

eBook

Hiring for values



Developed in partnership

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**GROWTH
BY DESIGN
TALENT**

Overview

Hiring for values is essential for building a successful and sustainable company culture. It ensures that you're not only hiring candidates that meet the qualifications for a role, but that there is a shared understanding of how employees are expected to work together towards a shared goal. Having a clear definition of what your values are, and then assessing for it in a structured way, will set up your company and your future hire for success.

In this guide, we'll outline the steps of defining your values and how to translate them into an effective assessment, using the structured interviewing framework.

What are values vs culture?

Values can be seen as “the rules of engagement” for a company. Some are present on the individual level and others are woven into the fabric of an organisation as a whole.

Culture is made up of more than just people: it reflects the product, mission, values, physical environment and company history.

Your values feed into and help define your larger company culture.



Why does this matter?

Promotes engagement and productivity

Employees who value the same things, and are inspired by your company's mission, are more likely to achieve shared goals and [be more productive](#).

Supports DEI

Defining and assessing for values can mitigate personal biases. Rather than leaning on hiring people that you simply like, which can drive homogeneity, it's best to have a rubric of behaviours to assess values against.

Showcases culture

Highlighting your values shows candidates what behaviours are valued in the company and is a window into how employees work together. It can be a positive differentiator for why someone might join one company over another.



5 steps to hiring for values



1. Define your values

Clearly define what your organisation's values are and make sure they align with your mission, vision and goals.

Your values should be specific, measurable, actionable and communicated to all employees. Use this template to drive this process and gain alignment with members of your leadership team.

2. Translate your values into competencies

Core values are often memorable phrases but may be interpreted differently. For example: if "Be an owner" is a core value, some might define it as "takes initiative and a bias for action" while others see it as "a team player and takes responsibility". By conjugating values into core competencies, it creates shared understanding that sets up a consistent way to assess. Make sure your competencies are not role specific – these are competencies that you want everyone at your company to embody.

3. Create assessment rubrics

Write standardised questions that map to your new values competencies to understand how candidates have demonstrated these behaviours in the past. These should be questions (behavioural, situational or skills tests) that could be asked of any candidate, regardless of role, to assess them on this value.

4. Weave into your hiring process

Ensure your new values are woven into each stage of your hiring process. Showcase them on your company website and job descriptions to engage and attract prospective candidates. Incorporate your values into your intake process and template, while identifying who will assess for each competency during the assessment process. Design your applicant tracking system so that interviewers can leave feedback that map to your values. Finally, set up training sessions for interviewers on how to assess values competencies effectively.

5. Iterate and improve

Your competencies should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure they reflect the changing needs of your company. Review interview feedback to see the effectiveness of your interview questions and adjust those as needed.



Exercise

Designing competencies around culture and values

One of the most important values at my company is:

The person that exemplifies this value the most is:

The behaviours that they exhibit that make them a great example are:

The headline (i.e. focus area) that summarises these behaviours is:

What are the competencies that ladder up to those values?

Below we've included an example of what it looks like to build competencies that map to your values, with corresponding interview questions for the company value "Be an owner". Reference this once you've defined your values and use it to translate them into competencies and interview questions.

Value	Competencies	Description	Interview question
Be an owner	Resourceful	Adapts quickly to changing environments while managing resources and asking questions to fill in the gaps	Tell me about a time you had to start something from scratch
	Innovative	Generates ideas that are new, different and better while encouraging others to look at problems in a new way	Tell me about a time you came up with a new idea to solve an old problem

Conclusion

The best company cultures are buoyed by a set of core values that are clearly defined and effectively embedded into the entire employee experience. When bringing on new team members, it is a worthwhile investment to consistently assess candidates for your core values in a structured manner, so you have the confidence that they will be an additive piece to your company and culture.



Greenhouse is the hiring operating system for people-first companies. Our industry-leading software brings a structured hiring approach to any company's process, helping to promote more fair and equitable hiring practices and more data-driven decisions so companies can continuously get better at hiring.

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