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Factoring Human Capital Into Your Business Plan

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Interviewing: It's More Than Just Your Gut

The decision to hire someone is essentially a purchasing decision. Yet managers tend to make the mistake of treating the interview like a conversation. This presents several pitfalls. First, it gives the interviewee the opportunity to run away with the conversation. Second, it gives no structure in which to gather information that will be useful in not only assessing this individual against the position, but also against other candidates you may be seeing.

To best prepare for this important decision, here are five steps that will result in a better choice:

1. **The Greeting.** An interviewee will give you their best answers when they know what to expect. Start by defining both the process and the position.
2. **The Probe.** The majority of the time should be spent asking questions that you've already developed against the profile for the job. Be diligent. If you don't get an answer that gives you the data that you need, ask it again in a slightly reconfigured way.
3. **The Assessment.** Begin to compare the data against the profile. Take notes and make comments like "Strong communication skills" or "Would like to see more strategic thinking."
4. **The Sell.** Only to be used on those who you think might be a good fit. Take the time to describe the company and position and why, based on your discussion, you think it would be a good fit for the candidate.
5. **The Close.** Tell them what they can expect next. Be specific and don't overpromise.

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