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Paul McDonald • Dec. 13, 2016

The hiring process is drawing to a close. You just interviewed someone who seems like the perfect fit for the role and your company culture. Everything clicks.

Even though you're eager to land the candidate, you still need to do your due diligence. You know that if you rush through the process, you risk ending up with a **bad hire**. But if you take *too long*, you may lose that talented tax accountant or auditor to a competitor.

This is especially true today. Nearly four in 10 (39 percent) U.S. workers in a **Robert Half survey** said they'd start pursuing other job openings if faced with a lengthy hiring process. Thirty-two percent would even question the company's decision-making abilities in general.

But how long is too long? Almost half (46 percent) of respondents would lose interest in prospective employers if they don't hear back within seven to 14 days of the interview, while 23 percent want some sort of communication within a week.

If you're having trouble landing highly skilled candidates, you may need to make your hiring process faster and more efficient. Here's how:

1. Maintain a candidate pipeline. Don't start from scratch every time you need to fill a vacancy. To accelerate the hiring process, maintain an up-to-date file of potential candidates. This list should include resumes and contact information of previous applicants as well as CPAs you've met at **networking** events and job fairs who may themselves be interested or know someone who is.

Then, when you're faced with an opening, contact people on this list. Be proactive instead of waiting for candidates to stumble upon your job posting.

2. Tap your team. A strong [employee referral program](#) can ease the recruiting part of

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protracted because you're focused on other pressing matters. What many managers forget is that they can tap outside help for parts of the hiring process.

Specialized [recruiters save you time](#) because they know the local market and already have a high volume of accounting professionals on file. Tell them what you're looking for, and they'll send you candidates who match your criteria. Recruiters are also a good source of advice, such as on salary and negotiation trends, during your hiring search.

4. Expedite the interview process. Once you or your recruiter have identified the people you want to [interview](#), don't waste time.

- Before meeting top candidates, decide on your interview team and have them set aside time on their calendars.
- Be open to nontraditional formats, such as [video interviews](#), to enhance your efficiency.
- Try to schedule interviews in one large block of time so that at the end of the day, you and your team can make a decision about your next steps while memories are fresh and momentum is high.

5. Communicate at every step. Don't leave candidates dangling – stay in touch throughout each step of the hiring process. Send a quick acknowledgement email when they apply, and inform them of the general timeline. Call and schedule a meeting as soon as you've decided to interview them. If that goes well, you can go as far as to make a verbal offer, contingent on reference checks and, if applicable, background screening.

Even for applicants you choose not to hire, let them know as soon as you know. This will help them carry on with their search. The downside of not taking this respectful and simple step can be damaging. Professionals will let their network know you left

them out in the cold, which could dissuade other talented accountants from wanting

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overview of trends as well as tools to customize projected salary ranges for your local market.

Build on the salary by also offering sought-after perks, such as [work-life balance](#) programs, a generous vacation package and flexible-scheduling options. Additionally, make sure you're communicating to candidates why your firm is a great place to work and their potential career paths.

When hiring, keep in mind the old adage, "He (or she) who hesitates is lost." Don't hesitate when you identify strong candidates. Woo them, tell them how your firm can help them grow their career, offer an attractive salary, and move quickly. If you don't, you may find your top choice chooses someone else.

Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. He writes and speaks frequently on hiring, workplace and career-management topics. Over the course of more than 30 years in the recruiting field, McDonald has advised thousands of company leaders and job seekers on how to hire and get hired.

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