



The why, who, and how of hiring engineers

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- Senior Director of Engineering at Rapid
- On Rapid, you can build & monetize your APIs with our developer tools. And you can discover and connect with thousands of APIs in our hub.



Agenda

The **WHY** of hiring

- Do you need to hire?

The **WHO** in hiring

- Who do you want to hire?

The **HOW** in hiring

- How do you assess your candidate?



The **WHY** of hiring



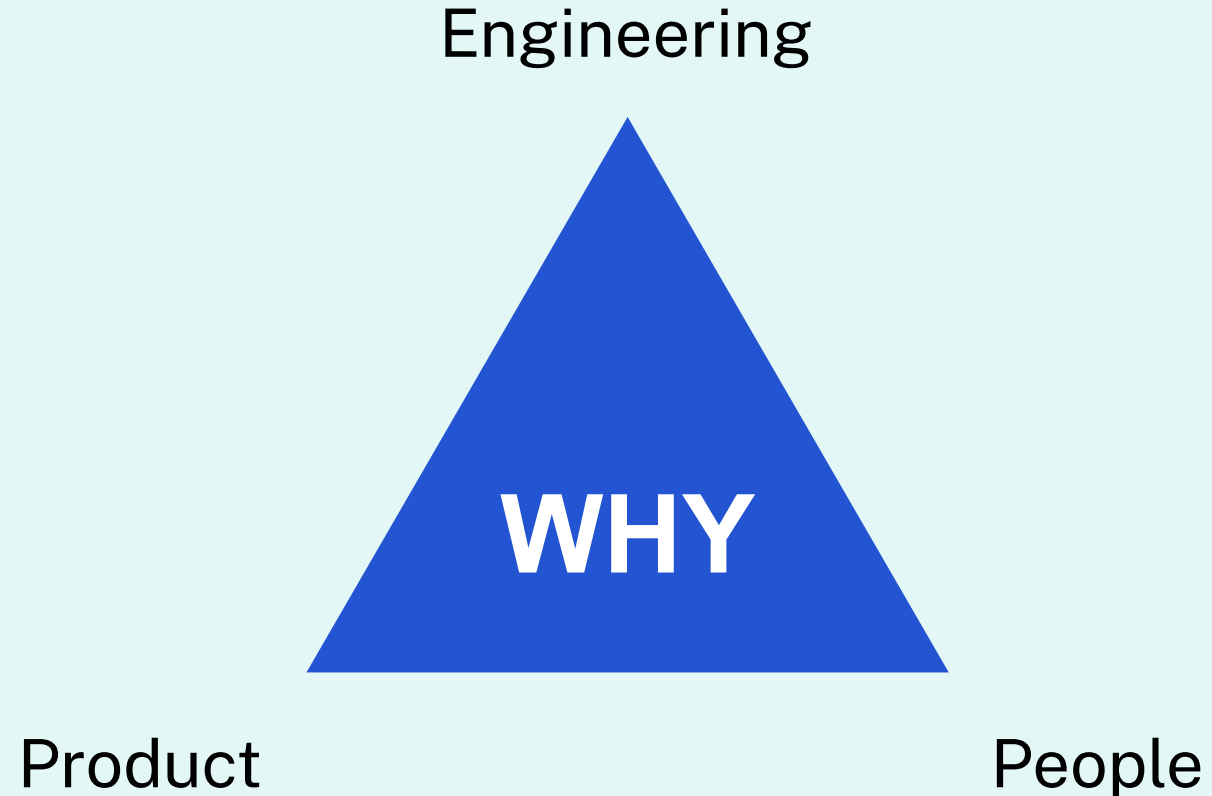
Guiding question: what problem are you trying to solve by hiring?

Hiring is a huge **investment**.



The 3 lenses

The WHY of hiring



Engineering

The WHY of hiring

Reinforcing signals

- Technical debt is blocking the team
- Your team spends >50% time fighting fires



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Anti-patterns

- Engineers drops everything to handle any reported bugs, despite severity.



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You have a process problem instead!

Product

The WHY of hiring

Reinforcing signals

- Clear signals that your product is growing
- The current team is out of capacity



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Anti-patterns

- Business strategy and prioritization is unclear. The team is spread too thin on problems that don't matter



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Anti-patterns

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You have a prioritization problem instead!

