

Kiss Your Bad Hiring Goodbye

2025 Update

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Intro

Who's this?

Presenting myself for my first e-book, Kiss your Fiat Gob Goodbye, was a bit challenging, as I didn't want to bother people with all the details of my background or make it too personal- somehow, I managed to make it personal in the end.

For this one, I want to try and dive deeper into my professional experience.

Anyway, hi! I'm Sladjana, but since that's too difficult to pronounce, people in the industry call me Thunder. No, it is not connected with my birthname whatsoever. Yes, I've been a Bitcoin-only recruiter for about four years, one of the few in the industry.

Before entering the Bitcoin industry four years ago, I worked in four different fields and gained diverse experience.

My first encounter with hiring was back in 2009. I was an Economics/ Finance first-year student, working as a recruiter and a team lead of five. Around that time, I heard of Bitcoin, but found it too complicated to understand, so I went on, without paying much attention to it. And while I loved my job, I had to quit after a year and focus on my studies.

After getting my Bachelor's in (fiat) finance and being only 23 years old, I wanted to try out other options and have that fun life, so I started working as a flight attendant. By the age of 25, I was promoted to Manager, conducting regular Performance reviews, among other things. As funny as it was, being a flight attendant was not my career goal, and some (not as fun!) life situations pushed me into a third industry: Teaching English as a second language in the Asian market. Bitcoin was still somewhere in the air for me, and at this point, I started learning and understanding it more.

At the time, this English gig was a popular job to do in my area; however, I wanted to implement my previous recruiting/ performance review/ start-up knowledge into it. The company I worked for had just over 30 teachers and was fairly new on the market.

After a few months and countless successful projects of selling courses to large corporations, I presented my idea to my manager and was promoted to Recruiter, Instructor, and Onboarding specialist. Over several years, I hired, trained, and onboarded around 500 teachers worldwide. We scaled and created a successful, gigantic company. I also managed to explore crypto, realized it's stupid, got rid of my portfolio for Bitcoin, and went down the rabbit hole.

However, my entering the Bitcoin space was not intentional, but rather a coincidence and, if you ask me, a destiny.

I was hired in an early-stage start-up, and we started creating processes, manuals, and policies. We went through the hyper-growth and scaled tremendously. I went through 4 promotions, with the latest one being Head of Talent/ Internal Ops Specialist.

To conclude my career, I would say:

- I hired at all levels and departments.
- I scaled start-ups.
- I assisted people with writing their CVs and Cover letters.
- I provided feedback and performance reviews.
- I built processes, developed procedures, and wrote a lot of manuals.
- Head of Talent is just one of the titles I hold, alongside the Talent Partner.
- Long story short, when it comes to hiring, I've seen it all and done it all.

Bitcoin is honest, which this ebook also tends to be.

Bitcoin is perfect, but this ebook probably won't be. I'm sure you will have some questions after reading this guide. I strongly encourage you to reach out on LinkedIn or any other social media with your questions, and I will try to answer them as soon as possible. (Look for the "Contact" section on this website!)

Who's that?

Hello start-up, nice seeing you here!

(Since I'm not as creative as I think I am, I will steal the form from myself and my other e-book, Kiss Your Fiat Job Goodbye, but change the challenges you most likely face.)

Are you piled up with applications that no one has time to review? Or, on the contrary, do you struggle to find any candidates at all, without a single clue on where to look?

That paragraph sounds like a pitch, and I'm not selling you anything. Let's try again.

Do you have any hiring process set in place, or do you schedule calls without any order whatsoever? How often do you end up ghosting people? How often did you lose a good candidate because you were slow and sloppy during the process?

Okay, it still sounds like one of those TV shops from the 90s selling toasters and pillows. One more time, please?

You raised funds recently and need to expand your teams. You know those first several hires are the key to setting your company's culture, and you are afraid to make a mistake. You are looking to grow strong, international, resilient teams, but you are not sure how to do it. You don't know how to tell a true Bitcoiner from a fake one, so you are forcing Cover letters as your main requirement, just to realize that it is not the only requirement you need to look for.

I understand.

This ebook should come to the rescue in everything mentioned above and more.

We will discuss understanding hiring needs, culture, and employer branding. We will talk about the stages of the processes, interview questions, message templates, (free or cheap) tools you could use, job postings, and everything you, as a founder and/or hiring manager, should know. We will pay attention to candidates' experience and how your approach to it may take you a long way.

The struggle you are going through is real, and in the same way, I believe people shouldn't pay to increase their chances of getting a job; I believe early-stage companies should have a helping hand, too.

Together, we can hopefully create a common ground for job seekers and founders to understand each other a bit better.

Part I: Culture

Building a compelling company culture is essential but difficult.

Be supportive of your team. Be proud of them. They are the first people to believe in your company goals and mission- do not forget that. Listen to your team and encourage managers to do the same. Value their ideas and their voices. Some people came to your company after working in corporations where they were nothing but a number - encourage them to speak their minds.

