HOW TO HIRE MORE A-PLAYERS

(AND ELIMINATE COSTLY MIS-HIRES)

RecruitPack
by Nuage Software Pty Ltd

About the Author

David Wilson MBA,
Founder of *RecruitPack*

I have been a licenced employment agent for 25 years and have been both directly and indirectly responsible for thousands of hiring decisions.

Early in my career, I was all too often astounded by the great disparity between what people seem to offer in resumes and interviews, and what they actually deliver on the job. I have worked alongside slackers who management believed would be A-Players, and I have hired what I thought to be A-Players only to be sadly disappointed.

I knew that every B- or C-Player was disappointing our customers, damaging our brand, increasing churn, and risking long-term workers' compensation claims. Plus, all of this had a negative effect on our A-Players who were forced to pick up the slack.

The direct costs can be one to five times salary, and when you add in missed opportunities, dissatisfied customers and disgruntled employees, the total cost has been estimated at up to 27 times salary for an executive position. (The high cost of mis-hires, Dr. Brad Smart)

As Steve Jobs said: "A small team of A+ players can run circles around a giant team of B and C players." (Steve Jobs: Hiring the Best Is Your Most Important Task)

And that's why, during my twelve years as General Manager SA/NT at Skilled Ltd, the labour-hire and recruitment firm, I started to examine better ways to ensure the people we hired would be productive and profitable.

I developed a structured four-step program that not only skyrocketed our success rate in hiring A-Players, it also helped us avoid the C-Players altogether, and greatly improved the quality of the B-Players we did hire. These steps are described in this report, and if you follow them, you can start hiring more A-Players immediately.

1

What Are the Characteristics Of A-Players?

When I first started this journey, my definition was simple. An A-Player was anyone who consistently exceeded my expectations and outperformed others in similar roles. Using their characteristics as benchmarks enabled us to pick the better candidates for any new positions.

However, as the program started to deliver results, my expectations rose, and I could see that the initial A-Players were being overshadowed by the new recruits.

It was time to look more closely at the key characteristics that would really raise the bar.

Brainstorming with my team of recruiters produced a long list of nuances which we eventually distilled down to these eight key attributes:

1. **Appropriate Skills and Experience** – Finding exactly the right person brimming with an abundance of all eight attributes is unlikely, so view this as the most flexible because it is both the easiest to measure and the easiest to improve. Therefore, someone who may need some extra training but has the other seven attributes in spades is always a better choice than someone with all the skills but lacking in another area.

2. **Resilience & Positive Attitude** –A-Players rise to the challenge when the going gets tough. They have that "can-do" attitude that allows them to see possibilities where others see obstacles. Their enthusiasm carries the day and brings everyone along for the ride.

3. **Big-Picture Perspective** – A-Players look beyond their needs to see how the dynamics of the whole environment functions and can therefore foresee problems and opportunities and take the appropriate action before lesser players even know what's happening.

4. **Flexibility** – To be a top performer requires the flexibility to adapt readily to changing circumstances. This means being open-minded, accepting there will always be different views, and being ready to adopt a better way. There are no sacred cows. Often this is so effortless for the A-Player that it goes unnoticed. But once you compare their performance with your B- and C-Players, you'll realise just how crucial this is.

5. **Versatility** – A-Players typically have a wide range of interests and can make meaningful contributions in many areas beyond their job description. This is a good reason to keep job descriptions broad and focused on contributing to overall results. My job description at Skilled was simply "Make money!" So, I always had the freedom to focus on the opportunities that would get the best results.

6. **Dependability** – When an A-Player is meant to do something, you just know that it will happen exactly as expected, on time and in full, often beyond expectations. They are reliable and consistent by nature, not because there's some added incentive to get it done.

7. **Empathetic** – A-Players understand "system thinking" and realise that we rely on each other and must work together to achieve results. They include others, encourage collaboration and acknowledge contributions – all crucial for employee engagement.

