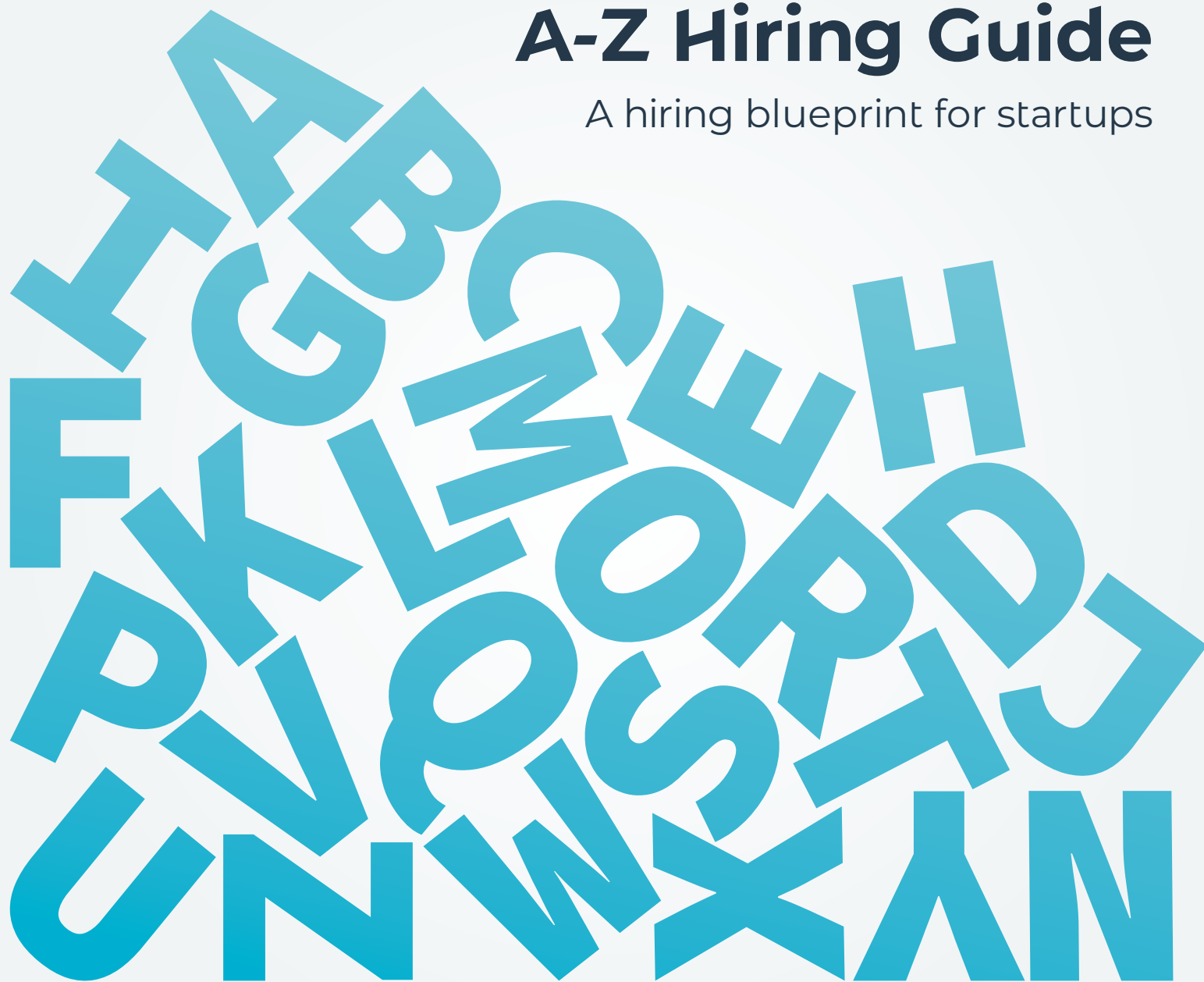


# Talent

SOLUTIONS

## A-Z Hiring Guide

A hiring blueprint for startups



# A-Z Hiring Guide

Your Hiring Blueprint

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## Looking to grow your team, but where do you start?