It's 2025, and I don't think we should be talking about flexible working hours and working locations. Let people take the day off when they need it. Respect their privacy, and don't micromanage. Different people celebrate different holidays, so be curious to learn more about it.

Yes, most people are aware of the hectic startup culture. They know they will sometimes work late hours, they will maybe have to leave projects unfinished because the company decided to change direction, and yes, every now and then, an individual will come across, unaware of these things. That's okay. Not everyone is cut out for a startup.

However, the people on your team are there for a reason. Their values are aligned with your company's values. They have the drive, the passion, and the willingness to cope with everything a startup brings to the table.

Having a happy team means they will take pride when talking about where they work. Having a happy team also means more talent wanting to work at your company.

And, overall, is just another good commercial for your product.

Part II: Your Hiring Needs

Hiring pain points

As an early-stage startup, your focus is pulled in a hundred directions: product development, strategy, market fit... and somewhere far down that list, hiring. It seems easy at first, which is probably why it gets deprioritized. But then reality hits: you're struggling to find the right people.

The truth is, hiring can be simple if you take the time to understand your needs and set up the right processes from the beginning.

In the earliest stages, your first hires will likely come from your personal network: friends, family, and former colleagues. That's natural. But once you outgrow that pool and need to bring in "fresh blood," things get more complicated.

Here are just a few of the pain points you're likely to face:

1. How do you even define the role you need?
2. Do you need recruitment tools or software right away?
3. Should you build an in-house hiring function, outsource, or just do it yourself?
4. How do you design an effective application process?
5. What does a structured hiring process even look like?
6. How should you communicate with applicants and candidates?
7. Why do hiring mistakes happen, and how do you avoid repeating them?
8. And finally, what is employer branding, and do you really need to think about it now?

Hiring isn't just about filling seats - it's about laying the foundation for your company's future. The earlier you approach it intentionally, the fewer roadblocks you'll hit when it counts.

Headcount Needs

You'll find countless formulas and strategies online for calculating your hiring needs, from mathematical models to detailed strategic frameworks. But in my experience, those approaches are far more useful in large, stable organizations. For early-stage startups, things move differently.

Your hiring plan will naturally evolve alongside your product roadmap. Someone once told me that one year in a startup feels like four years anywhere else, and I couldn't agree more. The pace, the pivots, and the constant reevaluation of priorities mean that what counts as a long-term goal for a startup, might be a short-term milestone in a traditional company.

With that in mind, try to focus less on rigid headcount planning and more on understanding your company's evolving needs. Start by aligning hiring with your high-level business strategy. Yes, things will change, and that's okay. But ask yourself: what do we want to achieve one year from now, and what kind of team will we need to get there?

Here's an example scenario: You need a Social Media Manager today, but in six months, you'll probably need a full-stack Marketing Manager. Do you hire just for the short-term need? Possibly, but then you risk spending more in the long run: onboarding and offboarding costs, lost time, or even paying two salaries for one team's worth of work. Instead, consider hiring with growth in mind. Look for a Social Media Manager who shows potential and appetite for expanding into a broader marketing role. Lay out a clear growth path, offer mentorship, and plan for a promotion or raise when the time is right. This approach is often more cost-effective, sustainable, and aligned with the long-term vision.

Bottom line: always zoom out. Ask yourself not just what you need today, but what you will need moving forward, and can you build toward that now?

In a startup, every hire counts. Think ahead, and hire for who you'll become, not just who you are.

Tools and software

How do you keep track of your hiring needs? Do you use any tools or software that could help you organize better? Do you even need one? Short answer- yes, you do.

Long answer- yes, you do, but it depends. If you expect to go into a hyper-growth stage any time soon, you may want to think about integrating specialized software for hiring, aka ATS (applicant tracking system).

The market is full of different options, going from only 10 USD per month to large, robust ATS's with a lot of features and a high price. Depending on your hiring needs, you can integrate the perfect one for you within a week or two of signing the agreement.

If your hiring needs are still limited to just a few roles per year, you don't need to spend a lot of money on it. Especially, if there is no internal hiring team set in place, and no one will be using the ATS.

For example, Notion.com can take you a long way. It's simple to use, and it feels like the options there are endless. You can use it for a variety of things, and hiring is just one of them. To learn more about recruiting via Notion, visit [this page](#). They often have discounts for new startups. You can find some on joinsecret.com.

Team or no team?!

When thinking about tools and hiring needs, a common question arises: Should you build an internal hiring team, or not?

As with most things in startups, it depends.

If you're in a hyper-growth phase, building an internal hiring team can be a smart move. Even a small team of a single experienced recruiter can make a huge difference. Just make sure they're a strong cultural fit and that their values align with your company's mission. Recruiting might not look like a critical role from the outside, but it directly shapes your future team and your company's success. Also, keep in mind that finding the right recruiter takes time, so plan ahead.

On the other hand, working with external recruiters can be faster and more flexible. They can step in at any moment, scale up quickly, and help you fill roles efficiently. But don't skip the groundwork: have deep conversations with them about your needs, goals, challenges, and expectations. Alignment is just as crucial here as with internal hires.

