



THE WANTED POSTER

HIRING SYSTEM

A leader's complete guide to hiring right,
reducing turnover, and building a team that
works when you're not in the room.



Part of the Alignment System | v5

A NOTE BEFORE YOU START

Think about a wanted poster for a criminal. El Chapo, let's say. If you've seen that face — the dark mustache, the sharp eyes, the stocky build — you don't need to think twice when you spot him on the street. You know immediately. That's the guy.

That's what this system builds. Not a job description. Not a list of requirements. A picture. A specific, unmistakable picture of the person you're looking for. Defined before anyone walks through the door.

I reduced turnover in my own restaurants from 240% to 50%. That number didn't come from better job postings or higher pay. It came from getting clear about who I was actually hiring for and holding the standard. Every. Single. Time.

The Wanted Poster is one of two tools inside what I call the Alignment System. The 3P Filter handles your current team. The Wanted Poster handles who comes next. Together, they create a self-sustaining system built on culture, not chaos.

The Wanted Poster Hiring System is the result of 20+ years and 8,000+ hires across restaurants, medical offices, engineering firms, and technology companies. It works because it forces clarity before urgency has a chance to compromise your judgment.

Most bad hires aren't bad people. They're the wrong person for that specific role, hired by a leader who didn't define the role well enough to know the difference.

This workbook fixes that. Work through it seriously and you'll walk out of every interview knowing exactly what you're looking for. And exactly what to do when you find it.

SECTION 1 THE FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

The Wanted Poster evaluates every candidate on five attributes. Skill opens the door. Character determines everything after.

The system is built on one discipline: define the ideal candidate first, then evaluate all candidates against that standard. Do NOT evaluate them against each other. Hiring is not a competition between candidates. It is a comparison between the candidate and your predefined standard.

#	ATTRIBUTE	WHAT IS MEASURES
1	Skill (Pass/Fail)	Can they perform the minimum essential functions of the job? Binary. Yes or no. Not scored.
2	Defining Trait	The single behavioral trait that predicts excellence in this specific role. Scored 1 to 10.
3	Drive	Do they bring their own momentum? Do they persevere through difficulty without being pushed? Scored 1 to 10.
4	Mindfulness	Are they aware of self, others, and their relational environment? Do they read the room? Scored 1 to 10.
5	Humility (Non-Negotiable)	Are they coachable? Do they own mistakes, give credit, and put the team first? Scored 1 to 10. Cannot be the lowest score. Must be 8 or above.

HIRING THRESHOLD 36 or above out of 40	HUMILITY RULE Must not be the lowest score AND must be 8 or above	SKILL RULE All minimum requirements must be met
--	--	---

If the candidate meets the standard, hire immediately. If not, do not hire. Regardless of urgency.

SECTION 2 WHAT THIS SYSTEM REQUIRES OF YOU

The Wanted Poster is powerful. But it cannot compensate for a leader who won't hold the standard. Before you use this system, commit to three disciplines.

Clarity

You have to know what you're looking for before anyone walks in. What does this role exist to accomplish? What behaviors lead to excellence in it? What will you not compromise on? A vague leader produces vague hires. There's no system in the world that fixes that.

Courage

You will meet candidates you like who don't hit the threshold. You will feel the pressure of an open seat and a full calendar. The system only works if you decline candidates who fall short. Including the ones you have chemistry with. Comfort is never a reason to hire someone.

Consistency

Nothing destroys culture faster than inconsistency. Score the same way every time. Deduct based on behavioral evidence, not feeling. Hold the 36-point threshold. Use humility as the non-negotiable anchor. When leadership is consistent, culture becomes predictable. When culture becomes predictable, your team becomes reliable.

SECTION 3 THE FIVE CORE ATTRIBUTES

3.1 Skill | The Gatekeeper

Skill answers one question: can this person perform the minimum essential functions of the job? That's it. Nothing more.

Skill is pass/fail. It is not scored. If a candidate clears the minimum, they move forward. If they don't, the conversation ends. Regardless of how much you like them or how strong their drive is.

The trap most leaders fall into is treating excess skill as a positive. It isn't. If your minimum requirement for a barista is "able to show up on time, legally able to work, willing to learn," then someone with 10 years of barista experience doesn't score higher than someone with zero. They both meet the minimum. Beyond minimum, skill becomes a distraction from what actually determines performance: character.