Launching your own startup is an exciting and thrilling journey and can be filled with great opportunities. It is no secret that the success of any startup lies in the hands of its people – the passionate, talented individuals who bring your vision to life, drive innovation, and propel your venture forward.

We get it though, this stuff is hard. Navigating the complex landscape of hiring can be overwhelming, especially for startups. From defining job roles, crafting compelling job ads, establishing an EVP and choosing an ATS - every step in the hiring process demands careful consideration and strategic planning.

That's where we come in. Whether you're a first-time founder or a seasoned entrepreneur venturing into a new industry, this guide aims to equip you with things to think about and the essential knowledge necessary to build your dream team.

[Get in touch](#)



A

## ATS

An applicant tracking system (ATS) is software for recruiters and employers to track candidates throughout the recruiting and hiring process. An ATS can offer a variety of capabilities that can help organisations find, hire, and retain the best candidates.

For your startup, this could include: streamlining the hiring process, organising candidates efficiently, ensuring compliance, enabling data-driven decision making, and supporting scalability. With an ATS, you could save time, attract top talent, and revolutionise your hiring process for success.



**When considering any ATS it's important to ensure the technology can scale with your business and support your long-term strategy.**

Sarah Blanchard,  
Head of Talent Advisory, Talent

A B C D E

F

Brand

J

K

Attracting top talent is a fierce battle for startups, but a strong brand gives you the upper hand. A reputable brand associated with innovation, a positive work culture, and a compelling vision becomes highly appealing to the talent you are trying to attract. It is important to remember that just because you may have a great brand in the eyes of consumers, that doesn't always directly translate to a great brand in the eyes of candidates and prospective future colleagues. A strong employer brand is essential for you to attract and retain top talent.

O

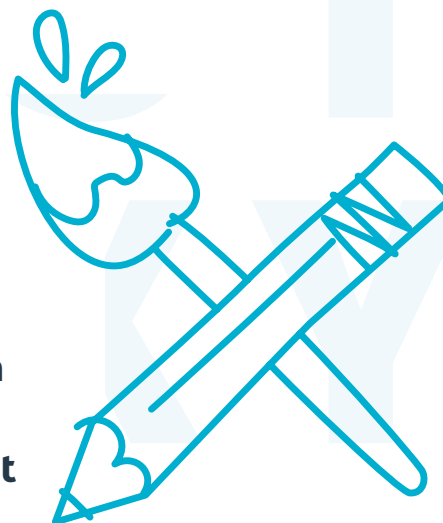
P

T

“

**A compelling brand not only elevates a company's reputation, but also serves as a captivating force, drawing in talent inspired by the organisation's values, culture, and vision. In a competitive job market, a unique and captivating brand stands out, making recruitment easier.**

Ashleigh Barsley,  
Management Consultant, Talent



A B C D E



## Culture

Culture is a make-or-break factor for startups in hiring. Your culture refers to the collective beliefs, behaviours, and norms that shape the work environment and define your company's identity. A strong culture attracts the right talent who align with your values. It also helps retain top talent, builds a positive brand reputation, and supports scalability and growth. Culture sets the stage for a thriving startup where employees are engaged, motivated, and united in driving success.



**You have to hire people for their attitude. It is essential to bring on board people who are willing to roll their sleeves up and get their hands dirty. Hiring someone with the wrong attitude and no willingness to help out when things sit slightly out of scope regardless of how brilliant they might be, can end up putting quite a strain on the culture you are looking to achieve.**

Olive Evans,  
Senior Talent Acquisition Partner, Talent

# Diversity

Ensuring you have diversity in your business is essential. It's not just about ticking boxes, but about unlocking the full potential of a dynamic team. The collision of different age, backgrounds, education, gender, life experiences and perspectives ignites a spark of creativity and innovation. A cognitively diverse workforce enables you to approach challenges from multiple angles, resulting in better decision-making and problem-solving.

Check out our DEI Hiring Guide for practical tips.