Which one is more cost-effective?

Surprisingly, whether you go internal or external, the cost at the end of the year is often similar. It depends on a few key factors:

- Where you're hiring from (location and salary expectations)
- The number of roles you expect to fill
- How do you plan to compensate your internal team (base salary, bonuses, benefits, etc.)

So, it's not just about money, but rather about what works best for your strategy, structure, and speed of growth.

What if you have no hiring team at all?

Doable. In fact, this guide is written with the assumption that you don't have internal or external hiring help, and maybe no plans to bring any on board right now. My goal is to help you do it yourself, at least for now. This gives you a solid foundation, so when the time comes to scale or delegate hiring, you'll know exactly what you're looking for.

To conclude, it all comes down to your hiring strategy, your team's capacity, and how well you understand your needs and pain points. There's no one right answer, just the right answer for you at this moment.

I know this chapter may raise even more questions, but hopefully, it also helps you see the bigger picture more clearly. I'm rooting for the second outcome.

Part III: Job Posting Mastery

Writing an effective job description doesn't look like a complicated job, but maybe you caught yourself looking at the empty file, not knowing where to start. And even after you are done, you have no idea where to post the job to make sure Bitcoiners will see it.

Job Description

Your job post should be simple and concise, with key responsibilities and expectations highlighted.

Separate what you want and need to write into different segments:

1. About the company

Paragraph section

- What does your company do? Why do you do it?
- Share your values and mission
- Refrain from writing a long paragraph. Four or five sentences will be enough

2. About the role

Paragraph section:

- Why do you need this position, what the person would be doing in this role, and what your expectations are.
- Once again, a couple of sentences are better than a long paragraph. It will be easier to read and more engaging.

3. About the requirements

Bullet-points section

- List job requirements, such as years of experience, certain skills, and background
- Be concise

4. About benefits, compensation range, and other perks of working at your company

Bullet-point section

- Don't be scared to share perks and benefits!
- If you are hiring in the US only, please remember that posting a compensation range is a legal requirement in most states.
- If you are hiring globally, please remember that posting a compensation range may not be mandatory, but a common courtesy.
- If your range is different for the US and EMEA locations, for example, don't be afraid to highlight it. We are all aware of the pay differences in different areas of the world. No hard feelings, as the living standards are not the same.

Once you find a template for Job Descriptions you are satisfied with, use it for all job openings. Having consistency in your postings also affects your employer branding.

Job boards and resources

Without further ado, here is the list of the job boards you can use to attract Bitcoiners:

- [Bebitcoiner](#) - no clear data on the plans (free/charged)
- [Bitcoinerjobs.com](#) - there is a free posting available, and there is a paid- posting option. In the paid posting option, your job post will be at the top of the page.
- [Ostrich.work](#) - charges 20.000 sats per job post
- [Bitcoinjobs.com](#) - no clear data on the plans (free/charged)

Currently, there are only a few Bitcoin-only recruiters. Don't hesitate to connect and ask for help. Bitcoin-only talent agencies:

1. [Layer4talent](#)- Martell Fox and I are using our experiences as Talent Leaders to help companies grow their dream teams. You can always reach out to us!

Part IV: The Art of Finding Candidates

If you're not satisfied with the applications you're receiving from your job post, it might be time to take matters into your own hands. Here are a few proactive ways to find the right teammates:

In-House Referrals

One of the most natural and effective ways to grow your team is through internal referrals. Large corporations often have formal referral programs with incentives like bonuses or gift boxes, but in early-stage startups, it's usually more informal.

Don't stress about setting up a full program right away. Simply share your hiring needs with your existing team and ask if they know someone who might be a great fit. That said, keep in mind that a simple gesture of appreciation, like a thank-you note or a small gift, can go a long way when someone refers a successful hire. (Still, you should aim to build an internal referral program at one point!)

Network Referrals

If you're a founder in the Bitcoin space, chances are you already have a community around you. If not, this is your sign to start building one.

Post about your open role across your channels. Share the job link and encourage your team to do the same. Ask your network to help spread the word. This approach can quickly get your opportunity in front of people who are already aligned with your mission.

The only downside? Be ready to receive a flood of DMs, emails, and messages with CVs and cover letters. Set aside time to go through them; your next teammate might be hiding in that inbox.

If That Doesn't Work... Start Sourcing

If referrals don't bring the results you hoped for, it's time to roll up your sleeves and actively source candidates. It may take more time, but it gives you control and precision in targeting the profiles you truly need.

Being proactive in hiring is often what makes the difference between just filling a role and finding someone who genuinely elevates your team. Whether it's tapping into your internal network or reaching out directly, the effort almost always pays off.

Sourcing

Sourcing means focusing on identifying and engaging potential candidates for current (and future) job openings. It is a valuable skill and it does take some time to master it, however, anyone can do it- if they have enough time on their hands. Looking for Bitcoiners with matching skill sets can be especially tricky, so pay close attention to each profile you find! This is something tightly connected with the Talent workers, and what I'm doing here is teaching you how to do our job, but if you have no Hiring team, and you do have some extra free time, you may find this interesting to learn!

