Kiss Your Bad Hiring Goodbye

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 three years, one of the few in the industry.

Before entering the Bitcoin space three years ago, I worked in four different industries and gained diverse experience.

My first encounter with hiring was back in 2009. I was an Economy/ 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 was just above 30 teachers and 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 3 promotions, with the latest one being Head of Talent.

To conclude my career, I would say:
- I hired 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 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 several first 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.

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 2024 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 them.

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 carved 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.

Your Hiring Needs

Hiring pain points

As an early-stage startup, you have a lot to think about- products, strategies, and market fit, however, I can bet that hiring is last on that list because it looks easy. Yet somehow, you still can't easily hire anyone. Hiring is simple, if you understand your needs, and set up your processes right away. The first people on your team will most likely be people you already know, regardless if those are your friends, family, or former colleagues. However, when you need to find "fresh blood" and actually start hiring, the troubles start.

Your pain points could be:
1. How to unveil the mystery of what role you need?
2. Do you need tools and software?
3. Do you need an in-house team or an external team, or you can do it yourself?
4. How to set up the application process?
5. How to set up the hiring process?
6. How to communicate with applicants and candidates?
7. Why do you make hiring mistakes and how to learn from them?
8. What is employer branding and do you need one of those?

Headcount Needs

You can find formulas and strategies online regarding how to calculate your hiring needs. From mathematical calculations to strategic ones, however, my personal opinion is that those work only in large corporations. For an early-stage startup, your hiring plan will naturally pivot and change directions along with your product roadmap. Someone told me that a year of working in a startup is like four years working in any other company, and I couldn't agree more. With that being said, your long-term goals are short-term goals for corporations.

What you want to achieve in the next year or two, can easily be calculated as a long(er)-term goal.

So, try understanding your company's needs first. Look at the high-level business strategy. Yes, you may pivot from time to time, and that's okay, however, try thinking about what you want to achieve as a company one year from now. If you need a Social Media Manager right now, but in six months you think you'll need a full-stack Marketing Manager, why wouldn't you hire one right away? Too expensive at the moment? Maybe, but it is more expensive to hire one now, then fire that person, and look for another one with more skills. Or, it is even more expensive to pay two different salaries in six months, in the same department, when you only need one individual.

Solution: hire a Social Media Manager ready to grow their skills into a full stack, and offer a promotion and a raise when the timing is right.

Try to look at the bigger picture. What you need at the moment vs. what you will need in the (near) future.

Tools and software

How do you keep track of your hiring needs? Do you use any tool 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?!

Speaking of tools and hiring needs, you probably also wonder if you should create a hiring team in your organization or not.

Once again, it depends. For hyper-growth, having an internal team is a great idea. It can be only one or two-person team max, consisting of experienced recruiters. Make sure your recruiter(s) are fully culturally fit and their values are aligned with your organization's. The job they will have to do is essential even though it doesn't look like it, so you want to make sure you are on the same page. Keep in mind that finding a good recruiter can also take some time, so organize accordingly.

The external hiring team, on the other hand, can jump in and help at any moment, so it could seem like a better idea naturally. However, you must talk to your external recruiters about your needs, ideas, challenges, and pain points, establish all details in advance, and ensure you are on the same page as well.

What makes more sense, compensation-wise?
From this perspective, having an internal team or using external help, can cost around the same at the end of the year.

Once again, it depends: on the locations you want to hire from, the number of roles you expect to have during the year, and how you would pay your inhouse team- base + bonuses, and other details, but in a nutshell, it will cost around the same.

No team at all?
Doable. I'm writing this guide with the idea that you do not have any internal or external help, nor do you have plans on creating one or seeking help elsewhere. My goal here is to teach you how to do it yourself but bear in mind that in the long run, it is not the best-case scenario. So, I will teach you how to do it yourself, just so you can have a strong start, and time to decide how you want to handle hiring in the future.

To conclude this chapter, it all comes down to your strategy, and your organization understanding its needs and pain points. There are a lot of variables here and I understand this chapter may confuse you even more or open your eyes. I hope for the second option.

