



WHY “PERFECT FIT” IS A TRAP — AND HOW STRONG CANDIDATES ACTUALLY GET HIRED

How hiring decisions really happen—and
what strong candidates do differently

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THE “PERFECT FIT” MYTH SOUNDS REASSURING— BUT IT MISLEADS

Job descriptions often describe an ideal, fully formed candidate who checks every box. In reality, most roles are filled through judgment calls, tradeoffs, and potential—not perfection.

👉 In the next few slides, we’ll share 7 realities about how strong candidates actually get hired—and why chasing “perfect fit” can hold you back.





REALITY 1

ROLES ARE FILLED BY SOLVING PROBLEMS, NOT MATCHING RESUMES

Hiring managers are trying to solve specific business problems, not hire a “type.” Resumes are signals, not answers.

Strong candidates focus on what they can fix, improve, or move forward.

Impact matters more than resemblance.



REALITY 2

MOST JOB DESCRIPTIONS ARE ASPIRATIONAL

Many postings blend current needs, future goals, and wish-list skills. They are rarely a strict checklist.

Most successful candidates meet some—not all—of the requirements.

Self-screening out often eliminates strong contenders.





REALITY 3

HIRING IS COMPARATIVE, NOT ABSOLUTE

Candidates are evaluated against each other, not against a perfect standard. Decisions are relative, not idealized.

Clear thinking and strong communication stand out quickly.

Small gaps matter less than overall strength.



REALITY 4

SIGNAL MATTERS MORE THAN SYMMETRY

People trust people—not just titles. Sharing a few personal details (values, quirks, experiences) helps humanize your leadership.

You don't need to overshare—just let people see the person behind the role.

Vulnerability invites connection. And connection accelerates trust.





REALITY 5

HIRING MANAGERS HIRE FOR TRAJECTORY

Teams are betting on where someone is headed, not just where they've been. Growth potential shapes decisions.

Candidates who show direction feel easier to invest in.

Momentum is persuasive.



REALITY 6

RELATIONSHIPS CHANGE OUTCOMES

Many roles are filled through referrals or warm introductions before a posting closes. Access often precedes evaluation.

Strong candidates build conversations early.

Visibility creates opportunity.





REALITY 7

STRONG CANDIDATES REFRAME THE CONVERSATION

Instead of asking if they're a perfect fit, strong candidates focus on contribution. They shift the discussion toward value.

They clarify where they can add impact quickly and share examples of previous experience.

Hiring becomes a partnership, not a test.