What do we expect to achieve when we source?

1. Collect valuable information, such as CVs and work samples
2. Pre-screen candidates' skills to make sure they match the role we would reach them for
3. Build long-term relationships with potential hires

It can be done by using platforms, such as LinkedIn, learning a thing or two about Boolean search strings, or, my personal favorite lately, checking open-source repositories on GitHub and finding contributors, among others.

Sourcing on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a popular business tool. With more than 722 million members and around 310 active users per month, it presents probably the biggest talent pool there is.

To be able to look for people on LinkedIn, you can first go through your network and see if anyone matches the skill set or experience you need. If not, you can use the LinkedIn Recruiter Lite account. The process of getting this account is straightforward, and it costs around 200\$ per month. Once you get your account, you can create the project, for example, "Marketing Manager," and dive into the talent pool. There are several filters you can use, such as Title, Years of experience, Industry, Location, and so on.

The catch? You can only see up to your 3rd degree connections, so make sure your network is broad before setting up an account like this.

Tip: When setting the criteria during your search, try using the word "Bitcoin" in the "Keyword" section.

Boolean search string

This type of sourcing allows you to tailor search results, so your search process is faster and smoother. To learn more about it, please consult this [Indeed](#) webpage.

GitHub

If you are looking for a developer, you may consider using GitHub as your sourcing method. Open-source repositories present a great talent pool!

The catch? You can't just contact people on GitHub. Some people leave their information, such as email or Twitter profile, but some don't - they wish to remain fully anonymous, and contacting those individuals may be impossible.

RecruitIn

[RecruitIn](#) is a powerful tool recruiters like to use. It allows you to search for potential candidates on different platforms, such as LinkedIn, GitHub, StackOverflow, Dribbble, Xing, and X. It is free and simple to use. It is also a good tool if your personal LinkedIn profile doesn't have a large network and, with that, a large Talent pool.

Y Combinator

[Y Combinator](#) thread called "Who wants to be hired" is also an amazing talent pool. Every month, a new thread is created and people can leave their information, such as what role they are looking for or in what industry.

Tip: You don't have to look at the posts one by one. Search the page using keywords and try to find matching profiles!

Bitcoiners- only sourcing

Yes, the [Bitcoinerjobs](#) website has a talent pool! Create your company profile and look for a "Talent pool" section.

Part V: Streamlining the Application Process

Applying for a job should be easy.

But let's be honest - when was the last time you applied for a job yourself? Try to remember the experience:

Did you enjoy answering 78 questions that were already answered in your CV? How long did it take you to write a personalized cover letter for each company, one that thoughtfully explained why you wanted to work there?

Even when the process looks simple on paper, applying for a job takes time, energy, and attention, especially when candidates are putting in the effort to do it right. That's something worth keeping in mind when designing your own hiring process.

I've lost count of how many times I've heard people say they found the perfect role in a company they admired, one they were qualified for, but ended up not applying. Why? Because the application process was frustrating, confusing, or overly complicated.

As a founder or hiring manager, it's tempting to build hurdles into the process to see who "really wants it" or to filter out people who aren't serious. Especially in the Bitcoin space, there's often an unspoken idea that only the most passionate, hardcore Bitcoiners should make it through.

But here's the truth: you can still identify great candidates with a streamlined, respectful, and efficient application process. It's not about removing all barriers, it's about removing the unnecessary ones.

And that starts by treating hiring as a top priority, not an afterthought. Make time to think it through, design it well, and give candidates a smooth experience. Trust me: you won't regret it.

Right now, the Bitcoin hiring market isn't exactly fair to candidates. There's more talent than there are open roles, and yet some companies receive surprisingly few applications. If that's happening to you, it's a signal. You're probably making it too hard to apply.

So ask yourself:

- Is your job post clear and compelling?
- Is your application form asking for too much too soon?
- Are you asking for information that's already on the CV?
- Is the process slow, uncommunicative, or disorganized?

Great candidates don't just want a job; they want to feel respected from the very first interaction. And in a space like Bitcoin, where passion and purpose are driving forces, your hiring experience should reflect the same level of care you expect from your applicants.

The easier you make it for the right people to apply, the better your chances are of building a truly aligned and talented team.

Good application process

A good application process should consist of:

1. Personal information, such as full name and email address
2. CV
3. Cover letter (optional or mandatory)

You could add a question about how they heard of the job opening, but only if you are tracking the data to see which job board works and what is the main source of your talent.

Submitting an easy application like the one mentioned above still usually takes around 30 minutes or more. Do you want to know why? Because Bitcoiners won't send you just another Cover letter. They will take time to write you a good one.

Bad application process

The more you ask people to do during their application, the fewer applicants will end up in your mailbox. So, to define a bad application process, it would be a process with too many questions, free ideas, and work expected, and too many of... everything.