People

The WHY of hiring

Reinforcing signals

- There is a clear skill gap, hiring is a necessity to fill the gap



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Anti-patterns

- Work is distributed unevenly across engineers. One engineer has all the context
- No docs or onboarding

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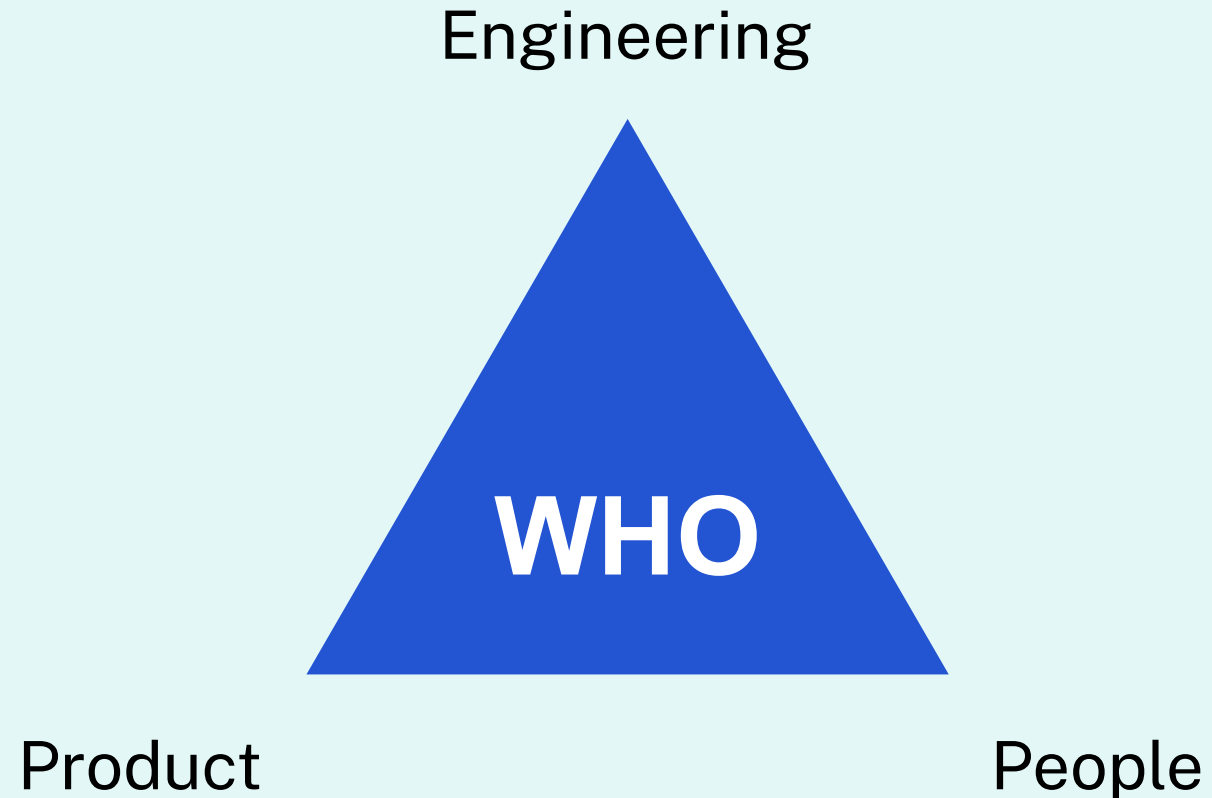
You have a knowledge distribution problem instead!

The **WHO** in hiring



The 3 lenses

The WHO of hiring



Engineering

The WHO in hiring

Tech infrastructure

Does your tech stack match the industry **standard** or is it **bespoke**?

Do all teams share the **same service structure** and infra?

This influences the **skillset, experience level, tech specificity.**



Engineering

The WHO in hiring

Tech infrastructure

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Process maturity

How **efficient** is your organization in getting things done?

Would you need an engineer who can work **without process**, who can **build processes** or **work within established processes**?



