



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 job.

#### 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)



## Recruiting Blogs

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### 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.

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