Let's put a few questions here:

1. Are you asking for a CV during the application?

Then why ask for experience details in the application? You need to make hiring your priority if you need a new teammate. Yes, you need to review each application, and no attempt at pre-screening will help you find "the one". On the contrary!

2. Do you have an interview process set in place?

Then, why ask people to write essays about case studies during an application? Asking people to do free work for you before even talking to you is the number one thing to push talent away.

3. Would you spend several hours applying for a company with such an application process?

Remember: a simple process equals a lot of talent. A complicated process equals only a few applications.

I know you are too busy and a lot is going on; you have no time to review each application, so you try to screen right away. It won't work, and it will hurt your employer's branding. Keep it simple.

Application review

Before scheduling any calls, you need to develop criteria for resume and application review, and then set up criteria for the initial interview stage. Knowing exactly what you are looking for will cut the time to hire and minimize the risk of making wrong hires.

To help you create a good screening technique, here are some questions you can answer beforehand, and yes, it can be in this particular order:

- Do you care about the time zone your hire is in?
- What skills are mandatory?
- What skills are just extra points?
- Do you care about their start-up experience?
- Do you care about their contributions in space?
- Are you willing to hire someone with less experience and skills but eager to prove themselves?

Read those CVs carefully. If you see an interesting profile but no mentions of start-up experience, Google the companies they listed in their resumes. People don't always tend to highlight these things.

Read the Cover letters even more carefully. Those two combined will give you a clear understanding of each profile. Unsure about something? Look for their socials and learn more about each person you find interesting before scheduling a call. Be sure they learned all they could about your organization, so show the same respect.

Please, don't forget to send rejection emails to those applicants who aren't a good fit.

Part VI: Navigating the Interview Process

Before you write a job description or build your application process, there's one critical step that often gets overlooked: you need to have your interview process in place.

Although we didn't start this eBook with interviews, purely for the sake of logical flow in discussing hiring, it's worth emphasizing that the interview process should be the first thing you establish.

While different roles may require specific additions, like technical interviews or deep dive calls, the core process should remain consistent: clear, simple, and transparent.

Too many interview rounds create a long, exhausting experience for both sides. If you're interviewing the same candidate over two months with no clear structure, expect confusion on your end and a lack of interest on theirs. On the flip side, rushing through one or two quick calls just to fill a role urgently can lead to poor hiring decisions that cost you more in the long run.

The key is finding the right balance, thorough but efficient. It's not always easy, but with a bit of planning and intention, it's absolutely achievable.

Creating an interview process

There is no one-size-fits-all interview process that suits every company or role. Each organization has different resources dedicated to hiring, and every role comes with its own unique requirements. Because of this, your interview process should be tailored to fit your specific needs.

That said, I will provide a foundational interview process framework that you can customize and adapt as needed.

1. Screening- informal call (30 to 45 minutes)

This initial call can be conducted by the hiring manager or any other team member with relevant experience, whether that's an in-house recruiter, an external recruiter, or a colleague familiar with hiring.

The primary goal of this conversation is to establish a connection and get to know each other. You want to assess if the candidate would be a good cultural fit, understand their working style, and learn about their general interests. While it's important to touch on their background and experience, don't dive too deep: just enough to confirm they have the capability to do the job. The main focus should be on cultural fit, so ask thoughtful questions and listen carefully.

I won't provide a specific list of cultural questions here because it's important that you tailor them to what matters most to your team and company. But here's a helpful tip: people tend to excel at what they enjoy doing, so feel free to ask about their professional likes and dislikes.

Before the call:

Prepare a list of questions you want to ask—it can be as extensive as you like. Consider including a question about their Bitcoin journey or story. This often sparks enthusiasm and gives insight into their values and alignment with your company's mission.

From your list, select a few mandatory questions that you will ask every candidate without exception. These core questions will help you compare candidates fairly and speed up your decision-making process.

At the start of the call:

Introduce yourself and provide an overview of the role and the company. Outline the flow of the conversation by saying something like, "I have some questions for you, but I also want to leave time for you to ask me any questions." This sets clear expectations and shows good time management on your part.

During the conversation:

Take notes on anything that stands out: a green flag, a red flag, or an interesting skill or insight.

A final tip:

Always leave enough time for the candidate to ask questions. Remember, interviewing is a two-way street. While you want to learn about your applicants, they also want to learn about you, the company, and the team. The ultimate goal is to build a genuine, mutual connection, not just a one-sided impression.

2. Technical Interview / Deep dive call (45 minutes to an hour)

Would you rather do a traditional technical assessment, like a whiteboard session or a take-home case study?

I encourage you to reconsider this!

I vote for a call! Bear in mind that these Bitcoiners probably have their regular jobs, and most likely are involved with other Bitcoin projects voluntarily, so giving them more free work, in the name of testing their skills, will not show how passionate they are. They are passionate. We all know it.

What questions should you ask? Exactly what they will need to do on the job!

Who is going to ask them? Whoever possesses the skills within your organization. Great opportunity for other team members to meet the candidate! Yes, a hiring manager can be on this call (and should!), but feel free to bring other people this person would work with!