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 of 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 you need this position, what the person would be doing in this role, and what your expectations are.
- Once again, a couple of sentences is 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 compensation range may not be mandatory, but 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 with us on any platform and to reach out.
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!
2. Bitcointalent.co- There are several options listed on their website, so you can choose what works best for you or, you can reach out to Andy Thompson directly.

The Art of Finding Candidates

If you are not happy with the applications you receive from your job post, you may want to consider taking matters into your own hands. Here are different ways you could look for new teammates.

In-house referrals

A very popular, and natural way of getting new teammates is asking your in-house team for referrals. Large corporations mostly have a system in place for employees referring new hires, such as gift boxes or incentives. Startups usually don't, so don't stress about it- share your hiring needs with your team and ask if they know anyone who would be a good match. However, keep in mind that at some point in the future, you may want to say "Thank you" to your team member for referring a new hire to you. A gift box of goodies is a nice touch!

Network referrals

If you are a founder in the Bitcoin space, your network is probably already established. If it's not- what are you waiting for?!

Share the news with your community that you have a role opening and leave the link for the application. Encourage your team to do the same. Ask your network to spread the news!

Downside? You will probably end up having dozens of private messages from interested parties with their CVs and cover letters, and you should dedicate a certain amount of time to review it all - your next new hire may be just there!

If, by any chance, no referrals were provided and your network did not deliver good results, it is time to roll up your sleeves and do sourcing!

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 string, 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 big, 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, Dribble, 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 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, Bitcoinerjobs website has a talent pool! Create your company profile and look for a "Talent pool" section.

Streamlining the Application Process

Applying for a job should be an easy process.

Take a step back and try to remember the last time you applied for a job. Did you want to answer 78 questions about your experience that are already listed in your CV? How much time did you spend writing a cover letter for each company you applied for? I'm talking about a tailored Cover letter, with a detailed explanation of why you want to work there. So, even an easy process takes a lot of time, if you want to do it right. Keep that in mind when creating an application process.

The number of times I've heard that someone found a great role, in a great company, they filled all the requirements but still didn't apply, is massive. Why? Because of a messed up application process!

While I understand you want to see who *really* wants to work at your company and who the true Bitcoiner is, remember, you can still see it with a simple application and a simple hiring process. You just need to think of hiring as your top priority and make time for it. You won't regret it.

The Bitcoin hiring market isn't fair towards candidates at the moment. There is more talent on the market than jobs, and if you receive only a few applications per job, you are doing something wrong.

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 what 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 of 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 you 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 the 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.

Navigating the Interview Process

Before writing a job description, or creating an application process, you need to have the interview process set in place. It is not the first thing we talked about in this ebook, simply for the sake of having a flow when we discuss hiring, however, the interview process should be the first thing you establish.

While some roles require adding a few variations, such as technical assessments or case studies, your processes should be more or less the same: simple and transparent.

Too many interviews can lead to a long, dreadful process, and interviewing the same person for two months back and forth will end up with confusion from your end, and no more interest from the candidate's end. Having just a call or two, and rushing the interview process due to an emergency need to fill the role, can end up in making a wrong hiring decision from your end. Finding that fine balance is challenging, but not impossible.

Creating an interview process

There is no universal interview process that can work for each company and each role. Every organization has a different number of people dedicated to hiring, and also, every role is specific, so these interview processes should be tailored according to your needs. However, I will try to provide you with the foundation of the interview process that you can adjust.

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

This call can be done by a hiring manager or any other team member. It can be an in-house recruiter, external recruiter, or another team member with the hiring experience. The goal of this call is to establish a connection and get to know each other. You should be able to determine if the person would be a good cultural fit, what the working style is, and what the general interests are. Yes, you should tackle the background and experience but not in too much detail- just enough to establish that the person could do the job. You want to ask mostly cultural questions and listen very carefully.

I will not be providing you with the list of the cultural questions I ask or I think are important, simply for the sake of letting you be creative and coming up with what's important to you. But, a hint: People are usually good at what they like to do, so feel free to ask questions about what they like/dislike doing, professionally of course.

