

Welcome to Bridge the Gap Contributor Wednesday. I'm Chris Heinz. I'm back. That must mean it's the fourth Wednesday of the month. And each month on the fourth Wednesday, we'll be discussing recruitment, team building, and mindset. In today's episode, I want to discuss effective ways to create an interview process that can result in an actual hire. As I mentioned in last month's episode on effective storytelling to attract talent, hiring at any level is a challenge in today's market. One of the biggest headlines in the hiring and recruitment space is the "great resignation is here." Dun dun dun. Now I've been recruiting for almost 25 years now, and I can truly say that this is one of the most culture shifting times I have ever seen. Some people are burnt out. Others wanna change a pace. Others want to try something completely new. They want a new challenge.

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Some professionals are leaving the senior living industry while others are looking towards it because of the ability to have a greater meaning in what they do. The fact is for the last hundred plus years, people have left one job for another. People have decided they want to work less. People have decided they want to do something different. They want to work from somewhere else. The technical lingo for that now is work from X or work from anywhere. These challenges are not new. We have directly seen them in our recruiting searches that we've completed for our client. And we've heard about them from the very same companies on the searches that they've done on their own. Just like I shared last month, there are several things that we can do to improve the likelihood that you can fill the openings you have. The first way to make this improvement is to create better stories. If you missed my episode and discussion and suggested techniques on this subject, go back and listen to the January episode. The second way you can improve your chances is to improve your interviewing process. That, my friends is our subject today. Let's dive in, shall we?

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I want start out with an important statement. If your process that you are currently using is getting the results that you want and you are getting the people hired for the roles that you have in a timely fashion. Congratulations! You could simply skip forward to the mindset moment so that you could still get something from this episode. But if you are like almost every other company in our industry, heck in every industry and you you're struggling to hire, or if you lose the candidates that you had during the process at some point, there are improvements that can be made. I need to ask a favor of you though. Can you forever remove the sentence, "this is how we've always done it." Or can you remove the line "if lose 'em we lose 'em." We need to be willing to change while without sacrificing the critical elements of our decision making so that we could be successful in today's market.

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As I mentioned in my introduction, in the first episode in January, I lead a recruiting team that specializes in identifying qualifying and delivering the best available senior living talent for community and corporate leadership across the country. So we have seen good, even great. We've seen some not so great. We've seen some terrible and bordering on horrendous interviewing processes during our time. Here are a couple real world examples of hiring processes that we have seen from some of the companies that we've worked with. A candidate is identified. Now that can be Indeed, Google, LinkedIn jobs, an employee referral, a recruitment firm, your own internal referrals. It could be from anywhere, but simply a candidate's identified. The candidate needs to apply into the applicant portal. Candidate needs to take an assessment. Candidate will have a phone screen with HR, candidate will have a Zoom interview with regional VP, candidate will have to meet the team at the community.

Candidate will have a Zoom with someone in the same position as they are, that peer interview candidate will fly to the headquarters for several interviews. Candidate will talk with the investor. A decision will be made if they're going to make an offer. All of these steps take 30 to 45 days. Here's another real world process. Candidate is identified, candidate has a Zoom interview with the RVP. Candidate has a team interview at the community. Candidate interviews with SVP. Candidate interviews with company president, offer is made. All of these steps take two weeks. One last example for you. Candidate is identified and instantly sent assessment. Candidate has a zoom interview with the RVP or VP. Candidate has a panel interview with the regional team. Candidate interviews with president and EVP via Zoom. Candidate has an interview with the investors. Offer is made. All of those steps are completed within eight days.

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The point to me sharing these examples is to illustrate that even if you have multiple steps, there is one magic ingredient that makes the biggest difference, speed, and process. Now let's break down each of the elements to create an effective interview process.

First, the interview steps. Now how many interviews are truly needed for you to be able to decide if the prospective candidate is the right one for the job? Two, 3, 5, 12? That is your record in our company, 12 interviews. In my experience, one is too few. If I were a candidate and after just one interview, I was offered the job, I might get spooked. Are they simply trying to find a body and I qualify because I have one? I realize there are some positions that one interview is enough, but when we're discussing leadership positions, one just won't cut it. The best way to determine how many steps are actually needed in the process is to determine who really, truly needs to be involved to make the decision.