8. **Up-to-date** – With the accelerated rate the world is changing, this is far more relevant today than ever before. A-Players know that yesterday's solutions won't hold water tomorrow and that they need to continually adapt. So, they constantly expand their knowledge and skills, keeping at the forefront with the best solutions for tomorrow's world.

And, What Are the Characteristics Of C-Players?

You will easily recognise these people, and would no doubt prefer to know fewer. Unfortunately, they do have an insidious knack of presenting a false persona in order to get a job, but over time their true nature reveals itself when they:

- Claim every problem is someone else's fault
- Are evasive when you ask them a question
- Become aggressive when challenged
- Always have an excuse
- Always find fault with every initiative
- Have an inflated opinion of their worth
- Have not updated their knowledge and skills
- Will not share information
- Have a poor safety record

So, Where Do B-Players Sit?

B-Players are the in-betweeners. Using the 80/20 rule, they are the 60% in the middle. Employees in the upper end often have A-Player potential (and should be nurtured as such), while those in the lower end are often in danger of becoming C-Players.

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How Valuable Are Your A-Players?

What percentage of the people you work with are A-Players? How would your life change if you were surrounded by A-Players and the C-Players were completely out of the picture?

Take a moment to consider this: Use the 80/20 rule as a rough guide to start, and fine tune it as the results accumulate. Start with the premise that the top 20% are your A-Players and the bottom 20% are your C-Players. That leaves the middle 60% as your B-Players.

If you hire a B-Player, on average the new recruit will come up to speed in a reasonable time, possibly even excel for a period in order to impress, and then settle in to align with the company norm. That's an average result at best.

A C-Player, on the other hand, will be slower to induct, fail to reach the norm, and typically drop back to the minimum level they can get away with. This is an ongoing cost and a drain on management, and the rest of the team are forced to shoulder the burden.

Contrast this with an A-Player. One who hits the ground running and gets up to speed fast. One whose natural energy and rhythm overcomes peer pressure and goes on to set new highs in performance.

In simple terms, the value of an A-Player is both the added value they create over and above a B-Player, and also the value you gain by avoiding the inconvenience and costs of hiring a C-Player.

Right Management, the world's largest career transition and organizational consulting firm, surveyed 444 organizations in 2006 to find that direct costs of a mis-hire run at an average of 2½ times an individual's salary, including recruitment, training, severance costs, and lost productivity.

Here are the findings from that survey:

- Equal to the employee's annual salary (15%)
- Two times the employee's annual salary (42%)
- Three times the employee's annual salary (26%)
- Four times the employee's annual salary (6%)
- Five times the employee's annual salary (11%)

(The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.6%)

Indirect costs and negative consequences of mis-hires and promoting B- & C-Players include:

- Lost customers
- Missed opportunities
- Lower customer satisfaction
- Lower morale
- Impaired teamwork
- Increased staff turnover

4

- Bullying & harassment
- Workers' compensation claims
- Lower productivity
- Mistakes and misdirection
- Closer supervision requirements
- Unreliability
- Absenteeism
- Disengagement
- Remedial work by you and others to fix these shortfalls

If you were to put a reasonable estimate against each of those items,
what would your total be?

Others have estimated individual costs from $500,000 to well over $2,000,000 depending on the role. If that is then multiplied by the bottom 20% of your workforce, the magnitude of the problem becomes evident.

Once you know the true cost, replacing C-Players with A-Players not only becomes a no-brainer, it becomes a REQUIREMENT for ongoing success.

Our goal at Skilled was to have 80% A-Players and 20% B-Players, with ZERO C-Players.

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Our Original Program for Hiring A-Players at Skilled

When I examined the recruitment process at Skilled, I found over 80% of the time was spent on low value processes such as reading resumes, chasing emails, interviewing mis-fits, etc., and much less than 20% was spent with those who had any real potential to be good employees.

With so much time wasted, it was almost impossible to conduct the depth of interview necessary to fully understand the competence and motivation of each candidate. As a result, far too many B-Players and C-Players were slipping through the cracks, and it cost us dearly.