[Hiring guide](#)



**Diversity is more than just ticking a box. There are tangible steps you can take at every stage of the hiring process to ensure you are practising inclusivity. From using gender-neutral language in job descriptions to widening your candidate search and avoiding bias in your shortlisting process, it's important to take action when it comes to building a diverse workforce.**

Jaimee Rangi,  
Talent Advisory Analyst, Talent



## EVP

EVP stands for Employee Value Proposition. It refers to the unique set of benefits and rewards that an employer offers to its employees in exchange for their skills, capabilities, and contributions. With a compelling EVP, startups become magnets, drawing in skilled professionals who are hungry for more than just a paycheck. It's about showcasing the exciting opportunities for growth, the vibrant company culture, and the chance to be a part of something bigger.



**Essentially there are five core elements of an EVP, compensation, benefits, career & development, work environment, and culture. Ensuring you are hitting all these elements in your EVP will help you attract talent, keep employees engaged, and drive performance business outcomes.**

Adelina Ekechukwu,  
[Client Delivery Lead, Talent](#)



# Flexibility

Flexible work is no longer an earned benefit, it's an expectation of candidates today. Providing flexibility to employees not only helps startups attract and retain talent but also fosters a positive work culture, improves productivity, and supports employee well-being – ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the organisation. Some examples of flexible work include: remote work, flexible schedules, flexitime, job sharing, compressed workweeks, and career breaks.



**Surveys indicate that at least 80% of workers expect some level of flexibility in their role. Data also shows that 70% of workers want even more flexibility than they've currently got. There aren't strict rules when it comes to what flexibility should look like for your organisation. But once you've decided, it is important that prospective and current employees are all clear on what it means to you. Simply putting "flexible working" on a job ad doesn't cut it anymore. It is also vital that once people have joined your business to make sure you authentically live up to the promises.**

Cameron Robinson,  
Sales Lead – MSP & RPO, Talent





## Glassdoor

Glassdoor is like a treasure trove of insider information for job seekers, and startups have struck gold by recognising its importance in hiring. It's a platform where the voice of employees echoes loud and clear, providing invaluable insights into the inner workings of a startup. By actively managing your presence on Glassdoor, you can unlock a world of transparency and trust, building a strong foundation for attracting and retaining the best and brightest minds.



**Glassdoor not only provides honest reviews on what it is like to work for a company, but it is a cost-effective platform to strengthen a company's EVP. Considering an employee's voice is 3 times more credible than the CEO's when it comes to the working conditions in a company to prospective candidates, it really is a valuable resource for startups.**

Claire Wright,  
Management Consultant - Talent



## HR

You may not be big enough to have an HR department, but it's too important not to include on the list. HR (or People & Culture as it is often better known), is responsible for managing and overseeing various aspects related to employees. HR departments handle activities such as recruitment, onboarding, training and development, employee relations, performance management, compensation and benefits, compliance with labour laws and regulations, and fostering a positive work culture.



**Having a startup is challenging enough without having to worry about the work that a HR department usually handles. HR is the undercurrent that streamlines onboarding, nurtures growth, ensures compliance, and ultimately shapes the foundation on which a startup's success is built.**

Lauren Johnson,  
Senior Talent Acquisition  
Partner - Talent

# Interviewing techniques

Good interviewing techniques are crucial for startups in hiring as they ensure accurate and objective candidate evaluation. By asking the right questions and employing structured processes, you can navigate the hiring maze with precision and efficiency, saving precious time and resources while ensuring quality hires every time.



**The interview process is an important aspect of finding top talent. Remember that it's not a one-way street – the candidate is reviewing you as a prospective employer too. Are you explaining in the interview stage what is expected of that individual and what will be expected of them over time? Are the milestones clear? Is the vision and purpose clear? As a leader, you need to constantly be refining your ability to clearly communicate your vision so that everyone is on board.**

Crionna Doyle,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

## Job ads

Are you just posting job descriptions as your job ads? If so, you're missing a huge opportunity. Crafting an engaging job ad is crucial for startups when hiring because it serves as the first impression and a powerful tool to attract top talent. Startups often have to compete with established companies for skilled professionals, so an engaging job ad allows you to stand out in a crowded market. It captures attention, ignites curiosity, sparks interest, and motivates talent to take action and apply. By showcasing your startup's personality, values, and potential for growth, a job ad becomes a magnet that draws in the right candidates and sets the stage for building a high-performing team.



