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Paul McDonald • Sep. 05, 2019



Employers face hiring challenges in every business environment. Today, however, when the unemployment rate for accountants and auditors is just 1.5%, recruiting difficulties become even more severe.

Senior managers in [a recent Robert Half survey](#) said generating interest from candidates is the most difficult part of the hiring process in the current market. Asking the right interview questions ranked second, followed by developing compensation packages and negotiating salaries. Whatever the challenge, well-meaning managers often hinder their own efforts as the pressure to recruit high-performing accounting professionals overwhelms them.

Here are five common – and avoidable – pitfalls employers make in the hiring

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contemplating the abilities you prize, and home in on the most crucial skills required for long-term success. This helps keep your job description to the point. It also prevents you from limiting your pool of applicants with an unnecessarily lengthy list of “must-haves.”

## 2. Skimping on salary and benefits

In the current hiring market, you must offer competitive compensation to land elite accounting candidates, or you'll risk losing them to firms willing to pay more. Don't play games with negotiations. Make a strong offer from the start to keep candidates interested. They know the salary their skills command and will quickly move on to another firm if they feel lowballed.

Consult industry resources like the [Robert Half Salary Guide for Accounting and Finance Professionals](#) and your network for insights into the latest compensation trends. Also make sure you track candidates' requests to stay current on the [benefits and perks](#) top applicants want.

## 3. Overlooking soft skills

A mismatched skill set is the leading cause of a failed hire, the Robert Half research found. Under the pressure of a hiring search, employers may be tempted to look for shortcuts in the hiring process, and soft skills are sometimes sacrificed in favor of technical abilities. Don't fall into this trap. Managers who take time to consider what nontechnical attributes the ideal candidate should possess can save themselves from a poor [corporate culture](#) fit and the cost of a bad hire.

Ask interview questions that elicit responses about situations in which accounting professionals put their problem-solving, collaborative and communication skills to use. Afterward, check their references. Previous employers and colleagues can provide insights into whether candidates have the nontechnical chops to thrive in your firm.

#### 4. Failing to promote company culture

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#### 5. Taking too long to extend an offer

The majority of workers in a separate [Robert Half survey](#) said a lengthy hiring process can cause them to lose interest in a job. Since the current demand for talent outpaces supply, dragging out your decision will significantly affect the size of the applicant pool you're left to draw from.

Establish clear hiring and approval processes that allow you to move quickly once you identify top prospects. Communicate regularly with applicants to keep them interested and build excitement for the position and your organization.

With the nation's unemployment rate near historical lows, there's little room for error when you're recruiting skilled accountants. Strike these mistakes from your hiring process to improve your odds of landing talented professionals who flourish at your firm.

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*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 35 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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