Engineering

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Process maturity

How efficient is your organization in getting things done?

Would you need an engineer who can work without process, who can build processes or work within established processes?

Technical maturity

What is the level of **technical debt** in the product area?

Does your organization rely on tribal knowledge? Are there **decision logs**?

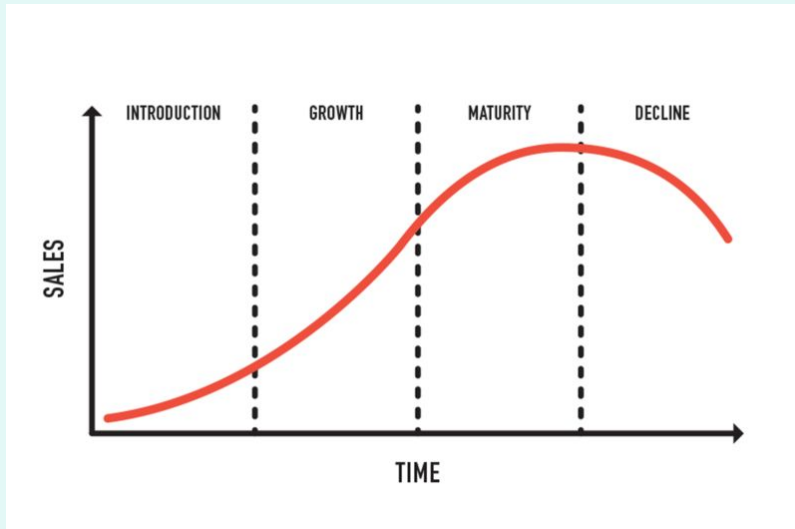
This influences the **experience level** you'd need to hire at.



Product

The WHO in hiring

Product lifecycle

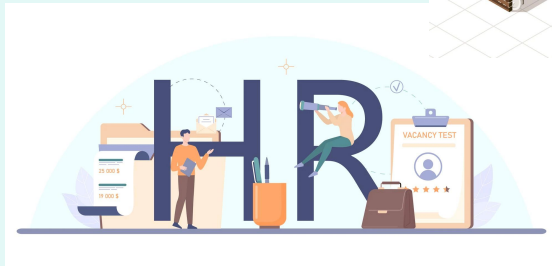


- Prototyping or scaling up?

Product

The WHO in hiring

Product nature



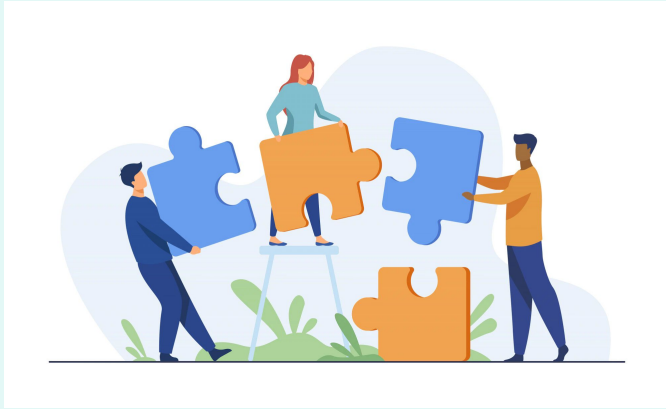
- The depth of the product domain might require you to hire people with prior product knowledge



People

The WHO in hiring

Team fit



- What are the strength & weakness of your current team?
- Anything to note on personality compatibility & ways of working?
- How does success look like in your team?



People

The WHO in hiring

Organization limitations



- Level of people operations support and locales you can legally hire from
- Budget and location factors
- Remote vs co-location



Articulate the WHO in hiring

Hiring Canvas

Modeled after theteamcanvas.com

I'm looking for an engineer who satisfy the following criteria, because....

Team Name: Date:

Team fit

What are the strength & weakness of your current team?

Anything to note on personality compatibility & ways of working?

How does success look like in your team?

Technical infrastructure

Does your tech stack match the industry standard or is it bespoke?

Do all teams share the same service structure and infra?

Process maturity

How efficient is your organization in getting things done?

Would you need an engineer who can work without process, who can build processes or work within established processes?