Before the call: Write down the list of questions you want to ask. It can be a long list. Why not include a question about their Bitcoin story? Bitcoiners will be excited to talk about it, and you'll get a sense of their journey and a cultural match with what your company wants to achieve.

From your long list of questions, pick several mandatory ones you will ask *each* individual, with no exceptions. Those questions will help you compare experiences and cultural fits. It will do wonders for your decision-making time.

Start the call by introducing yourself, providing information, and expectations of the role, as well as details on the company. Share the flow of the call: "I have some questions for you, but I also want to make sure we have enough time for you to ask me any questions." This way, you both know to keep an eye on the clock and show off your time management skills.

During the conversation, write down the notes of anything you think is important. It can be a green flag, a red flag, or an interesting skill.

Tip: Don't forget to leave enough time for the candidate to ask you questions. Remember, interviewing is a two-way street. You want to get to know your applicants, but they also want to get to know you, the company, and the team. The ultimate goal is to create a mutual connection, rather than one-way liking.

2. Interview with the hiring manager (45 minutes to an hour)

If a hiring manager conducted the informal call, then this call would be a great opportunity for other team members to meet the candidate!
(If there are no other team members, the hiring manager can conduct this call as well, but then you may want to change the timeline: Informal call could be 30 minutes long, instead of 45, and this call could be 45 minutes long, instead of an hour).

This call should be more oriented toward skills. This is your chance to dive deeper into the relevant experience and discuss in detail all role requirements. At this stage, you expect your candidate to know about the company and the culture. Focus your questions around the experience in the CV, but also go beyond that.

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. In this round of interviewing, you will most likely be answering questions about the team, the scope of work, or details not mentioned in the job posting. Listen to these questions carefully, not only could those separate great professionals and talent from the average one, but only is a learning curve on your job description skills!

3. Technical assessment/ Case study (1 hour)

The most debated stage at all early-stage startups is definitely this one!
Should it be a call? Should it be a take-home assignment? What should we test? Who is going to test it?
Okay, take a deep breath, let's try to answer these questions.

Call or a take-home? I vote for a call! Bear in mind, that these Bitcoiners probably have fiat jobs, and most likely are involved with other Bitcoin projects voluntarily, so giving them more free work, to resolve your challenges and problems during a hiring process, will not show how passionate they are. They are passionate. We all know it. Make it a call.

What should you test? Exactly what they will need to do on the job!
Who is going to test it? Whoever possesses the skills within your organization. Don't have such a person? Seek external help!

If you are testing developers but don't have (enough) technical personnel, seek external help. There are many companies out there whose product is to test developer's skills. Yes, it cost some money. But it's still cheaper than hiring wrongly.

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 your candidate possesses all the needed skills to do the job. You want to test their abilities but also a thinking direction. Remember, sometimes is not about the "correct answer" but rather the way they approach challenges.

This call can also be a good opportunity to bring more stakeholders to the call, so they get to meet the candidate.

And, I know we said it too many times, but let's repeat: leave enough time for a candidate to ask you questions. Maybe they will be confused by a certain challenge you are facing. Maybe they need extra clarification regarding the job expectations.

4. Technical interview/Case study interview (30 minutes)

This interview stage can be adjusted however it suits your organization. It can be renamed, duration of the call can also vary, but 30 minutes should be just about enough, however you decide to design the call.

If you have a third-party testing developer's skills, you may want to have this call and follow up with the candidate after testing, commenting on the results, following up with further clarification, or answering any confusion. If your non-technical candidate had a case study call already, with a positive outcome, and an Executive member or any other team member for that fact, wants to meet the potential hire, you can also use this stage.

By this interview stage, you should be left with your top picks, and you should be ready to make a hiring decision soon.

5. Salary negotiation call (30 minutes)

This stage should be conducted by whoever has the authority in your organization to talk about the compensation!
While I strongly encourage all companies to be transparent regarding the pay, you will most likely use a range, so this stage is where you discuss with your (soon-to-be hire) what level they are, and what you can offer salary and benefits-wise.