We needed to turn this 80/20 split around. And after a lot of hard work, we finally achieved this with a four-step program that completely transformed our results.

After laying the foundations, by competency mapping each position, we were able to implement this four-step program:

1. **Screening** — The competency map was used to create specific application forms for each role. Every applicant had to fill out a form and answer job-specific questions on their skills, experience and qualifications. This was a huge time-saver and allowed us to concentrate on only those who met the minimum requirements. We now do this online with our expertly crafted Screening Questions.

2. **Deep Interviewing** — Because we could quickly identify those worth consideration, we now had the time for in-depth interviews where we used a mix of questions exploring and validating history, behavioural interviewing, hypothetical situations, and practical testing.

3. **Targeted Reference Checks** — We introduced targeted reference checks where the favoured applicant(s) would be asked to arrange for us to talk to three former managers of our choosing. The key here was that we told them early in the process that they would be asked to do this, so they knew their answers were going to be thoroughly checked.

4. **Psychometric testing** — back then we couldn't find a way to do this economically on the thousands of casuals we were hiring, but we made it a rule for all staff positions. These days we have the technology required to do this up front for every single applicant, offering us valuable insights when shortlisting.

This process has evolved over time, to meet the increasing demands of today's world, while capitalizing on the powerful technology now available.

But before I share more about that, let's explore each of your available options for hiring more A-Players...

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You Could

Use Free Tools for Screening

The Risk Advisory Group (TRAG), which reviewed over 3,000 candidate CVs and resumes for discrepancies, found that job seekers misled firms over everything from employment gaps to fraud committed against previous employers. The most common lies were in employment history, with 55 percent of applicants inventing a more impressive career. A further 36 percent lied about their qualifications.

It is often said that if you are going to rely on resumes, you may as well just throw them in the air and only consider those that land on your desk. Maybe a bit harsh, but it does illustrate a point. If resumes are so unreliable, why waste hours trying to interpret the qualities of the applicant?

A better approach is to use an online survey to canvas responses to the specific questions you want answered. Survey Monkey, Survey Planet and others each offer a free service that is easy to set up with a variety of questions types.

Imagine how much easier it is to shortlist applicants based on their answers to the same set of specific questions. You can even cover pertinent questions that you never find in resumes, such as:

- "Do you have the right to live and work in Australia?"
- "Do you consent to our checking that right with the Dept of Immigration?"
- "Do you have a current driver's licence?"
- "Do you have XYZ accreditation?"
- "At interview, will you be able to demonstrate 60 WPM typing speed?"
- "At interview will you be able to demonstrate a high competency with spreadsheets?"
  Etc. etc.

Stick to Yes/No questions and avoid posing any that require a written response (unless you are hiring a creative writer). Written responses invite puffery and must be read and interpreted to find the meaning. They are in effect mini-resumes, the very thing you want to avoid.

There are also a range of websites offering "free" psychometric assessments, but these are often trimmed down versions and usually limited to only one sample.

You might like to set up an account with a reputable provider and select the reports best suited to your recruitment needs, which may include numerical, verbal or logical reasoning, personality and safety profile. Each report can cost anywhere between $50 to $350, though bulk discounts often apply.

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You Could
Sink Serious Money into an Applicant Tracking System

There are possibly hundreds of applicant tracking systems (ATS) on the market ranging in price from a few hundred dollars to several hundred thousand, depending on the complexity and size of your organisation.

The fundamental features these provide include:

- An online application process
- Communication tools (email and SMS)
- Often include screening questions
- Usually have some way to record your grading of each applicant
- Usually allow storage of past applicants in a "talent pool"

This can be a great time saver because you don't have to manage, track and respond to email applications, and if you set up the right screening questions, you won't have to read so many resumes.

However, all too often, all these tools do is help you to choose the wrong candidate, faster.

With the right screening questions, they can help identify those with the Appropriate Skills and Experience, but as mentioned earlier, this is only ONE of eight key attributes and it is the easiest to remedy if there is a shortfall.

To identify the A-Players requires the much broader perspective that only psychometric reports can offer. So, it would be wise to combine a psychometric service with the ATS to address this.