If this is a community leadership position, we typically see our companies have them interview with N a D, an RVP or VP, and then the SVP or president. Now the magic can happen when you combine some of those interview steps together, this will ensure that it is done in a timely fashion. Is there any reason that the RVP and SVP can't interview together? If you're willing to improve your interviewing process and you are objective in your thought process, there is no normal reason you cannot complete the interview process in seven to 10 days.

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Yes. You heard me right. Seven to 10 days. Once you start going beyond that, you will run the risk of losing the talent you want. I completely understand. There are times when this just can't happen. Somebody is sick, the candidate has a vacation in the process, but if you make the majority of your interviewing processes completed from identification to offer within 10 days, max, you will land more candidates than you will lose. And you can still keep the integrity of your decision making. It is one thing to have an effective process. It's another thing though, to explain this process to your perspective candidates. The clearer the process that will be completed in a timely fashion, the more likely the candidate will stay engaged. If they know that the interview process is seven to 10 days, it is more likely they will hang in there.

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When we work with our clients, we work together to define an effective process. And we explain to the hiring managers that we're going to share this process with the talent so that they know what to expect. This is particularly helpful with passive candidates. Those that are not actively looking for a job on the job boards. Second, let's talk about assessments. Now, these things come in all shapes and sizes, from a 15 minute personality or cultural fit assessment completed online, to a situational based questionnaire that can illustrate how they would handle certain situations, all the way to the Grand Poobah, an all day psychological assess with a shrink. I understand that there are real costs associated with these assessments, but I am down on bended knee, pleading with you to please put the assessments upfront or at worse, after the first interview. There is nothing worse than everyone involved getting all excited about an incredible candidate, the candidate themselves be coming excited about joining the team.

And then the final step is the assessment. And it comes back, let's say luke warm, or even bad. All of a sudden now they are a serial killer. The candidate's terrible. They want to know why they wasted all their time, interviewing them and they could not believe that somebody would hire them. They were a good candidate before weren't they? Now I want to cover the legal sides here. I know that nobody listening here will ever, or has ever used an assessment as a decision making tool. It is never going to be a hire, no hire tool. I know that you purely use it as an interview guide. After all, that is what every single, psychological or personality assessment contract will state. There was your legal commercial for the day. Here's a very logical question for you. Have you ever analyzed the retention results recently? Have you analyzed if your retention has improved since you have instituted an assessment into your process? I have had many honest conversations with company execs that can say that the assessment hasn't really improved their retention, just food for thought. Is a time to evaluate?

Next up, the offer. When you have a Kennedy at the final stage of the interview process, the next likely step is the offer, isn't it? Since you know that, and I know that, is there any reason that everything that needs to be done to have that offer discussed and decided on internally by the final interview is not completed? Is there any reason why you don't know what the best offer that can be made before that interview happens? Today's market will not allow you to attempt to make a low ball offer. You're all good people, so I know you wouldn't do that, but there are some companies out there that would. You need to expect that this candidate is entertaining more than one offer. You have one chance to make a big impression, many states, now in fact, and municipalities have an enacted laws prohibit asking what a candidate is currently earning.

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So it's more about what is this candidate worth to you in comparison to what you can budget for? Make the best offer possible. If you do so, it will impress the candidate and you could stand out from the competing offers they may be looking at. It will also let your candidate know that this is the last and best offer, so you can minimize negotiating. Now, when we work with our client companies, we've already had multiple conversations with our candidates about what is needed in terms of compensation and benefits. And we share this with the company leaders so that the right offer is made.

I am back on a bended knee one more time. Heck for this one, I am on both knees. Please, pretty please do not just send an offer letter without it being verbally presented. Because when you verbally present

the offer, you can hear their excitement, or lack thereof. You can uncover any potential concerns, and you could hang up that call with the confidence that this offer is going to be accepted.

