



job.

Hiring for cultural fit is a popular term amongst HR professionals and recruiters. While the latest trends tell us to hire for personality, hiring decision makers can't ignore a lack of skill or training when assessing a candidate's fit for a position, especially those that ubiquitously require brand new hires to "hit the ground running".

The fast learners, tech-savvy, and those with a certain level of understanding of professional decorum, can take the cake during the interview process. But mere good interview skills don't necessarily mean they have the know-how for the job. Hiring managers have to be able to assess fit for the position. This is why recruiters and hiring managers have to find the delicate balance between a perfect cultural fit and those that fit the functional requirements to DO the

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Functional Fit: How to Measure?

If organizations were to [assess candidates simply based on skills](#) and training, then interviews would be a moot point! To assess for functional fit beyond brief descriptions on a resume, ask candidates to bring an example of their work; a portfolio, writing samples, even snippets of code on a professional network will suffice. Other skills that are hard to display but easy to quantify like sales and marketing, can be assessed via measurable results.

If you can't measure; assess. Sometimes, a position requires skills so advanced or niche, recruiting pros must implement assessments during the screening process. If you are hiring for such a position, implement the assessment early in the process to avoid [wasting time on interviews](#) with unqualified applicants.

Every candidate should have so-called "standard" professional abilities like the potential to lead, teamwork capabilities, and acceptable communication skills. Unfortunately, much of the entering workforce has underdeveloped communication skills. Although it is a soft skill, in the State of St. Louis Workforce study, it was noted that the [lack of communication skills](#) and critical thinking skills to be two of the most problematic attributes in applicants. By implementing your own internal requirements around this, you can build these [candidate screening tools](#) into your current recruiting process. A simple example would be having someone working within a call center having to pass multiple phone screens with dial-in codes. Not only does this meet a recruiting stage need, it shows the interviewer if this person can be comfortable in a semi-complicated phone environment that is dependent on communication skills.

Cultural Fit

Interviews give windows into a candidate's personality; it's practically why they were invented. Candidates show employers their personalities through more than just the words they say; they also show it through body language and attention to detail in the interview. In Hyper Island's survey, Tomorrow's Most Wanted, 53% of respondents said [cultural alignment](#) was the most desirable candidate trait.

Simply put, people can be taught skills, but they can't be taught attitude — the intangibles like work ethic, adaptability, good people skills, etc, that make for a good cultural fit. Dan Schwabel (@DanSchwabel) said:

"As the [focus on hiring](#) has shifted away from technical proficiency and onto attitude, it's precipitated a lot of tactical changes in how job interviews are conducted."

His point is, as companies shift from skills based hiring to the more cultural-based hiring in vogue now, interviews have shifted as well. How do you assess for things like a good work ethic? It's tough for any recruiter via the phone or a piece of paper.

[Video interviewing platforms](#) allow recruiters and hiring managers to determine a candidate's cultural fit from anywhere because it's a conversation. Through the video interview, hiring decision makers are able to make the same deductions of a candidate's fit as they would in a traditional interview. The difference: it's more convenient and less expensive to conduct a video interview than a traditional interview. Weaving video interviews into your current process gives you the opportunity to assess candidates for both cultural fit and skills aptitude.

How to Determine a Balance

Combine functional and culture-based questions during the interview to achieve a well-rounded picture of the candidates. During the interview, ask questions that are strategically targeted to answer the functional vs. cultural fit debate. Lisa Quast (@careerwomaninc), Founder and CEO at Career Woman Inc., lists these questions to determine the balance:

Cultural Fit

- Describe your ideal work environment.
- Explain a work environment or culture in which you would NOT be happy.
- Describe the behavior and characteristics of the best boss you've ever had.
- Tell me about your favorite working relationship and what you learned from it.
- Tell me about your preferred work style (e.g. alone or on a team, with close supervision or allowed to work independently, fast-paced or slower paced)

Functionally Fit

- Sales role: Walk me through the most complex sale you've ever made and why you believe it was complex.
- Marketing role: What are some of the biggest issues you've encountered in product launch plans, and how did you overcome them?
- Administrative Assistant role: What have you found are the most important skills for being successful in the role of an administrative assistant?
- Database Administrator role: Walk me through your process of troubleshooting problems/ issues.

Hiring decision makers have to maintain a balance of functional and cultural skills when assessing a candidate's fit for the role. Hiring a candidate based on their function fit could lead to the 89% of the [new hires who fail](#) for attitudinal reasons. Hiring for cultural fit alone could result in candidates who don't have the necessary skill set to function in the position. Use a combination of interview skills, examples of work, and the right interview skills to find candidates who have the right balance of functional and cultural similarities with your organization.