**We see so many job ads that are just regurgitated job descriptions, and that's not going to attract the best candidates. Job ads need to sell the company, the vision, and the growth available to whoever joins. That's what will excite those highly skilled and ambitious applicants. Think less boring responsibility lists and more exciting, value-driven, conversational points about what success looks like.**

Ryder Eberhard,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent



## KPIs

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are quantifiable metrics that measure performance and progress of specific objectives. When it comes to hiring for your startup, KPIs are essential as they provide measurable benchmarks, set clear goals, improve efficiency, enhance the quality of hires, drive accountability, and support scaling and growth. By leveraging KPIs effectively, you can optimise your hiring processes and build high-performing teams that contribute to long-term success.



**Examples of KPIs within a TA function could be around hiring velocity, diversity hiring, quality of hire, or conversion of interviewed candidates to hired. You decide what's important to measure based on the stage of the maturity of the business.**

Sowmya Manchem,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

## Learning & development



Startups must be agile and adaptable to stay competitive in dynamic markets. L&D initiatives cultivate a learning culture that encourages employees to embrace new ideas, explore innovative approaches, and adapt to new technologies and industry trends. Continuous learning and development enable startups to drive innovation and respond effectively to changing business landscapes – while helping them attract the best and brightest.



**Learning opportunities and developing new skills are some of the top considerations when a candidate is on the lookout for their next opportunity. Development can present itself in on-the-job learning as well as in the form of structured learning programs (Using the 70/20/10 rule - On-the-job/mentoring relationships/structured course work and training). This structure allows for ongoing scalability.**

Luiza Mocellin,  
Senior Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

# Money

When you're trying to hire the best and brightest, offering competitive salaries is always beneficial. Check out Talent's Salary Guide to keep up to date with the latest salary trends. Of course, it can be challenging for startups to compete on the salary front. In this case, it's important to think about the overall package you are able to offer, including equity or stock options, performance-based bonuses and non-monetary perks and benefits.

[Salary guide](#)



**We've seen a significant increase in candidates prioritising work that aligns with their values and holds a purpose. In addition to competitive compensation, candidates are increasingly seeking out companies with strong cultures and values that align with their own. In addition, they are looking for opportunities to make an impact and be a part of a team that is driving positive change.**

Zoe Crouch,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent



## Niche hiring

Niche hiring requires a strategic and targeted approach to attract candidates with a specialised skill set. By hiring niche talent, startups can gain a competitive advantage, drive innovation, and deliver high-quality products or services. If your business requires niche skills – be it a Data Scientist with ML and AI skills or an SME in solar technology – your best bet is to utilise a specialist service that can connect you with the pros you need.

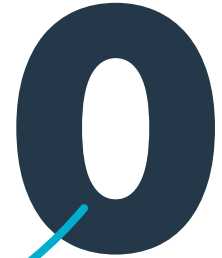


**When recruiting in the startup space, you are competing with major corporations for top talent. To help you acquire great candidates and have an edge over competitors, it may be worthwhile to use the services of a specialist recruitment provider. They have the resources, skills, connections, as well as detailed knowledge of the industry to help you source the best people in the roles you need to fill.**

Kiri Evans,  
Senior Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

# Onboarding

A great onboarding process is crucial for startups when it comes to hiring. Great onboarding turbocharges productivity, boosts employee satisfaction and loyalty, aligns new hires with the company's vision, fosters a tight-knit culture, fuels knowledge transfer and skill development, ignites team collaboration, and polishes your employer brand. By rolling out a well-structured onboarding experience, startups can lay the groundwork for success and create a vibrant environment where everyone thrives.



**First impressions matter, and it's often forgotten that first impressions aren't on an employee's first day, they are made when the employee is still a candidate. The communication and experience should begin there, and flow through seamlessly, making each person feel special and individual. It's been shown that as this engagement increases, so will tenure and productivity.**

Tom Mackintosh,  
General Manager Solutions - Talent

## Process

Having well-defined and structured hiring processes is essential for startups. These processes ensure efficiency, consistency, fairness and compliance. By implementing robust and standardised processes, you can maximise your recruitment efforts, maintain a positive employer brand and ensure that precious time and resources are not being wasted.



