



LESSON 1

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE HIRING DECISION

Introduction: The Moment of Truth

You have done all the hard work. You have conducted a thorough job analysis, sourced and screened a pool of qualified candidates, and conducted a series of insightful, behavioral-based interviews. Now, you have reached the moment of truth: it's time to make a hiring decision. This is one of the most important decisions you will make as a leader, and it requires a careful balance of both art and science. It is a process that requires you to weigh the objective data you have gathered while also trusting your informed, professional judgment.

The Science: A Data-Driven Approach

The foundation of a good hiring decision is a systematic and data-driven approach. This is the “science” of the hiring decision, and it involves three key steps:

Step 1: Consolidate Your Data

Gather all the information you have collected on each of your final candidates, including:

- Their resume and application
- Your notes from the phone screen
- The results of any performance assessments
- The scores and notes from each of the interviewers

Step 1:

Use a Candidate Comparison Matrix

A candidate comparison matrix is a simple but powerful tool for organizing your data and comparing your candidates side-by-side. Create a simple spreadsheet with your candidates’ names across the top and your key selection criteria down the side. For each criterion, rate each candidate on a scale of 1-5.

Criteria	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
Experience	4	5	3
Technical Skills	5	4	4
Communication	3	5	4
Problem-Solving	4	4	5
Cultural Fit	5	3	4
Total Score	21	21	20

Step 3:

Analyze the Data

Look for patterns in the data. Where does each candidate excel? Where are their potential weaknesses? In the example above, Candidates A and B have the same total score, but they have very different profiles. Candidate A is a strong cultural fit with excellent technical skills, while Candidate B is a better communicator with more experience. The data doesn’t give you the answer, but it helps you to frame the decision in a clear and objective way.

The Art: Trusting Your Informed Judgment

While a data-driven approach is essential, the numbers don't always tell the whole story. This is where the "art" of the hiring decision comes in. After you have analyzed the data, you need to step back and use your professional judgment to make the final call.

- **Consider the Team Dynamics:** How will this person fit with the existing team? Will they complement the team's strengths and weaknesses?
- **Think About the Future:** Which candidate has the most potential for growth and development? Who is most likely to be a future leader in your organization?
- **Listen to Your Gut (But Verify It):** Your intuition can be a valuable source of information, but it should not be the sole basis for your decision. If you have a strong gut feeling about a candidate (either positive or negative), go back to the data and see if you can find objective evidence to support it.

The Tie-Breaker Question: “Who do we want to work with every day?” When all else is equal, the answer to this question can often be the deciding factor.

Activity: The Decision-Making Matrix

Go back to the “Diana Jones” case study from Day 1. Create a candidate comparison matrix for Diana and John.

- Identify at least five key selection criteria and rate each candidate on a scale of 1-5. Does the data support your initial decision?
- Or does it cause you to see the candidates in a new light?

Share your matrix and your reflections in the discussion forum.