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 these 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.

Decision-making

In an early-stage startup, the decision-making process can take a long time. You may have talked to six or seven candidates, and you think all are a good match, so you don't know who you should push forward. Confusion sometimes makes you leave things as they are, so you can "review" in the upcoming days, only to realize, a week or two later, that you did not review it, and you go back to square one.

Try coming up with the "decision-making rule"- give yourself, and the team, the time frame in which they must come up with the final call. Make it 24 or 48 hours, while the impressions are still "fresh". The notes and scorecards will be there as a reminder as well.

Not only your decision-making system will be better, but your overall hiring process won't be as long either. Yes, you need some time to find a perfect hire, but if you are unsure about a certain individual, it's better to push them forward and have others talk to the same person, rather than just leave it as it is.

Setting up a time frame for deciding on a certain profile, will:

- Improve the hiring process overall
- Make your process a bit smoother
- Make your process easier to follow for the rest of the team
- Decrease the chances of making a wrong hire
- Increase the candidate's experience.

Small steps with big outcomes!

Communication

You may have a few email templates created. Or all of them. Or none, but you 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, aka, 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 already talked to, but don't think should continue with the interview process.

Bonus points: Create a template for any kind of test stage you have, such as technical assessment or case studies. 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.

For example, you don't need to create a Case study call email template for a Sales position, if you are not hiring for one at the moment. Once you have such an opening, and establish what the case study will be, take a step back and write an email template. Save it for future use and feel free to adjust it for other roles if needed.

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: Be smart. I know many candidates will disagree and 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 your second favorite candidate to talk to and make a move.

Onboarding Excellence

You made a hire! YAY! Good job! You are excited and can't wait to welcome your new teammate to your organization. The hiring process is done, right? Wrong! It is not.
Onboarding is the final part, but don't get too relaxed, it is the last test you need to pass.
It is way more than just the paperwork. It is about integrating your new mates into the organization, making them feel respected, connected, prepared, and supported. According to some statistics, 70% of people who went through a good onboarding experience, claim their job is "best possible".

If done right, some of the benefits a good onboarding brings are:
- Increased productivity
- Decreased turnover
- Great employee engagement
- Higher employee satisfaction
- Stronger company culture
- Strong reputation
- Strong Employer Brand
- Last but not least, higher revenue

Designing a robust onboarding system is probably not something you want to do right away, and the good news is, you don't need to. The onboarding procedure is something you can build with time, as your organization and team grow.

Now, I'm sure some of you reading this will say something along the lines of: Bitcoiners should be already excited to join a BTC-only company, why put in extra work, etc. Yes, Bitcoiners will be thrilled to join a Bitcoin-only company. Yes, they still need to feel supported and welcomed.

Keep reading.

There are a few easy, simple things you can do to ensure you start 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 a manager, should organize a call with a new hire (these are usually 1+ hours long) where they will go through the original job description, talk about it, one bullet point at the time, and set the expectations.

Let your new teammate lead the call and listen to what they, as experts in the field, have to say.

This is a great opportunity for them to share how they think certain requirements should be handled, or what they would need to achieve specific goals.

Write the expectations down.

Once you and your new hire are on the same page, you can be sure your team is set up for success!

This conversation is a perfect foundation for setting up a 30-60-90 day plan - if you are ready to implement a more complex onboarding system. If not, this will work just fine.

30-60-90 days plan

After setting up expectations together with your new teammate, you can create a simple template for what both of you expect to achieve within the first 3 months.

Note: Depending on the role, level of the employee, and the company goals, these plans can vary, so be ready to adjust them for your own needs. Usually, it goes something like this:

First month:

- Clear expectations (we talked about it in the chapter above)
- Learning time. During the first 30 days, you expect your new hire to learn as much as possible about the product, goals, and anything you think is important (organization structure, policies, procedures, etc)
- Setting the priorities. Are there any urgent priorities your new hire will have to take up immediately?