**Well-considered talent processes can be the difference between securing top talent or going back to the drawing board. Your talent processes can be the first window into company culture so take time to ensure they are an accurate reflection of the environment.**

Sarah Blanchard,  
Head of Talent Advisory - Talent



**Quality hires are the backbone of your startup's journey. As the famous saying goes, "If you think it's expensive to hire a professional, wait until you hire an amateur." Prioritising quality in hiring ensures you have the right team to create a thriving work environment – and avoid the costs associated with getting it wrong.**

Luke Greenwood,  
Management Consultant - Talent



## Quality

The quality of candidates is crucial for startups when hiring as it directly impacts the success and growth of the company. Hiring high-quality candidates brings valuable skills, expertise, and fresh perspectives to your startup. These individuals are more likely to contribute to innovation, drive productivity, and positively influence the company culture. Remember: hiring quality talent is an ongoing process, and continuous improvement is key. Regularly evaluate your hiring strategies, learn from successes and failures, and adapt your approach.

# RPO

RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing) is a hiring approach where an organisation partners with an external service provider to handle some or all of its recruitment functions. Instead of managing recruitment internally, the organisation partners with a specialist RPO provider. An RPO provider brings expert knowledge, scalability, and time-saving advantages to the table, allowing you to focus on what you do best. By partnering with a specialist, you can gain access to wide talent networks, allowing for positions to be filled with lightning speed. RPO also ensures compliance with hiring regulations, protecting startups from potential risks.

Learn more about how an RPO approach can help your startup.

All about outsourcing



**An RPO provides a startup with the best of both worlds. They get an expert recruiter (or flexible team of recruiters) assigned to them as an extension of their business whose job it is to embody what the organisation is all about in the market. Plus, they get access to the flexibility, scalability, and support network of the RPO's wider business; a team of subject matter experts that a startup would never otherwise be able to retain in-house**

Cameron Robinson,  
Sales Lead MSP & RPO - Talent

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**With 59% of candidates stating that a company's commitment to environmental sustainability influences their decision to accept a job offer, it is obvious that this is not a business priority that can be left to the bottom of the list.**

Jade Collins,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

## Sustainability

We know environmental sustainability is important for the planet, but did you know it also matters to job seekers? In Talent's Sustainability: Awareness to Action report, 84% of candidates said that it is important for them to work for a company that prioritises environmental sustainability, and 59% agree that it influences their decision to accept a job offer. When hiring for your startup it is essential to be attuned to what your candidates want in order to attain that top talent, and going green (in a genuine way) could make all the difference. Examples of going green could include implementing a robust ESG strategy and aiming for net zero carbon emissions.





**We often see businesses struggling with incomplete or disparate tech stacks. This causes a number of difficulties for the hiring process: double handling, no visibility for hiring managers, no reporting, the list goes on. Ultimately, all of these issues result in a slow process which can mean missing out on getting that perfect candidate over the line.**

Ryder Eberhard,  
Talent Acquisition Partner - Talent

## Tech stack

A well-considered tech stack is an essential part of enabling a startup's success in a competitive talent market. Referring to the set of technologies and tools used by startups to streamline hiring processes, it encompasses various software applications, platforms, and systems that support different stages of the employee lifecycle, making it more efficient, organised, and data driven. A tech stack may support moments that matter such as sourcing, application and candidate management, reference and background checking, onboarding, and candidate experience, right through to employee relations, contract management, L&D, payroll, leave management, performance management and engagement.





**Unconscious bias is the silent saboteur that can undermine the very foundation of your startup's diversity and innovation. By acknowledging its existence and actively combating it, you unlock the true potential of your team and create a culture of inclusivity that propels your company to greater heights.**

Sorcha Joyce,  
Head of Client Services - Talent



# U

## Unconscious bias

Eliminating unconscious bias in the hiring process is vital for startups. By promoting diversity, ensuring equal opportunities, and focusing on qualifications rather than biases, you can truly attract that top talent, build a positive employer brand, and mitigate legal risks. A fair and unbiased hiring environment fosters employee engagement and retention.





