



WHITEPAPER
VOLUME SIX

AVOID THE COUNTERFEIT CANDIDATE

KNOW WHO TO HIRE THROUGH
EFFECTIVE RESUME SCREENING AND
INTERVIEWING SKILLS

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AVOID THE COUNTERFEIT CANDIDATE

KNOW WHO TO HIRE THROUGH EFFECTIVE RESUME

SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS

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1 :: INTRODUCTION

Sourcing great talent, as the famous proverb goes, can be like finding a needle in a haystack.

Distinguishing between similar candidates is a complex process, but it is particularly complex in this technology driven, highly educated, information rich environment. There are more than **8 million** Internet sites in North America alone, related to career search, resume writing, interviewing, employment and work. The Internet has made it very easy to create a resume and then transmit it effortlessly and instantaneously to dozens of companies. A focused jobseeker could probably distribute several hundred copies of their resume in a morning.

At www.wetfeet.com this commercial website is dedicated to educating job seekers to 'get the job'. It is a website so above and beyond the traditional 'effective resume writing' and "acing the case interview", that it will amaze and perhaps even shock you. Information is developed and sold to prospective candidates in the form of 'insider guides'. Often created by ex-employees or 'insiders' of a company or an industry, these guides offer a window into the world of a specific industry or company including:

- In-depth detail on the working environment
- The various functions and job openings

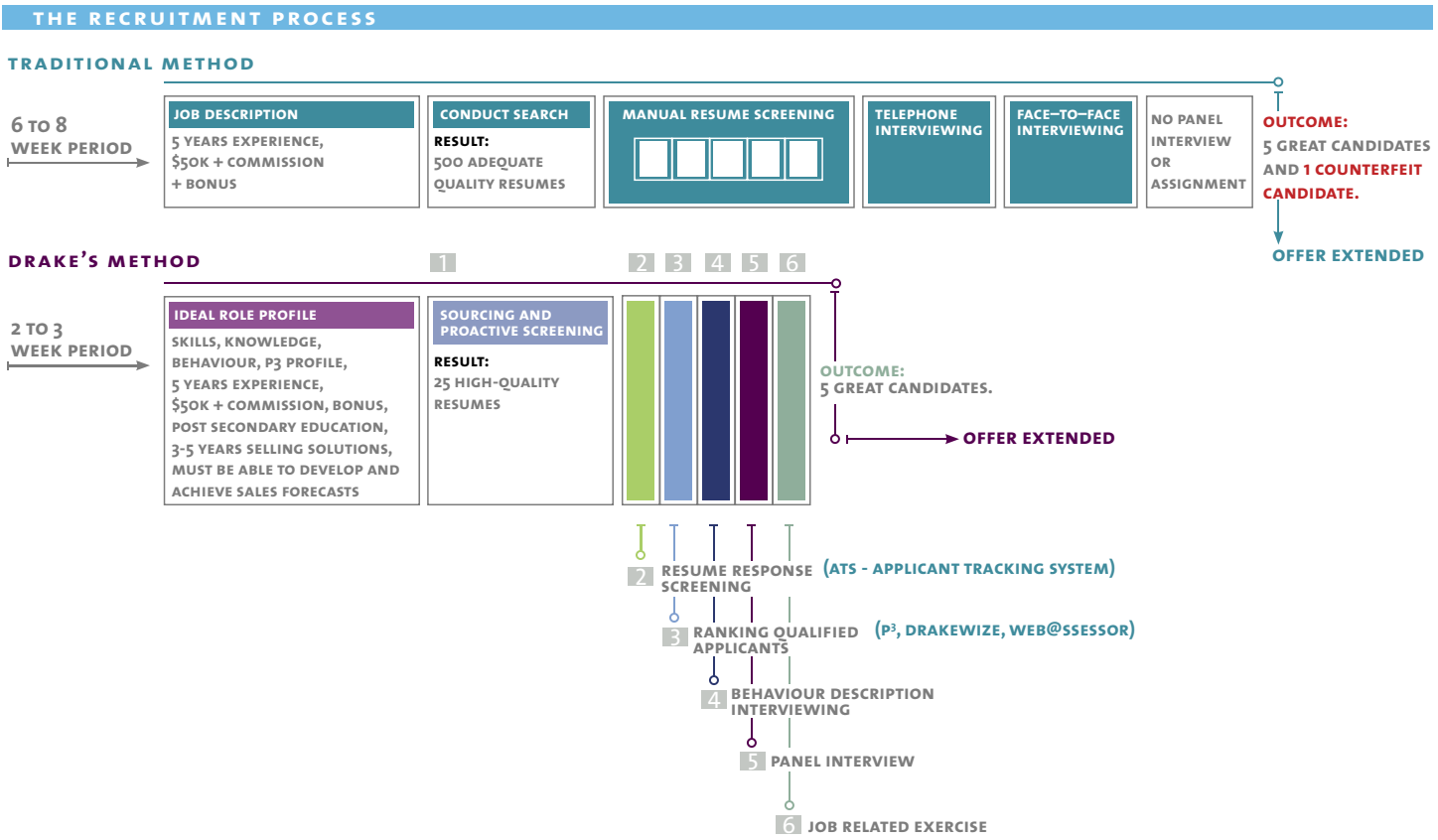
- Typical interview questions the company uses in their recruitment process and how it varies for different types of candidates
- Glossaries of jargon to help candidates 'talk the talk'
- Profiles of current staff
- Compensation information and how to negotiate, and
- Tips on what to wear