Product lifecycle

Where does your product lie in terms of the product lifecycle?

Do you need a prototyper or someone to scale up your product?

Organizational limitation

Level of people operations support and locales you can legally hire from

Budget and location factors
Remote vs co-location

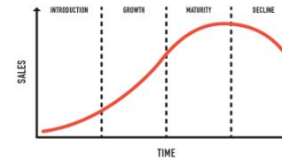
Technical maturity

What is the level of technical debt in the product area?

Does your organization rely on tribal knowledge? Are there decision logs?

Product nature

How complex is your product and problem domain?



Detail your expectations of the engineer (30/60/90)

Summary

Based on the above analysis, I'm looking for a candidate at _____ experience level, I'd focus on candidates with _____ past experience. The candidate needs to know these frameworks and programming languages: _____. / can be tech agnostic as long as they have _____. The ideal candidate excels at creating things from the ground / follow processes to get things done in the organization. To be successful in the team I'm hiring for, the candidate needs to be _____.

<https://tinyurl.com/nhkrspur>

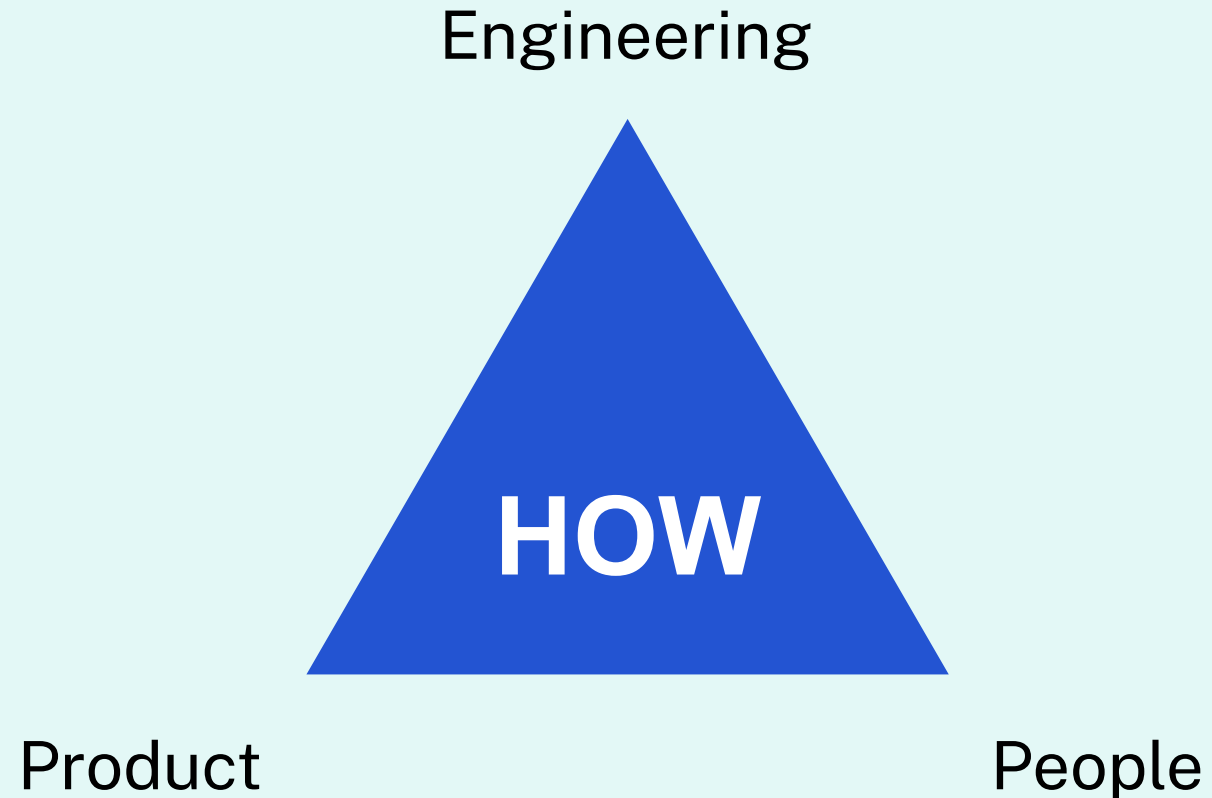


The **HOW** in hiring



The 3 lenses

The WHO of hiring



Good interviewers dig deep and their questions look a lot like coaching prompts.