One more thing: soft skills (attitude, integrity, cooperation) do NOT belong in this section. They are behavioral attributes and will be evaluated under Defining Trait, Drive, Mindfulness, and Humility. Minimum Skill Requirements are measurable technical skills only.

Define your minimum skill criteria as measurable, observable facts. Not impressions. Facts.

3.2 Defining Trait | The Behavioral Anchor

Every role has one behavioral trait that, when present, predicts excellence, and when absent, explains the failed hires you've made in that seat.

This is not a personality preference. It's a behavioral requirement specific to this role. A customer-facing role needs warmth and outward energy. A detail role needs precision and follow-through. A leadership role needs decisiveness and clear communication. You can like the same things in every person you hire and still select the wrong trait for every role.

You choose exactly one Defining Trait per role. Not two. Not a blend. One. The process for finding it is in Section 4.

Every answer the candidate gives during the interview should be filtered through a single lens: does this reinforce or weaken evidence of the Defining Trait?

The Defining Trait must be measurable. Ask: Can I describe what this trait looks like? Can I describe how someone with this trait communicates? Can I identify behaviors that display it? Can I identify behaviors that contradict it? If you can't answer yes to all four, choose a more observable trait.

3.3 Drive | The Internal Engine

Drive answers one question: does this person bring their own momentum?

Low-drive candidates need to be pushed. They require micromanagement, escalation, and repeated follow-up to produce outcomes that a high-drive candidate initiates on their own. The difference in organizational energy is enormous. And it compounds across every person on your team.

You're not looking for ambition or career goals. A 16-year-old with no life plan can have tremendous drive. What you're looking for is perseverance through difficulty, ownership when things go wrong, and self-initiated action. Those show up in stories. Listen for them.

Drive isn't simply about raw motivation. The source matters. A candidate might show every sign of being highly driven, but if what's fueling them isn't connected to the role being filled, you have a mismatch. When you see general Drive in a candidate, keep asking. What is propelling that internal motivation? Adventure? Validation? A pursuit of excellence? The answer needs to align with what the role demands. If it doesn't, the score should reflect that.

Candidates with Drive bring their own momentum. Constant supervision isn't necessary. They are already disciplined to persevere during hard times and use hurdles as a learning tool, not a reason to quit. Drive is demonstrated by:

- Persevering despite difficulty
- Acting without being told
- Taking responsibility for outcomes
- Pursuing improvement or long-term goals
- Strong work ethic
- Finishing what they start

3.4 Mindfulness | Relational Intelligence

Mindfulness is awareness. Of self, of others, and of the relational environment. It's the difference between someone who reads the room and someone who doesn't know the room exists.

Here's the part most leaders miss: mindfulness appears before the interview begins. How did they greet the receptionist? How did they sit in the waiting area? Did they acknowledge the other people in the room? Were they prepared? Did they dress appropriately for the environment? These are not meaningless details. They are behavioral data.

In the interview itself, mindfulness shows up in listening, in how they describe their impact on others, and in how they talk about people who challenged or frustrated them. The language is telling. The tone is telling. Don't ignore it.

Note: what "appropriate" looks like may vary by role. A construction worker showing up in jeans is not a Mindfulness red flag. A barista showing up in pajamas is. Decide what acceptable looks like for the specific role before you sit down with a single candidate.

3.5 Humility | The Non- Negotiable

Humility is the foundation. Every other attribute depends on it.

Humility is not weakness or self-deprecation. It's ownership plus openness. The willingness to take responsibility, receive feedback, grow from it, and put the team above the ego. A candidate with high humility can be coached toward excellence in every other area. A candidate with low humility, regardless of how high they score on Drive or Defining Trait, will eventually be a culture problem.

Watch the language. As you listen to a candidate answer questions, ask yourself: do they cast blame on others or do they assume responsibility? Do they acknowledge that people have supported and lifted them up? How many times do they use I or me language versus we or us language? People with genuine humility use "we" when describing success. They use "I" when describing mistakes. People with low humility invert that. Listen for it in every story they tell.

TWO RULES FOR HUMILITY:

- 1. Humility MUST NOT be the lowest score.**
- 2. Humility MUST be 8 or above.**

If either rule is violated, do not hire. No exceptions.