As for the candidates who are not developers, try creating a list of the problems you are facing or potential ideas you want to bring to life. You could send the topic that will be covered during the call to the candidate via email, so they can prepare in advance.

The goal of this interviewing stage is to establish that your candidate possesses all the needed skills to do the job. You want to test their abilities, but also their thinking direction. Remember, sometimes it is not about the “correct answer” but rather the way they approach challenges.

“Small talk” question idea:

What other things did you do that are not mentioned in your resume?

You will be surprised by the number of skills and experiences any individual brings to the table, but they decided to keep it out of the resume, for any reason. Maybe the CV would be too long or they didn’t think it was necessary to write about it.

Once again, make sure to leave enough time for a candidate to ask you questions. Listen to these questions carefully, not only could those separate great professionals and talent from the average one, but it is also a learning curve on your job description skills!

3. Meet the leadership/team/CEO/whoever (30 minutes)

This interview stage is highly flexible and should be tailored to fit your organization’s specific needs. You can rename it, adjust the format, or vary the duration of the call, though around 30 minutes is typically sufficient to cover key topics effectively.

For technical roles like developers, this stage presents a valuable opportunity for candidates to connect with senior leadership, such as your CTO or department heads. More broadly, use this phase to introduce top candidates to the leadership team or key stakeholders relevant to the role. This helps both sides assess cultural fit, alignment with company vision, and team dynamics on a deeper level.

While earlier stages may involve meeting multiple team members or screening calls, this part of the process should be reserved for your strongest candidates - those who have demonstrated the skills, experience, and values you’re seeking. By this point, you should be prepared to move toward a final hiring decision, ensuring that this stage provides the clarity and confidence needed to make the right choice.

Ultimately, this phase serves as the final opportunity to solidify your evaluation, address any remaining questions, and foster a meaningful connection between the candidate and your organization before extending an offer.

4. Salary negotiation call (30 minutes)

This stage should be led by the person in your organization who has the authority to discuss compensation.

While I strongly encourage all companies to maintain transparency around pay, it's common to work within a salary range. This is the moment to have an open conversation with your prospective hire about their level, expectations, and what your company can offer in terms of salary and benefits.

Notes and scorecards

When we talk about notes and scorecards, I believe notes are mandatory, whereas scorecards could be avoided if you aren't sure how to use them.

Interview notes:

Write everything down.

Max the Bitcoiner is in the process? Okay, here are the notes from his first, second, and third call. These are the red flags I noticed about Max. This is what I love about his experience. Max said something I found confusing, he said this —, next interviewer, please dive deeper into it.

Keeping track of notes will:

1. Help you make better hiring decisions
2. Help you understand what you are looking for
3. Help you remember everything from the process
4. Most importantly, it helps you understand what went wrong and why, in case it was a bad hiring decision. It presents a massive learning curve you don't want to miss.

Scorecards:

Scorecards can add value to your hiring process, but only if set up correctly.

If you have one interviewer using a one to five stars system, and then another one using a one to ten stars system, scorecards are nothing but a waste of time. Also, if you don't know what those stars refer to, they are useless.

So, if you want to apply a scorecard system, ensure your team knows exactly what they need to focus on. Example:

1. Is this person a good cultural fit?
2. Is this person a good professional fit?

Add questions as you see fit and decide on the scoring system (a one to five, or a one to ten, whatever works for you). Test and see if you find any value in it. If not, stop using it and focus on notes only.

Remember: Your notes and scorecards must be safe and secure, available only for those involved in the hiring process, respectful, and kept in professional language. Not under any circumstances should these notes be leaked publicly. Yes, it is polite to inform your candidates that you will be taking notes.

Decision-making

In an early-stage startup, the decision-making process can often drag on. You might interview six or seven candidates, find them all to be good matches, and then struggle to decide who to move forward with. This confusion can lead to procrastination - you tell yourself you'll review everything "in the next few days," only to realize a week or two later that no review happened, and you're back at square one.

To avoid this, establish a clear decision-making rule. Give yourself and your team a firm deadline: 24 to 48 hours to make a final call while impressions are still fresh. Use your notes and scorecards as helpful reminders during this period.

Implementing this system will not only streamline your decision-making but also shorten the overall hiring timeline. While it's important to take the necessary time to find the right hire, if you're uncertain about a candidate, it's better to move them forward so others can weigh in, rather than letting the process stall.

Setting a clear timeframe for decisions will:

- Improve the hiring process as a whole
- Make the workflow smoother
- Help keep the entire team aligned and accountable
- Reduce the risk of making a poor hiring choice
- Enhance the candidate's experience by keeping them engaged and informed
- Small steps can lead to big outcomes!

Communication

You may have a few email templates created. Or all of them. Or none, but you would rather write emails to your candidates as you go. Any scenario is fine, as long as you keep the communication going.

Do you let people know they are not the right fit after they apply and you review the application?

Do you send rejection emails?

How do you communicate regarding scheduling?

How do you inform people about being pushed forward in the interview process?