Good practices in coaching in interviews



Active listening

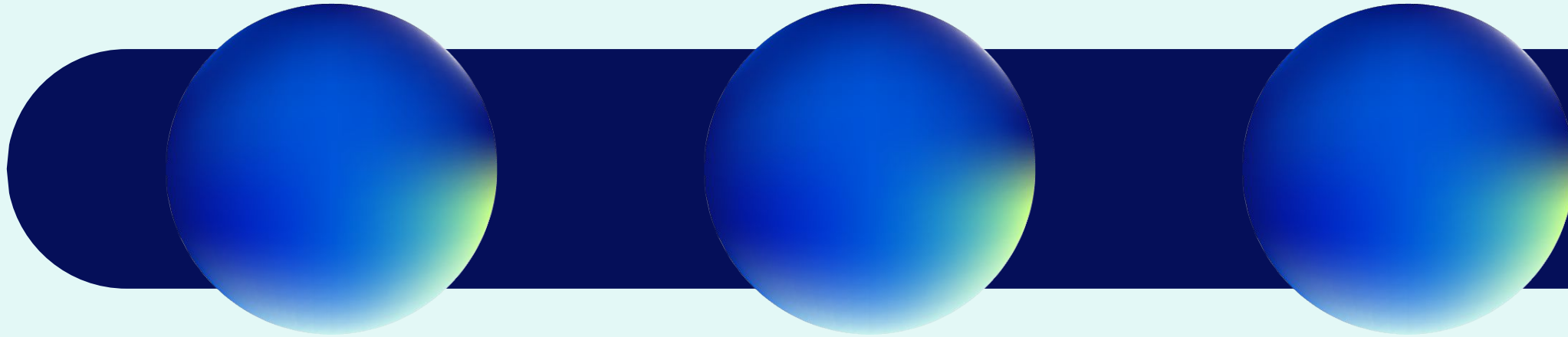


Echoing



Follow up with open-ended questions starting with “What”

An example



Expectation: the hire needs to be able to scale up the product

Let's talk about scaling. What were the steps you have taken to ensure that your service can work at the required load?

Follow-up: You mentioned monitoring dashboards, what were the key metrics you report and alert on?

Recap

The **WHY** of hiring

- Evaluate if hiring is the best solution to the business problem you have at hand

The **WHO** in hiring

- Work through the provided framework to articulate who you want to hire

The **HOW** in hiring

- Learn how to assess candidates based on the expectations you have set



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Thank you!



The business problem(s) you are facing

Build new

- Build vs buy: are there existing SaaS vendors in the market that already solved your needs?
- Is the new product core to your business?
- Are there Open Source projects that can speed up development?

Grow existing product

- What metrics inform the business decision to grow the product?
- Does your team have the right composition to train new engineers?
- How much have you invested in onboarding and documentation?

Maintenance

- How much time is your current team spending on **fighting fires**?
- How **efficient** is your current team at handling bugs and incidents?



Example hiring justification: I am hiring to grow an existing product. Based on our current organizational effectiveness and ramp up capability, adding more people will improve delivery.

Factor #3: Team composition

The WHO in hiring

- Strength & weakness of your current team
- Personality & ways of working
- How does success look like in your team
- What is the engineer's tolerable flaw



Factor #1: Company size

The WHO in hiring

Start-up (~1-15 engineers)

- The hire needs to be team, tech, product-specific
- Less risky to hire for current skills
- Less structure in hiring, more human-based
- Weaker people ops support

Scale-up / big-corp

- More efficient to hire for general profiles
- Opportunity to hire for potential
- More structure in hiring, more process-based
- Stronger people ops support



Factor #2: Technical strategy

The WHO in hiring

Tech infra

Does your technical infrastructure match the industry standard or is it bespoke?

Tech debt

What is the level of technical debt in the product area?

Docs

Does your organization rely on tribal knowledge? Are there decision logs?

Process maturity

How efficient is your organization in getting things done?