SECTION 4 BUILDING YOUR WANTED POSTER

| THE 5 STEPS

Step 1 | Role Information

Clarity here determines accuracy everywhere else. Especially in smaller businesses, it's common for one person to float between roles. Be specific about what role is being filled and what it entails. Defining this well prevents the most common interview mistake: expanding the role mid-interview because the candidate's skills look interesting.

Don't expand the role during the interview. If a barista candidate has management experience and you start mentally adding inventory and scheduling duties, you've already set them up to fail. Hire them to fill the role as defined. Nothing more. Nothing less. Unmet expectations erode trust faster than anything else.

Gather and write down:

- Role title
- Department
- Primary purpose of the role
- Critical outcomes expected
- Reporting structure (who this person reports to, and do they have capacity to develop a Project?)
- Success profile: what great looks like in this role

On Reporting Structure: before hiring, ask yourself whether the person overseeing this new hire has the capacity to develop a Project-stage employee. If your team needs a Partner from day one and you don't have bandwidth to develop someone, factor that into how tightly you hold the scoring threshold.

On the Success Profile: look forward. What do you see this person accomplishing? What would you get if you pulled the best out of them? How would the best version of this candidate impact your business and team?

Before moving to Step 2, your Role Information should clearly answer all of these:

- What will a person in this role be doing?
- What are the responsibilities of the role?
- Why am I hiring for this role?
- What's the reporting structure?
- What do I expect from someone in this role?
- What does success look like in this role?
- Here's what I need now. What would be great to have in the future?

If you cannot answer any of these questions clearly, go back. The clarity of your Wanted Poster depends on it.

Step 2 | Minimum Skill Requirements (Pass/Fail)

List only what is measurable and truly non-negotiable. If a candidate doesn't have these skills, there is no reason to interview them. They cannot meet the minimum functions of the job.

For every skill you list, ask yourself:

- Is this skill measurable and well-defined?
- Does this description give me an evaluation I can vet?
- Can the candidate perform the minimal essential functions of the job without this skill?

If the answer to the last question is yes, the skill isn't essential. Remove it. If the answer is no, it stays.

Common categories to consider: legal or compliance requirements (certifications, licensure, age), technical (software, equipment, specific methods), and functional (physical requirements, schedule availability, communication baseline).

A candidate who fails any one of these requirements cannot proceed. Regardless of how strong they look on every other attribute.

Step 3 | Defining Trait

This is the most important step. The process below is inspired by Brené Brown's core values exercise from "Dare to Lead." The goal is the same: force clarity until only one word remains. That one word is the Defining Trait.

Start by brainstorming every possible trait that could matter for this role. Write them all down. Don't filter yet. Include traits you're not sure about. Use the Defining Trait Reference List in Appendix B as a starting point. The goal here is to explore all possibilities first.

Once you have your full list, narrow it down using these five questions:

- A.** Which trait predicts excellence most consistently? Think of your best performers in this role. What personal characteristic do they share?
- B.** Which trait, if missing, causes failure fastest? This is your non-negotiable. The thing that, when absent, explains every bad hire you've made in this seat.
- C.** Which trait aligns most with the culture you're protecting? Hiring reinforces culture. It doesn't just fill a seat.
- D.** Which trait differentiates exceptional performance from mediocre performance?
- E.** If you could only choose one trait for this role, which would it be? This forces clarity. Eliminate every other option until one remains. That's the Defining Trait.

NON-NEGOTIABLE RULE: One, Defining Trait per role. One, Choosing more than one dilutes the entire evaluation. At some point, if everything is important, nothing is truly a driver.

Once you have the trait, operationalize it. Make it measurable, not conceptual. Ask:

- What does this trait look like in action?
- What does it sound like?
- What behaviors confirm it?
- What behaviors contradict it?
- What interview question would reveal it?

Step 4 | Behavioral Indicators (Drive, Mindfulness, Humility)

For each scored attribute, define in writing what high performance looks like. And what it doesn't. This keeps scoring consistent across multiple interviewers and multiple hiring cycles. Reference Section 7 for the full behavioral indicator library.

Step 5 | Automatic Disqualifiers

Some behaviors end the conversation immediately. List yours before you start interviewing. Not in the moment when you're face to face with someone. These typically include:

- Dishonesty or manipulation
- Blame-shifting and blatant refusal to take any responsibility
- Severe entitlement or disrespect toward others in the process
- Victim mentality: every setback is someone else's fault
- Aggressive or emotionally volatile behavior
- Open disrespect
- Refusal to self-assess

Any automatic disqualifier ends the interview. Document it. Don't proceed.