Second month:

- Taking the ownership. As a start-up, you want your new hires to get up and running as soon as possible, so you may expect them to take ownership of the projects by this time.
- Try not to put too much pressure and talk about the priorities.

Third month:

- By the third month, your new hire will be able to take full ownership of the job responsibilities
- Fully understand the long-term mission and goals

Hiring mistakes and how to learn from them

The Hiring process is something you continuously improve. Just like your organization, this department also learns as it goes and with time, the risk of making a wrong hire will be minimized, but never down to zero.

As a young start-up, you have a lot of work to do and need a helping hand as soon as possible. On the other hand, your people are probably too busy to focus on the hiring process, because they have a lot of work to do! This is a never-ending circle. Rushing processes to get that help right away or dragging the processes for months and months, to make sure you don't make a mistake will lead you to…. Making a mistake! Finding that balance is a challenge, however, you learn and adapt as you go!

Your hiring mistakes are not just expensive, but also time-consuming and they don't have a good impact on your teams.

If you already made a hiring mistake in the past and don't know what went wrong, you need to go back to the beginning of the process in question.

- **Read the CV and the Cover letter again**.

Do you now notice any red flags you didn't see before?

- **Review the notes and scorecards.**

Did interviewers write notes and scorecards after the call? If yes, review them. If not, encourage your team to start writing them, but first, ask them if they remember any details from the process.

- **Schedule a call for the hiring team**

Organize a 30 to 45-minute call with the team that was included in that specific hiring process and talk about what you guys think went south. The purpose of such a call is not to put the blame on anyone or point fingers, but rather to learn, so you don't make the same mistake twice.

- **Review your processes**

Is there anything you could've done differently? Review the questions you all asked. What did you miss asking?

- **Conduct Exit Interviews**

If you have a resignation letter in your mailbox, go ahead and schedule an exit interview with the person leaving. Try to dive deeper into what went wrong, write it all down, and use your learning to polish your processes.

Conclusion

Employer Branding & Candidate's Experience Recap

Being an early-stage startup isn't easy and there is a lot to think about. Sometimes, people don't think hiring is something that could hurt their brand, but remember, applications and interviews are usually the first "real and personal" touch Bitcoiners have with your brand.

Complicated and long processes, along with ghosting people, can hurt your employer's branding in the long run, so think in advance about how you want your potential hires to see you. Our community isn't big, so people sharing their experiences is what candidates rely heavily on.

The candidate's experience begins with the Job Posting, then during the application process, and gets full speed during the interview process. How you communicate with people, how much time you take when making a decision, and how often you change your ideas of what number of interviews an individual should have, are what will determine if you will be able to access talent easily or not.

The experiences people have engaging with your hiring process have a massive impact on how much talent you'll be able to attract.

The worse the experience, the less talent you'll be able to find.

Employer branding isn't something you can build overnight, so through this guide, I hope you learn how to create strong employer branding and become a desirable employer.

Hiring process Recap

- Hiring should be a part of your business strategy
- Understanding your needs and goals will prevent pivoting
- Use free or cheap tools to help you organize better during the hiring process
- Job Posts should be easy to read
- Application process must be straightforward
- Develop application screening criteria to make sure you are not biased and know exactly what you are looking for
- Don't hesitate to take matters into your own hands when looking for new talent- source!
- The interview process should be created around the same time as the Job description!
- Prepare a standardized list of questions for the first call
- Create decision-making rules to avoid long processes
- Create email templates for communication purposes
- Put a bit of effort into onboarding new team members
- Hiring mistakes are okay as long as you know how to learn from them

Throughout this guide, I've raised a lot of questions but I did not provide the same amount of answers, and yes, it was intentional.

Hiring isn't difficult but can be a challenge if you don't know where exactly your organization is going or what you want to achieve.

Hopefully, I gave you a start in developing a robust hiring process and helped with some uncertainties.

Do not hesitate to reach out if you need professional help or just have a question and need clarification. Check the "Contact" section of this website.

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 the end, everyone. See you out there!

Stay humble, stack sats.

Thunder!