Be on guard...

The counterfeit candidate's mission is single-minded - to secure a job offer. These are highly coached, well rehearsed candidates who may have studied your hiring practices, learned your company's lingo, know the decision makers and have researched your business to ensure they are telling you what you want to hear. They may be people who simply know how to 'sell themselves' in the interview, but are challenged in 'walking the talk' when push comes to shove. Counterfeit candidates look good on paper, interview well and will go to great lengths to be a part of your organization whether they have the proper skills, knowledge and behavior required or not!

How do we set our resume screening and interview process up for success to effectively uncover those savvy counterfeit candidates and ensure that we are hiring top performers the first time?

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2 :: STAGE ONE: SOURCING AND PROACTIVE SCREENING

Begin with the end in mind.
 - Steven Covey, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People



- What would your response rate be if you posted a generic advertisement for a Sales Representative who has 5 years of sales experience in a similar industry?
- What are the 'must haves' of this position?
- What could you live without if you had to?
- Would you receive fewer, but more qualified applicants if you added in the salary range of \$50,000 to \$56,000?
- What if you added an education qualification of a University or College degree? The need to be fluent in both written and spoken French and English?

The time spent, up front, in clearly identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviors of a key position, to be used to create an Ideal Role Profile¹ is invaluable. A job profile is a core document that very clearly outlines the position in detail, and is developed at the beginning of your recruitment process.

The more specific, detailed and focused the Ideal Role Profile is, the more time that will be saved in sourcing qualified top performer candidates.

This is the time to consider what is really important to you for this position.

Broad, generic job advertisements could have your recruiters buried within a thousand resumes and with a corresponding need to screen through them looking for that 'needle in the haystack'. This is a lengthy and unstructured process which tends to put the recruiter in a time crunch, reactively struggling to get someone, anyone hired into the position. Spending less time on more applicants de-focuses the screening process and opens the door wide for the counterfeit applicant to sneak through.

When it comes to the number of resumes that you target for screening, 'bigger is definitely not better'. Your sourcing strategy should envelope a 'proactive screening strategy' within it, acting like a filter that ultimately screens out unqualified applicants. At the end of the day, 5 quality candidates is a far better result than 100 applicants with 10-15 quality candidates.

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You can ensure greater success when you start with a well-written and clearly defined ideal job profile with enough substance to create a sourcing strategy that identifies and captures the ideal candidate. Your sourcing strategy needs to have built in ‘filters’ that will de-select unqualified applicants either by the applicant themselves, or simply through the application process. **Filters can be defined as a device or process that removes impurities from whatever passes through it.** In this case, resumes will be checked to weed out both unqualified and counterfeit candidates. The more and stronger the filters that are applied the more qualified the candidate pool at the end of the process.