How do you reject people from the interview process?

Job seekers in the Bitcoin space are not happy (they are angry, okay?!) for being ghosted, and/or ignored, and for not having any information about the status of their applications. They are right. We are all passionate about the space and what we do, and people deserve to know if they will be considered for the role or not.

Let's say you have no email templates created. Here is the list of the most important ones, you can create in less than 30 minutes:

1. Application rejection email: send it to people who applied, and you don't want to start the interview process. This can be a generic template, used for open positions you have. It is better to have a generic rejection than to ghost people.
2. Application accepted email + first call scheduling: send it to people who passed the initial screening, and start scheduling for the first call.
3. Interview process scheduling email: send it to people when they successfully pass an interview stage and are going to the next one. You can keep this one simple and use it for all stages of the interview process.
4. Rejection during an interview process: send it to people you have already talked to, but don't think should continue with the interview process.

Bonus points: Create a template for any kind of deep dive/ technical interviews you have. You can create as many variations here as you need. Don't sweat, you don't need to create all of these at once, but rather write them as you open new roles.

These templates, as small details as they seem, will have a massive impact on a candidate's experience. The way you communicate with people can make you or break you in terms of getting more talent interested in working at your organization.

Offer and Negotiation

The Offer and negotiation stage is critical in the hiring process. You may lose a perfect hire because you weren't prepared. If you are uncomfortable with leading these conversations, ask another team member with more experience to do it. Before you even post a job online, do your research. How do you wish to pay people? Will equity be included? Will their location play a part in their comp package?

Use this stage in an interview process to have an open and transparent conversation. Listen to your candidates. Don't hesitate to ask them what their financial goals are and what they are comfortable with before crafting an offer.

If you are hiring globally, you may be confused about what your offer should look like. Luckily, there are many tools online that could help you with establishing the pay range for each role. Some of those tools are [Pave](#) and [Salary.com](#), however, feel free to dive deeper and find the tool that suits your needs best.

Tip: I know many candidates will hate me for saying this, but you don't want to reach this stage with only one candidate. Because if they reject your offer, you have to start all over again. Rather have your top 2 candidates, but first talk to your top one, then if something goes south, you still have another candidate to talk to and make a move.

Part VII: Onboarding Excellence

You made a hire! Yay - great job! You're excited and can't wait to welcome your new teammate to the organization. The hiring process is over, right? Actually, no, it's not.

Onboarding is the final, and arguably most important, step, and it's far more than just paperwork. It's about truly integrating your new team member into the company: making them feel respected, connected, prepared, and supported. Studies show that 70% of employees who experience strong onboarding describe their job as "the best possible."

When done well, effective onboarding delivers a range of powerful benefits, including:

- Increased productivity
- Reduced turnover
- Higher employee engagement
- Greater job satisfaction
- A stronger company culture
- An enhanced reputation
- A solid employer brand
- And yes, ultimately, higher revenue

Designing a robust onboarding program might feel overwhelming right now, and the good news is, you don't have to build it all at once. It's a process you can develop gradually as your organization and team grow.

Now, some of you might be thinking, "Bitcoiners should already be excited to join a Bitcoin-only company, why bother putting in extra effort?" Yes, Bitcoiners are often genuinely thrilled to be part of the space, but everyone still needs to feel supported and welcomed.

Keep reading, there are a few simple, effective steps you can take to ensure your new hire starts on the right foot.

Before the start date:

- Send an email any day, between the signed offer and the start date, just to share again your excitement about them joining your organization. It's so nice and it will get your new hire pumped!
- Finish the email setup, different permissions, communication channels, and whatever you need to ensure this person has on day one.

On day one:

- The manager should schedule a one-on-one call
- The Manager should also schedule a team call to introduce a newcomer to the rest of the team
- Share any information *you* would want to know on your first day of the new job

First week:

- Encourage as many one-on-one calls with different teammates as possible
- Provide constant support and answers to questions
- Set up expectations

Setting up expectations

Within the first week, the team lead or manager should schedule a call with the new hire, typically lasting an hour or more, to review the original job description in detail. Go through it together, one bullet point at a time, and set clear expectations.

Encourage your new teammate to take the lead during this conversation and share their insights as an expert in the field. This is a valuable opportunity for them to explain how they believe certain requirements should be approached or what resources they might need to achieve specific goals.

Make sure to document these expectations. Once you and your new hire are aligned, you can confidently set your team up for success!

This discussion also serves as a strong foundation for developing a 30-60-90 day plan, if you're ready to implement a more structured onboarding system. If not, simply having this alignment will work just fine.

The 30-60-90 Day Plan

After setting expectations together, you can create a simple template outlining what both you and your new teammate expect to accomplish in the first three months.