**It is one thing to hire for skills and another thing altogether to hire on values. It is important to hire on your business values as this is what will truly help you grow. Your culture is what sets you apart. Without it, you really don't have much.**

Jasmine Alderton,  
Client Delivery Lead - Talent

## Values



Having a strong set of values is vital for startups for many reasons, but especially when it comes to hiring. Values help guide cultural fit (or even better, culture “add”), influence hiring decisions, enhance retention and engagement, uphold the company culture, and differentiate your startup in the talent market. Your values serve as a compass, ensuring you stay true to your mission and create a cohesive and purpose-driven team.



**It's impossible to predict the future, but we can plan for it. Workforce planning is a vital process that supports your entire workforce management strategy. By preparing for future staffing needs, you can turn your attention to improving your team's efficiency and efficacy.**

Iris Clamor,  
Talent Acquisition Specialist - Talent

## Workforce planning

Workforce planning is the strategic process of analysing and forecasting the talent needs of a startup to ensure you have the right talent for the right roles at the right time. It involves assessing current and future staffing requirements in line with the company strategy, identifying skill gaps, and developing relevant strategies to address them. By effectively planning your workforce needs, you can build a resilient and high-performing team that drives sustainable growth and success.



# W





**Before you commence recruiting, be clear and upfront about what your process entails. Don't wing it and hope for the best, as it both looks unprofessional and lengthens the process. Ensure you have the budget and a clear plan before you start screening, so that you can make the offer in a timely fashion. Otherwise, you risk the potential of losing your preferred candidate.**

Tom Mackintosh,  
Managing Director - Talent

## eXperience

A good candidate eXperience has a profound impact on the success of the hiring process and the overall reputation of your startup. By prioritising an engaging and efficient experience at every stage of the hiring process, you will set the foundation for successful and sustainable hiring practices. 80% of new hires that have a good initial experience are likely to recommend their employer to their friends and family, which is critical for your reputation in market and brand awareness.





**With social sellers creating 45% more opportunities than their peers, building your personal brand can be your ultimate competitive advantage in a crowded world. Your personal brand has the power to shape perceptions and open doors to new opportunities.**

Sorcha Joyce,  
Head of Client Services - Talent

## You

You've thought about your company brand, but what about your personal one? As a founder or early startup leader, your personal brand matters when it comes to hiring. What's personal brand? It's the unique combination of skills, expertise, reputation, and image that an individual presents to the public and professional community. In addition to attracting investment and partnerships, a compelling and engaging personal brand can help you build credibility, differentiate from competitors, and attract top talent.





**A critical mistake is overestimating how much time and influence you think you've got. If your candidate attraction strategy isn't reaching the best in the business, and if your recruitment process doesn't enable you to move quickly once you think you've found the right person, chances are someone else will have gladly snapped them up instead. Despite headlines which might suggest a flood of talent; the best people will always be in demand.**

Cameron Robinson,  
Sales Lead – MSP & RPO - Talent

## Zero sum game

It's simple, if you don't hire the best candidates, someone else will. The competition for talented individuals in the tech industry is real and ongoing, with no end in sight. Make sure you follow the recommended practices above to secure the top talent for your startup, or others will beat you to it. Remember, what one person gains, another person may lose.



# Z

There you have it, everything you need to consider from A-Z when it comes to attracting and retaining top talent for your startup. Navigating the hiring process can be complex, but with the right knowledge and strategies you can assemble an extraordinary team to drive your startup forward.

By following the guide, we hope you'll gain the confidence and expertise needed to make informed decisions and secure the right individuals who will contribute to your startup's success. Remember: your future team awaits, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

If you need help with one or more of these hiring areas, we can help. Our team can tackle specific gaps or disfunctions within your hiring process, with affordable and flexible services specifically for startups. Whether you have people challenges, process problems, tech pains, or brand battles, our services are designed to solve your specific pain-points. Get in touch with the team today.

[Contact us](#)





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