Elements of your ‘stage one’ screening strategy includes:

- Creating and documenting an ideal role profile for the open position
- Understanding ‘where’ your ideal applicant exists and the most effective way to get in contact with them
- Creating an effective external communication that advertises specific role requirements for a successful applicant

3 :: STAGE TWO: RESUME RESPONSE SCREENING



- How do you screen the resumes that you receive?
- How do you separate the qualified from unqualified applicants?

The growing applicant responses brought about by increased Internet use and the rise of online sourcing efforts dramatically highlights the need for improved efficiencies in the recruiting process. When it comes to recruiting the focus is always placed on quality not quantity.

Although your stage one sourcing strategy may have been created to proactively weed out unqualified applicants from the onset, your stage two screening process should eliminate any resumes that have wrongly made it through the first set of filters.

Corresponding back to the ideal role profile, stage two screen methods can use a ‘check-list’ type system allowing a simple and easy review of the ‘fit’. Listing the most important ‘must-have’ criteria first and the ‘nice to have’ criteria last helps you to quickly weed out resumes that surely won’t make the final cuts.

For example:

	CRITERIA	Y/N
MUST HAVE	Minimum 5 years sales experience	
	Industry experience	
	Salary expectations \$50,000 - \$56,000	
	Written and spoken French and English	
NICE TO HAVE	University or College degree	

There are two ways to conduct your 2nd stage screen of resumes – manually or electronically.

Manually:

Resumes are reviewed one at a time and rated against your formal, prioritized screening criteria. Three ‘piles’ can be created:

1. Fit all criteria,
2. Fit ‘must have’ criteria, and
3. Don’t fit criteria.

This method is an easy way to train junior staff on recruitment basics – get them to do the initial screening for you. Classic time management tells us that if you give a junior staff member one of your C priorities, it becomes their A priority. It is an excellent skill building and training exercise for them.

Electronically:

Many companies have turned to recruitment automation systems (or Applicant Tracking Systems - ATS) to help deal with increasing applicant volumes. Many HR teams are not equipped to deal with the sheer volume of CVs they receive on a daily basis. A portion of these resumes are in response to job advertisements, however the bulk are generally unsolicited. This obviously makes for a lot of extra work that cannot be dealt with accordingly due to the lack of manpower. Until recently, companies just had to try to muscle through it all, little by little, tackling the stacks of mailed and faxed applications.

Fortunately, the Web has made it possible for companies to get some much-needed help, without spending a fortune. Resume screening technology can be configured to your specifications allowing your hiring managers to receive incoming resumes in a prioritized and ranked order so they can focus on the

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most qualified applicants first. Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), often rely upon keyword searches as the sorting mechanism for separating the qualified from the unqualified. However, ATS vendors often supply tip sheets to applicants explaining the best techniques to ‘beat the system’. This of course leads to an even greater flood of resumes designed to maximize keyword searches, regardless of their accuracy for a position fit. Keyword searches are not scalable, since the recruiter has to take the time to read and consciously assess each resume identified by the results of the keyword search.

4 :: STAGE THREE: RANKING QUALIFIED APPLICANTS



- If multiple applicants look the same on paper how do you distinguish between them?
- Can you verify a applicant’s skills, knowledge or behavior profile before investing face time in the recruitment process?

“Automated resume screening and search: In the next three years, nearly half of the organizations surveyed will increase their use of automated resume screening and search, a process which has made it much easier to screen, organize and find resumes. In addition, 12% of the organizations will make greater use of computer-assisted interviewing to further streamline the selection process.”

– The Four Hiring Practices of Highly Successful Organizations, www.inc.com, Jan 2002

The next generation of recruitment automation tools is moving away from the time-trap inherent in traditional resume-based recruiting to the more efficient process of online qualifying. A simple online questionnaire makes it easier than ever before to obtain skill and knowledge sets from applicants.