If you just send an offer letter, it does none of this. The written offer letter should never take place of a live conversation. It should be the formality part of the process, not the climax. All right, I'm off my bended knees. Let's talk about a couple of elements that can make big differences. The first one, let me ask you a question. Do you expect a candidate to send a thank you note after the interview? Have you passed on a candidate because they didn't? Have you moved a candidate up the rankings or forward in the interview process because they did send one.

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We have seen each of these occur. Early last year, we had two candidates interviewing for vice president of operations positions. They were very close in experience. They had similar pros and cons. They were both seen as culture fits. Both were coached by us to send a professional thank you note. It's always part of the prep work that we do with our talent. One sent a thank you note, the other didn't. Guess who got the job. Now it is shocking to think that something as little as a thank you note costs somebody a \$20,000 pay increase and the opportunity to work with one of the best senior living companies in the country. And was that really the only reason? Of course not, but it was an important opportunity missed. Just last week, we had a candidate interview for an executive director position. The interview went pretty good, not incredible, but decent, but the candidate sent a thank you note explaining their interest and how they felt that they could fit into the position. The VP was impressed enough and they moved them further in the process. In part, because of that little letter.

Let me ask you a second question. If we put so much emphasis on receiving these letters, shouldn't we do the same? After all, this is a two person dance. They are trying to impress you and you need to try to impress them. If you like the candidate, send them a thank you note, follow up after the interview, thanking them for their time, sharing how you believe they could fit into the position and describe the remaining steps in the process. This will surely impress the candidate by doing so. Continuing along this line of trying to woo the candidate, after they have accepted the position, consider sending something to them. Company swag, flowers, a plant, an edible arrangement. It does not need to be something expensive. I simply want to mention this here, and we're gonna go into more details on this along with the rest of the transition period after acceptance, the start date, and the onboarding in a future interview.

But I didn't want to wait a month or two before I mentioned this. So let's bring it all together. Review your current interview process and determine where it can be improved so that it can be completed in a timely fashion. Ideally seven to 10 days. Communicate this process with the candidate, make the best offer you are able to and verbally it throughout the process perform the right dance moves to show your interest. A thank you note is a great step in that dance, and land the candidates that you want to have on your team. These elements are just some of the components that we use with our clients when conducting leadership searches, and they can help you on every search that you work on.

Now, I like to end every episode with a mindset moment. Do you have a growth mindset? The saying goes, "you are either growing or you're dying" But what does a growth mindset mean? Carol Dweck, a

Stanford professor popularized the exploration of this mindset. She showed that a growth mindset means that you truly believe that you are able to develop your talents, as opposed to just having them. This is done through hard work, good strategy, input from others, and that you are willing to learn through failing. I don't believe that we are simply born with talents. I believe that they can be grown. One of the best ways to grow your abilities is by trying new things. And yes, by failing at some of them, I love the story from Sarah Blakely on the subject. Sarah, in case you don't know is the founder of Spans. This is her company that she started with a \$5,000 of in her savings. And recently she sold a majority interest for 1.2 billion.

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She explains that as she was growing up, her father would ask each of the kids at the dinner table, "what did you fail at today?" Because the reality is we can learn so much through failing. As long as we focused on growing through that failure. Don't be afraid of making mistakes. Learn from them, grow from them, grow your mindset. Create the best version of yourself by forever working on having that growth mindset. Start today. Write down two things that you wanna improve in the next two months. For each of those things, write down four elements that you need to do in order to improve. If you don't know how to do one of those elements, ask for help, maybe get a mentor, then work each and every day on getting better at those two things. Be open to the ability to grow, be willing to make mistakes, grow that mindset. That's a rap gang. If you have any questions, comments, complaints, or even conundrums message me on LinkedIn, I'd love to chat with you. Stay tuned next month for the next chapter in our recruiting and mindset adventures. Thanks for listening to this week's BTG Contributor Wednesday, please connect with me [btgvoice.com](http://btgvoice.com).