YOUR WANTED POSTER

Complete this form for each role before the first interview.

ROLE TITLE	DEPARTMENT/ REPORTS TO
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF ROLE	SUCCESS PROFILE (What great looks like)
CRITICAL OUTCOMES EXPECTED	REPORTING STRUCTURE (Does supervisor have capacity for a Project?)

MINIMUM SKILL REQUIREMENTS (Pass/Fail) | candidate must meet ALL)

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

DEFINING TRAIT (One trait only)

The Trait:

What it looks like:

What it sounds like:

Behaviors that CONFIRM it:

Behaviors that CONTRADICT it:

Interview question that reveals it:

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS TO WATCH FOR

Drive (+positives / -deductions)

+ _____

+ _____

- _____

- _____

Mindfulness (+positives / -deductions)

+ _____

+ _____

- _____

- _____

Humility (+positives / -deductions)

+ _____

+ _____

- _____

- _____

AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFIERS

(Any one ends the interview immediately)

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

HIRING STANDARD REMINDER

Defining Trait: 10 / ____ Drive: 10 / ____ Mindfulness: 10 / ____ Humility: 10 / ____

TOTAL: ____ / 40

Hire if: Total ≥ 36

- Humility is NOT the lowest score
- Humility is 8 or above
- All skill requirements are met



SECTION 5 THE CANDIDATE SCORING SYSTEM

The scoring system exists to remove bias, prevent emotional decision-making, and ensure every candidate is evaluated the same way. Regardless of who conducts the interview, how much pressure exists to fill the seat, or how much the interviewer personally likes the candidate.

Why Start at 10?

Every candidate begins with a perfect score in each attribute. Points are deducted only when behavioral evidence warrants it. No points are added.

Starting from zero doesn't work. Everyone ends up between 6 and 8 on everything and there's nothing to distinguish one candidate from another. Starting at 10 forces you to evaluate what's actually there. Not what you're hoping is there.

The only reason to deduct a point is clear behavioral evidence. Not nervousness. Not speaking style. Not energy level. Not education. Not whether they remind you of yourself. Evidence.

The Scoring Sheet

ATTRIBUTE	SCORE (Starts at 10)	EVIDENCE/ NOTES
Defining trait	10 / ____	
Drive	10 / ____	
Mindfulness	10 / ____	
Humility	10 / ____	
Total Score	____ / 40	≥ 36 = HIRE 35 or below = DO NOT HIRE Humility must be 8+ and NOT lowest

What Earns a Deduction

Deduct a point when you observe a pattern. Not a single moment. One vague answer is not a deduction. A pattern of deflecting responsibility is. The following behaviors warrant a deduction:

- The candidate avoids or deflects responsibility
- Answers conflict with or fail to demonstrate the Defining Trait
- Behavior contradicts mindfulness: interrupting, dismissing, tone-deaf statements
- Excuses rather than ownership when describing setbacks
- Answers are vague, inflated, or clearly rehearsed with no real specifics
- Stories lack depth or reveal poor self-awareness
- Low drive: passivity, lack of initiative, comfort with doing the minimum

What Does NOT Earn a Deduction

You are evaluating behavior, not presentation. The following are not reasons to deduct:

- Nervousness or visible discomfort
- Personality differences from your own style
- Speaking style, accent, or energy level
- Introversion or extroversion (unless it directly contradicts the Defining Trait)
- Education level (unless it's a minimum skill requirement)
- Lack of polish or smoothness

SECTION 6 THE INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

The Wanted Poster interview has two stages that help you look past the surface through story: the Mindfulness Scan and Story Sifting.

When you sit down to interview a candidate, you are trying to determine whether they are your ideal candidate as described in your Wanted Poster. You aren't sitting down for coffee with a friend. Your goal is to ask and listen. Ask again based on what you just heard. Listen again. And as you ask and listen, observe body language and gestures. Both verbal and non-verbal cues help you understand to what level a candidate meets the criteria of your Wanted Poster.

Be more interested than interesting. The interview isn't about sharing interesting things about yourself. It's about asking curious questions to understand how the candidate works and behaves on a team.

One thing to keep in mind before you sit down: every candidate starts with a perfect score of 40. You aren't looking for them to prove character traits true. You are looking for something that proves a trait is absent.