Technologies like Drake’s Web@ssessor allow the recruiter to get the information required for pre-screening directly from the applicant, without convention-bound traditional resumes acting as the mediator. Instead of the applicant pushing information to the recruiter in a resume document, Web-based pre-screening allows the recruiter to pull information from the applicant.

A self-administered web-based survey allows an applicant to record answers to customized questions simply and easily at any computer, anytime. Online questionnaires can be developed asking questions to detect the desired skills, knowledge, behaviors and cultural fit:

- Skill assessments (like DrakeWIZE)
- Behavior assessments (like Drake P3 behavior profiling)

Once you have narrowed down your applicants to fit ‘must have’ criteria, to further increase your opportunity of finding the right applicant and prioritizing where you spend your time, consider developing a rating system that creates an overall score for each applicant and easily drives a ranked short list of qualified applicants.

For Example:

	CRITERIA	Y/N	RATING	SCORE
MUST HAVE	Minimum 5 years experience		15	
	Industry experience		15	
	Salary expectations \$50-\$56,000		10	
NICE TO HAVE	Written and spoken French and English		10	
	University or College degree		10	
	Proficient in CRM tools		10	
	Behavior Profile Match		10	
	Skill Profile Match		10	
	Transferable book of business		5	
	Network aligned to business plan focus		5	
TOTAL SCORE			OUT OF 100	

Add up the total based on the rating section and sort applicants by score. The resumes scoring closest to 100 make up your short list and move on to stage four.

5 :: STAGE FOUR: BEHAVIOUR DESCRIPTION INTERVIEWING



- Have you found yourself in an interview after five minutes realizing that this is not the candidate for you?

“Whenever two people meet there are really six present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is.”

- William James

Once the applicant has been qualified, it is at this stage that they turn into a candidate.

a) Conducting the Phone Interview

Keep in mind that this type of initial contact is two-fold as you are not only conducting an initial interview but ‘selling’ your organization to the applicant at the same time. This contact is one of the initial stages of your future employee’s ‘Onboarding’ process².

Use this time on the telephone to verify key ‘must-have’ criteria and ‘nice-to-have’ criteria used to prioritize this applicant over others. Prepare one or two questions that allow the applicant’s answers to verify they are right to move on to the next phase of your recruitment process. Be certain to take notes and store within your file or your ATS system.

If the applicant progresses to obtaining a personal interview, request that they bring along samples of their work to be discussed during the interview.

b) Designing the Face-to-Face Interview

The structure and design of these questions are the foundation of any successful interview. A template of interview questions customized for your company ideally is created in advance. You can further customize questions to specific individuals based on the prospective role they are applying for, their seniority and other relevant circumstances.

When compiling your questions keep in mind the end goal - to learn as much about your applicant, the elements of their relevant job experience and other factors that will influence you within the time frame. Questions need focus and should follow a logical order. A random list of questions quickly put together will likely not lead to valuable answers.

Structure the interview to qualify the applicant, while establishing rapport and credibility.

Questions to Ask at the Beginning of the Interview

Let the applicant know how much time you have for the interview. You will want to plan your interview so that you quickly arrive at some qualifying questions at the beginning of the interview. If the candidate does not answer appropriately, you do not waste your time continuing on with the interview.

Questions to Ask in the Middle of the Interview

Next build the depth of the interview by integrating the interviewee’s opinions through open ended and behavior description interviewing (BDI) questions. This section of the interview should delve into questions about the skills and knowledge that are necessary to be successful on the job. You will want to reference the ‘ideal role profile’³ when you are thinking about what questions to ask. Ensure your process is clear and driven by the skills and knowledge requirements identified in the job profile. Create questions that are behavior based which suggest the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

BDI questions ask for specific examples of demonstrated skills and knowledge. They allow the interviewer the opportunity to reverse engineer from an answer to create a crisp and clear question to test that the question will be effective.