Note: These plans will vary depending on the role, employee level, and company goals, so be prepared to tailor them accordingly. A typical breakdown might look like this:

First Month:

- Set clear expectations (as discussed above)
- Focus on learning—expect your new hire to absorb as much as possible about the product, company goals, organizational structure, policies, and procedures
- Identify and address any urgent priorities that need immediate attention

Second Month:

- Encourage your new hire to start taking ownership of projects and responsibilities
- Avoid putting excessive pressure; maintain open communication about priorities and expectations

Third Month:

- Your new hire should be fully capable of owning their role and responsibilities independently
- They should have a deep understanding of the company's long-term mission and strategic goals
- With this approach, you create a clear roadmap that supports your new teammate's growth while keeping everyone aligned on what success looks like at each stage.

Part VIII: Hiring mistakes and how to learn from them

The hiring process is something you continuously improve. Just like your organization, your hiring efforts evolve over time, reducing the risk of making a wrong hire, though it will never be completely eliminated.

As a young startup, you have a lot on your plate and need help as soon as possible. Yet, your team is likely too busy with existing responsibilities to dedicate enough attention to hiring. This creates a never-ending cycle: rushing to fill positions quickly or dragging out the process for months to avoid mistakes; either way, it can lead to costly errors. Finding the right balance is challenging, but you learn and adapt as you go.

Hiring mistakes are not only expensive but also time-consuming, and they can negatively impact your team's morale and productivity.

If you've made a hiring mistake and aren't sure where it went wrong, it's crucial to revisit the beginning of the process:

- Revisit the CV and Cover Letter: Look again with fresh eyes. Do you now notice any red flags that were missed before?
- Review Notes and Scorecards: Check if interviewers took notes or completed scorecards after each call. If they did, study them carefully. If not, encourage your team to start documenting their impressions moving forward, but first, ask if they recall any relevant details.
- Hold a Hiring Team Debrief: Organize a 30- to 45-minute call with everyone involved in the hiring process. Discuss openly what might have gone wrong. This conversation should focus on learning and improvement, not blame or finger-pointing.
- Assess Your Processes: Reflect on what could have been done differently. Were there important questions missing? Was the evaluation thorough enough?
- Conduct Exit Interviews: If you've received a resignation, schedule an exit interview to understand why the employee is leaving. Dig deeper into what went wrong, document the feedback, and use those insights to refine your hiring and onboarding processes.

By taking these steps, you turn mistakes into valuable learning opportunities that will help you make better hiring decisions in the future.

Part IX: Conclusion

Employer Branding & Candidate's Experience Recap

Being an early-stage startup isn't easy; there's a lot to juggle. Often, hiring isn't seen as a potential risk to your brand, but it's important to remember that applications and interviews are usually the first real and personal interaction Bitcoiners have with your company.

Complicated, lengthy hiring processes and ghosting candidates can seriously damage your employer brand over time. So, think ahead about the impression you want to leave on potential hires. Our community is tight-knit, and word of mouth travels fast; candidates rely heavily on others' shared experiences.

A candidate's journey begins with your job posting, continues through the application process, and truly takes shape during interviews. How you communicate, the time you take to make decisions, and how consistently you manage the number of interview rounds all play a crucial role in your ability to attract top talent.

The candidate experience directly impacts the quality and quantity of talent you can access: the worse the experience, the fewer qualified candidates you'll attract.

Employer branding isn't built overnight. Through this guide, I hope you gain the tools and insights needed to create a strong employer brand and become an employer of choice in the Bitcoin space.

Hiring Process Recap

Hiring Should Be Part of Your Business Strategy

- Understand your company's needs and goals to minimize unnecessary pivots.
- Use free or affordable tools to stay organized throughout the hiring process.
- Craft job posts that are clear, concise, and easy to read.
- Keep the application process straightforward to encourage more candidates to apply.
- Develop objective screening criteria to reduce bias and clearly define what you're looking for.
- Don't hesitate to take matters into your own hands and source talent when needed.
- Design the interview process alongside your job description to ensure alignment.
- Prepare a standardized list of questions for initial calls to maintain consistency.
- Establish decision-making rules to prevent prolonged hiring timelines.
- Create email templates for candidate communication to save time and maintain professionalism.
- Invest effort into onboarding new team members to set them up for success.
- Understand that hiring mistakes are part of the journey, as long as you learn from them.

Throughout this guide, I've posed many questions without providing all the answers - this was intentional.

Hiring isn't inherently difficult, but it becomes challenging if you're unclear about your organization's direction or what you want to achieve.

I hope that this guide has given you a solid starting point to develop a robust hiring process and helped clarify some common uncertainties.

Credits and shoutouts

Having ideas is great, but working alone is not.

This is a special “Thank you” note to:

- Marce, for doing her PR and Marketing magic, and for being an awesome friend.
- Doe, for creating my perfect landing page and website, for fulfilling our wishes and demands, without complaints, and trust me, we can be a pain.
- Tanel, for designing, re-designing, and perfecting our ideas, while he quietly judged the number of messages we could send per minute in the group chat.
- Last, but not least, Martell Fox, for her support and advice during this project.

None of this would have been possible if it weren't for the amazing, talented people to helped me bring this to you.

Thank you for reading through to the end, everyone. See you out there!

Stay humble, stack sats.

Thunder!