

Hiring Faster Without Getting It Wrong

A practical guide to reducing time to hire without compromising the outcome

Reducing time-to-hire can improve delivery and reduce pressure on teams.

But only if it leads to the right hires being made.

This guide outlines practical ways to move faster without compromising long-term outcomes.

1. Start with what you're actually measuring

Instead of:
Time-to-hire

Use:
Time-to-accepted offer
Time-to-hire with 6-month retention
Time-to-hire for candidates who pass probation

Why this tends to work:

You're still keeping an eye on speed, but only in a way that reflects whether the hire actually worked.

2. Set clear quality guardrails

If the focus is on moving faster, be clear on what can't be compromised. eg

Structured interviews using the same criteria
Scorecards completed before decisions
Clear agreement on what "good" looks like upfront

Why this tends to work:

It keeps decisions consistent, even when timelines are tight.

3. Get the brief right early

Most delays don't come from sourcing. They come from uncertainty at the start.

Align on must-haves vs nice-to-haves
Be realistic about what the market can actually provide
Be clear on what success looks like in the role

Practical move:

Use an intake conversation to pin down:
What problem this hire needs to solve
What "good" looks like in 6 months
Where there's flexibility

Why this tends to work:

Clarity early removes hesitation later.

4. Reduce decision lag

This is where most processes slow down without anyone planning for it.

Pre-book interview slots
Set expectations on feedback timelines
Avoid unnecessary extra stages

Practical move:

No feedback within 48 hours means
the process pauses.

Why this tends to work:

You're speeding up decisions, not lowering standards.

5. Look at conversion, not just activity

Instead of:

- Number of CVs sent
- Number of interviews booked

Look at:

- CV → interview rate
- Interview → offer rate
- Offer → acceptance rate

Why this tends to work:

Better alignment early means less waste later.

6. Build some consistency into hiring

Speed often comes from familiarity, not pressure.

- Reuse what works
- Document what a good hire actually looked like
- Avoid starting from scratch every time

Practical move:

After each hire, note down what worked well and what slowed things down.

Why this tends to work:

It makes future decisions quicker and more consistent.

7. Be aware of what's being incentivised

If speed is the only thing being measured, it's what people will optimise for.

Balance it with:

- Retention
- Performance
- Candidate experience

Why this tends to work:

People respond to how success is defined.

8. Review what's actually happening

It's easy for "fast" to become the focus without checking the outcome.

Look at recent hires:

- How long did they take?
- How are they performing now?
- Where are decisions slowing down?
- Where are mistakes being repeated?

Why this tends to work:

It keeps decisions and future planning objective, realistic and effective.

The simplest way to think about it:

Don't try to force speed into the process.

Fix the parts that slow down good decisions.

That's usually what reduces time-to-hire without creating a bigger problem a few months later.

And if you're looking at your own process, it's worth asking:

Where are we speeding things up... and where are we actually improving decisions?