Counterfeit candidates beware - It is difficult to fake answers to BDI questions. Either you can provide a specific example demonstrating your skills or knowledge, or you can’t. As an interviewer, be sure to probe for the specific detail to support the answer.

Questions to Ask in Closing the Interview

The last questions should allow respondents to provide additional information they deem important, ask you any questions, and give you their impressions of the interview.

A professional interview solution not only ensures questions will be proactively created and selected to suit concerns about your particular organization, but it can electronically warehouse your database of questions making it easy to access, customize and save your questions tailored to a specific situation. Solutions like Drake’s Web@ssessor technology make the design and development of survey questions efficient and effective for your company.

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c) Conducting the Face-to-Face Interview

Remember that candidates have often done their research. They generally anticipate the questions you are going to ask even before you ask them! Watch for prepared and 'pat' answers. Watch to see how effectively the candidate listens to the question and actually provides you the answer to that question.

Counterfeit candidates tend to gloss over facts and generally do not provide numbers, statistics or clear detail to back up their answers. If you sense this is occurring ask for specifics to back up such statements. As the interviewer, you are responsible for managing the quality of the candidates' responses – ensuring that they are specific, in depth, show a clear understanding of the position and demonstrate the ability to do the job.

SAMPLE QUESTION: Could you give me an example from your current position that highlights your strong sales abilities?

COUNTERFEIT RESPONSE: I was the best sales person in my company.

FOLLOW UP PROMPT: Take a moment and think of a specific example that highlights this.

IDEAL RESPONSE: I was ranked 6th out of 120 employees in the Eastern Region. My territory sales went up by 4.8% last quarter which was a fifth consecutive quarterly increase. As an award I went to the Presidents Club event in Las Vegas.

d) Using References to Weed Out Counterfeit Candidates

When asking for your 3 references, remember that everyone has 3 friends!

With Privacy Legislation in place – the ability to obtain meaningful references is becoming more difficult. When checking references be sure to identify what you need, what purpose it will be used for and once completed where the information will be kept. Have a single document explaining this and have candidates complete the form and sign off on it.

To ensure your process is tight from start to finish, when an applicant gives you a great behavior based example ask for names of people involved in that situation during the interview. Counterfeit candidates who may have embellished their answer often can't deliver a name. Watch for this. When it comes time for references, ask if you can follow up with that particular individual. This is an exceptional technique used to

validate the applicants answer and ensure that you are not getting duped by a counterfeit candidate!

Be cautious of examples from defunct companies with managers who cannot be tracked down. It is essential to validate what you are being told. Set yourself up for success in getting references to support the facts as they are being presented.

6 :: STAGE FIVE: PANEL INTERVIEW

"I see a green tree. And to me it is green. And you would call the tree green also. And we would agree on this. But is the color you see as green the same color I see as green?"
- Carson McCullers

Panel interviews are an excellent way to screen out counterfeit candidates. After all, two, three, four or five heads are better than one! The key to successful panel interviewing is to ensure that all panel participants are active listeners who are qualified to vet the candidates. A cross section of staff on the panel from hiring managers, internal clients, stakeholders, someone who has previously been in the role and even a direct report will help to give a 360 degree assessment of the candidate. Set the panel up for success by dividing up roles and lines of questioning to each participant. One of the biggest benefits to panel interviewing is time – all the decision makers are in the same room, hearing the same answers and have the opportunity to de-brief with each other about the candidate immediately after the interview.

Group or panel interviews may create better results than one-on-one interviews because they are more objective, relying on the assessment and consideration of more than one individual. Each member of the panel has a chance to consider the candidate's responses, thereby increasing the validity of the process.

7 :: STAGE SIX: JOB RELATED EXERCISE



- Have you ever left an interview and felt 'on the fence' about a candidate? You think they can do the job, their answers indicated as much, but your intuition is nagging at you...

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“Trust the instinct to the end, though you can render no reason.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Add a practical element into your interviewing process and see skills come to life by adding in a job related exercise to your recruitment process. Think through the specifics of the job you are interviewing for, what small exercise could the candidate undertake that would demonstrate their abilities?

