having performance standards for your organization is that the organizations that are performing the highest have them. If your organization has some kind of standards, then you want to make sure that they are well integrated throughout your company and hiring process. Every candidate should be made aware of them and then sign the statement to indicate their compliance.