

# HIRING FOR AN ETHICAL FIT

ETHICAL CULTURE TOOLKIT



**GREAT VISION WITHOUT  
GREAT PEOPLE IS  
IRRELEVANT**

Jim Collins

## Introduction

To create and maintain an ethical corporate culture, you need to hire people who respect that culture. Bringing in an employee who doesn't "get" your company's values can hurt everything you've worked to achieve. Such a hire can also expose you to unnecessary liability.

But how do you choose the right candidate? Everyone puts their best foot forward during the hiring process. You need a process that gives you the best chance of finding a good fit.

In this Toolkit, you'll find processes and recommendations that can help you hire employees that have the right mindset for your business. Use this resource to develop a plan that will avoid human resources and ethics problems down the road.

# WHAT IS "ETHICAL FIT"?



## HIRING FOR AN ETHICAL FIT

You may have hired dozens of people during your career. In those cases, you looked for a good fit for the specific job. Did the candidate have the right skills and experience to do the work well? You probably also considered whether the candidate would "fit in" with your existing staff. Was the candidate professional? Did he have a sense of humor? Did she have a good attitude?

Hiring for an ethical fit simply extends your existing process. The candidate needs to be able to do the job well, and must be able to get along with the team. But the candidate also needs to have an ethical orientation that matches your company's culture.

Research shows that ethical fit has several benefits. Good ethical fit reduces turnover and increases commitment to the job, in addition to supporting your ethical culture.

Determining whether a candidate is a good ethical fit requires some extra consideration. You should infuse the hiring process with this culture at every stage. After conveying how important ethics is to your company, some potential applicants may self-select out of the process. The applicants who proceed will be readier to address ethical issues.

Using the suggestions provided in this Toolkit, hiring for an ethical fit will rapidly become a normal part of your recruiting routine. You already know how to hire for qualifications and skills, as well as for the right personality. Adding another valuable aspect to that process is just another step in the same fundamental process.

# HIRING FOR ETHICAL FIT FLOWCHART



1. USE JOB POSTINGS TO  
COMMUNICATE THE  
IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS.



2. FOCUS ON ETHICS AS A  
MAJOR INTERVIEW TOPIC.



3. CONFIRM AND TEST FOR  
ETHICAL COMMITMENT.

### START OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT

When job-seekers read a posting, they gain information about the employer. For instance, a company may describe itself as "customer-centric" or "results-oriented." These terms give an idea of the company's culture, and applicants may decide not to apply if they do not share the same values. You have a stronger chance of recruiting ethical employees by raising ethics from the start.

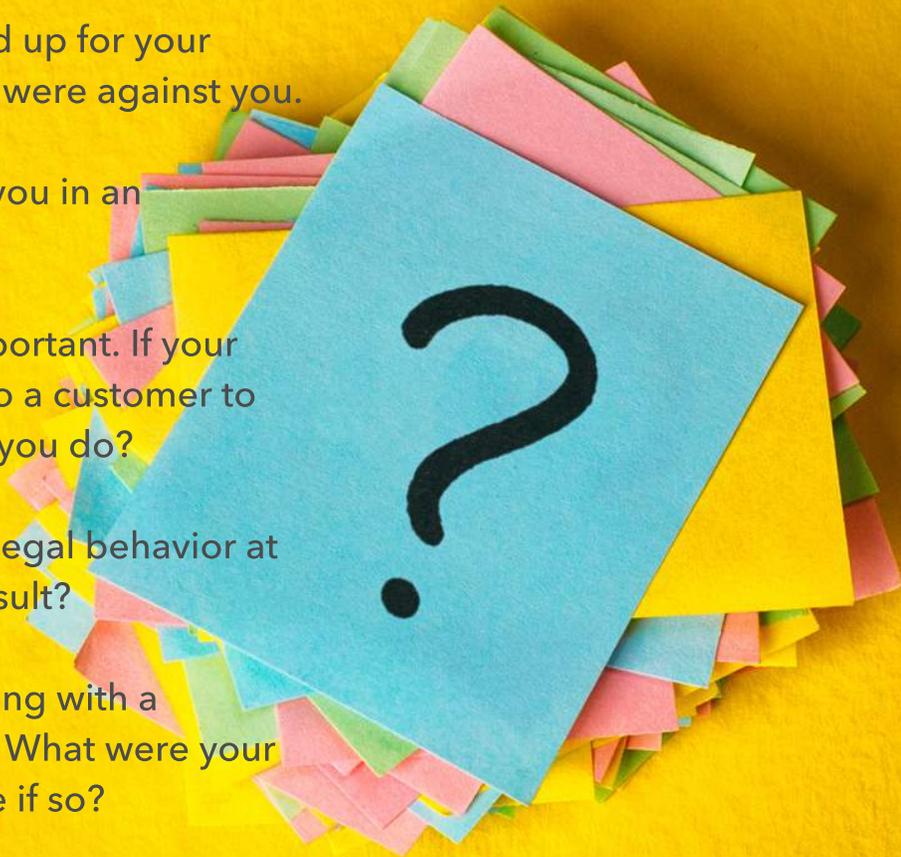
This list includes wording that you can adapt for use in your job posts.

- **Introduce the Company.** Include information about the company's ethical environment in the job posting. Some possibilities:
  - Refer to the company's "core values" and name them.
  - Use moral terms (honesty, respect, kindness, service, tolerance, etc.) when describing the company and the successful candidate.
  - Quote your mission statement if it includes ethical aspects.
  - Describe the existing team in terms of their virtues as well as their skills and talents.
- **List the Desired Qualifications & Competencies.** In addition to discussing necessary experience, training, and other qualifications, include ethical qualifications, such as:
  - "Acts ethically even in difficult circumstances"
  - "Demonstrated integrity and trustworthiness"
  - "Commitment to dealing honestly with customers and co-workers"
  - "Promotes the company's culture and values"
  - "Strong moral character"
  - Belief in constructive teamwork"

# ETHICS IN THE INTERVIEW

Even though most employers want employees with integrity, most interviewers do not specifically ask about ethical issues. But in an ethical corporate culture, those issues should be a part of each candidate screening. Here are some potential questions for interviewees to check for ethical fit. Look for thoughtful responses rather than canned answers.

- Tell me about a time you stood up for your principles even though others were against you.
- What values are important to you in an organization?
- Customer retention is very important. If your supervisor needed you to lie to a customer to save the account, what would you do?
- Have you ever had to report illegal behavior at work? What happened as a result?
- Do you have experience working with a compliance program at work? What were your impressions of that experience if so?
- If you had an ethical dilemma at work, how would you resolve it?
- Did you review the ethics material on our website? If so, what stood out to you?



**TIME SPENT ON HIRING IS TIME WELL-SPENT**

Robert Half

# DOUBLE-CHECKING FIT

Hiring is always a leap of faith. A good interviewee might not be a great employee. But there are several ways to confirm your decision, both pre- and post-hire.

## Don't Skip Steps!

Employers often skip references and background checks, or fail to confirm a degree or certification. These pre-hire steps can save you problems.



## Give a Test.

There are many options for personality and professional assessments that may help you screen candidates. Use a well-established test designed to be fair.



## You're on Probation.

Consider using a probation period for new hires. After working with someone for several weeks, you will be able to confirm a good ethical fit (or not).



## Make Connections.

After employees become permanent, keep them engaged in ethical culture through training and team-building activities.