For example – if hiring a copy writer, give them a brief assignment as you would in the actual job. If hiring a sales person, give them a client case study and ask them to draft out their sales strategy for that situation.

At Drake, we often ask our short list of candidates to prepare a written 30-60-90 day plan detailing how they would approach the position upon their start date moving forward 3 months. In this plan we look for;

- Their true understanding and knowledge of the position and the various tasks that have been discussed throughout the interview process
- The speed at which they'll 'attack' the position
- Their sense of strategic planning and prioritization

When candidates are asked to deliver, they can either demonstrate they have what it takes or they can't. This is truly where the rubber hits the road! A counterfeit candidate will not be able to slide through this exercise. Knowing this they sometimes decline the exercise and bow out of the process entirely.

8 :: MEASURING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- The last time you joined a company, was the resume screening and interviewing process as comprehensive as this? If it had been, would it have made a positive impression on you?
- Imagine having this comprehensive a resume screening and interviewing process integrated into your current organization; what positive impact could it make starting immediately?
- How does your organization measure its screening and interviewing return on investment?

In measurable terms, return on investment is defined as - reduced costs, avoided costs, and potentially increased revenues.

Often there are large variable costs associated to implementing effective resume screening and interviewing skills programs including time and salaries. As a responsible executive you need to be certain that your investment is wisely spent and will produce a significant return for you. What are some of these costs and how can you drive and measure a strong ROI?

We are confident that the return on investment from an effective resume screening and interview program will far exceed your expectations. There are 2 key areas to evaluate Resume Screening and Interviewing ROI:

1. Reduced time and cost of Screening
2. Reduced time and cost of Interviewing

For example:

	\$570	Cost of Traditional Resume Screening Per Hired Employee
x	% 70	Average time saved by staff through more effective screening techniques
=	\$399	Cost of Screening saved
	\$990	Cost of Traditional Interviewing Per Hired Employee
x	% 30	Average time saved by staff through more effective interviewing
=	\$297	Cost of Interviewing saved
	100	Number of New Employees Hired Annually
	x \$696	Total savings per Hired Employee (Screening \$399 & Interviewing \$297)
=	\$297	Annual Process Savings
	-\$5000	Cost of an Automated Screening Process
	\$64,600	Equals the Return on Investment (1292%)

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Other Benefits

- Decreased position vacancy rates
- Elimination of counterfeit candidates and resulting decrease in attrition rates
- Increase in qualified applicant pool to select from

9 :: CONCLUSION

As business leaders we are responsible for managing the screening and interviewing process by asking the right questions, processing and responding to the answers, and using the information to avoid counterfeit candidates.

To build a successful process that uncovers these counterfeit candidates, begin with an effective job profile which will lead to effective advertising of a very well defined, tightly focused position. You will have uncovered a target group of quality candidates who will journey through an intense behavior based interview process, complete panel interviews, and on the job exercises. The entire process from start to finish will have the checks in place to weed out the counterfeit candidates before they creep into your organization.



ABOUT DRAKE

Members of The Drake International Group of Companies are global leaders in the field of human resources, consultative management, staffing and technology solutions. For more than 50 years, Drake International has helped North American businesses solve productivity problems and recruit the best people. We begin with a business needs analysis which pinpoints the optimal way in which we can help your organization achieve its strategic objectives and overall workforce optimization strategy.

Using a partnership approach to deliver measurable results, Drake optimizes a company's profitability applying a blend of flexible staffing, permanent recruitment and technology solutions. Using innovative strategies Drake reduces costs, increases revenue and customizes HR solutions including outsourcing of non-core business functions. Our unique vision plans to hire the right people for our clients the first time, thus saving them money by reducing their need for recruitment.

Drake's operating philosophy is based on the principle that organizations and people are at the highest level of productivity when they are working with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours, using the best processes and technologies.

We aim to assist your organization in achieving heightened productivity, performance and profit standards through the effective use of people and the application of proprietary technologies to help match workforce levels to workload. Allow Drake to help you and your company Outperform.

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