But here's the problem: you will need to assess every single applicant who passed the screening questions for the Appropriate Skills and Experience in order to see the A-Player potentials. If not you either have to take a chance that the few you bring in for interviews will include an A-Player, or interview everyone and then test a shorter list. All of which can cost you more time, energy and money.

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You Could

Outsource to an Agency

Recruitment Agencies and Head-hunters thrive on sourcing candidates for you. And the better they are at their business, the more they charge. This is not an area where you want to cut corners if you want a favourable outcome. Expect to pay anywhere from 15% to 30+% of package, and even then, you may still wind up with a B-Player. But, if you pay the fees on time, at least you have a three-month guarantee.

This can be comforting, knowing that you have professional recruiters on your team and often the results are very satisfactory.

However, it is quite expensive, and the guarantee doesn't help with the disruption when someone doesn't work out.

Worse still, you may get stuck with another B-Player because you can't invoke the guarantee on someone who meets the minimum criteria, and you won't want all that disruption either.

But if none of these options cut it for you, and you want something more reliable — something that will help you get real results...

You Could

Use an A-Player Selection Solution that Cherry-Picks

the Cream of the Cream from the Talent Pool

This is where you'll be excited to find what RecruitPack can offer. Our system is not just another ATS – they will only help you choose the wrong candidate faster.

RecruitPack is an **A-Player Selection Solution** designed to pinpoint those applicants with the right characteristics to be **top performers** in **your** organisation.

Using a combination of screening tools and built-in psychometric evaluations our system allows you to quickly identify the very best applicants to spend your high-value, quality-time interviewing.

This approach will allow you to:

- **Eliminate** time wasted on **low-value processes** (reading resumes, chasing emails etc.)
- **Maximise** your time with **top quality** candidates
- **Keep ahead** of competitors who are vying for the same talent
- Employ far **more A-Players** who excel in their role and generate higher profits
- **Easily and reliably** snap up high-calibre B-players that show top performer potential
- Completely **eliminate C-Players** from your recruiting process, along with all the headaches they bring — without wasting any time or energy on them at all
- **Improve the quality** of your business and personal life with every A-Player you employ
- **Build a stronger, more stable,** and **more profitable business**

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Discover whether *RecruitPack* is right for your needs

If you want faster, more successful hires, *RecruitPack* may be just the solution you've been searching for. Our unique, all-in-one staff selection tool separates the wheat from the chaff for you, practically eliminating costly mis-hires and enabling you to build a superior culture with the best and brightest talent.

Best of all, you can come see for yourself what *RecruitPack* is capable of… with absolutely no risk.

Almost everyone who uses this software is blown away by how consistently and accurately it pinpoints A-Players. And I'm certain you'll be blown away too.

That's why I want to invite you to check out the *RecruitPack* software for yourself — absolutely free — with zero risk or obligation.

Simply click the link below for a Free Demo and fill out the form to get started. No credit card information required.

Here's what happens next:

Within 48 hours, you'll receive a quick call from us to find what solution is best for you. With that information, we can tailor the demo specifically to your needs.

And you don't need to worry, you won't be getting the hard sell from us — the demo already does a fine job of showing you the incredible value *RecruitPack* can offer.

We'll then line up a convenient time for your no-cost, no-obligation demo.

During your demo, you'll get to see our advanced, yet simple-to-use, software put through its paces. We'll lead you through, showing you exactly how it will save you time, money and stress. And, most importantly, how it'll make hiring A-players effortless.

It won't take long to see why others are choosing *RecruitPack* for all their recruitment needs.

Get Your Free Demo of RecruitPack Now

Remember, this is a risk-free opportunity to see how *RecruitPack* can eliminate the risk of costly mis-hires for good and help you hire more A-Players with ease. All while cutting the time, costs and stress you spend on recruiting dramatically.

Act now and see if it's right for you — before you have to deal with another mis-hire.

I look forward to helping you hire more A-Players.

Sincerely,

David Wilson