Never ask hypothetical questions. They are useless. The problem lies in the question, not the candidate. If you ask someone how they would handle a disgruntled customer, a smart candidate will tell you what you want to hear. They know how to play the interview game. They'll improvise an ideal answer on the spot. What you learned from that exchange is that they know how to play the game. Nothing more. Ask about what they actually did. Not what they would do.

Stage 1 | Mindfulness Scan

A candidate's level of Mindfulness is present the moment they walk through the door. It is communicated without words. Before you ask a single question, the evaluation has already started.

Take note of how candidates show up to the interview:

- Were they on time? If they are late, I don't interview them. It's a non-negotiable for me. Decide your standard before you sit down with anyone.
- What are they wearing? Is it appropriate for the role they are interviewing for?
- Are they present as they enter the room and sit down, or are they immediately distracted and absent? Are they attentive? Do they present like they care about being there?
- Do they seem aware of their surroundings? Do they acknowledge you and others in the room? Do they walk in confidently?

The way candidates greet you also reveals Mindfulness. Observe:

- Do they look you in the eye as they greet and begin speaking with you?
- Does their body language indicate self-assurance or self-deprecation? Slumped forward, looking down at their toes is a sign of self-deprecation. Chest puffed out as if to challenge could indicate overconfidence. Shoulders open and relaxed, body calm yet attentive, that is a sign of healthy self-assurance.
- Do you have their undivided attention as you greet them?
- If there is more than one interviewer in the room, do they know how to engage more than one person at a time?

These subtle clues may seem insignificant. They are not. Being inattentive, inappropriately dressed, or showing up late tells you a story about the candidate. It is the first indicator of cultural fit.

Ask yourself: is this candidate's non-verbal communication in line with what I expect of my staff? If it's not, take that into account when scoring Mindfulness.

Stage 2 | Story Sifting

In this stage, you move from introductions and greetings to asking questions. The agenda is simple: make the conversation real. Get out of the way long enough to let reality have a voice. Build enough trust that stories naturally flow.

Defining Trait, Drive, Mindfulness (a continuation of the initial scan), and Humility are all evaluated in this stage. One story might give you information for one area or all four, depending on the story. These areas will not appear in a linear sequence during a real interview. Drive won't necessarily surface first. The framework below teaches you what each area looks and sounds like so that you can recognize it whenever it appears.

Think of every candidate as a ball of string. Threads are twisted this way and that, looped in and out of each other, covering up the person underneath. Your goal is to tug on the threads by asking good questions and slowly unravel the string until you can see the candidate clearly.

Drive

Drive is revealed in how the candidate responds to challenge and adversity. One of the best questions to uncover it:

Key Question:

"Tell me about the most difficult thing you've ever attempted. What happened, and what did you do?"

Significant value is found in follow-up questions:

- “What was the hardest part?”
- “What did you learn about yourself, others, or in general?”
- “How did others respond to that situation?”
- “Sounds like that was hard...”
- “Who helped you get there?”

As candidates tell stories about encountering difficulties, listen for ownership, courage, and persistence. You are also trying to pinpoint the source of their internal motivation. Are they driven by adventure, control, validation, connection, or a pursuit of excellence? The source matters. Drive needs to align with the role being filled. When general Drive is evident, keep asking. What is propelling that internal motivation? If the answer isn't connected to the role, the score should reflect that.

Listen for:

- Perseverance: did this candidate continue despite difficulty?
- Initiative: did this candidate act without being told?
- Ownership: does this candidate take responsibility for outcomes?
- Goal Orientation: is this candidate pursuing improvement or long-term goals?
- Work Ethic: does this candidate describe self-driven effort?
- Follow-Through: does this candidate finish what they start?

Red flags in Drive:

- Avoiding difficulty
- Excuse-making
- Passivity (“I just did what I was told”)
- Blaming circumstances for low performance
- Quitting early or frequently

Mindfulness

In Story Sifting, Mindfulness moves beyond how a candidate showed up. Now you are assessing self and relational awareness through the stories they tell.

Key Question:

“Who’s been most influential in your life and what did they do to help you grow?”

Dig deeper by asking:

- “Mentors are awesome and they really challenge you to grow in uncomfortable ways. What were some ways that your mentor helped you grow? What was it that you were most resistant to?”
- “Why was that feedback necessary?”
- “What did others notice afterward?”

Take note of the way candidates talk about others as they answer. Are they critical? Judgmental? Dismissive? These are telltale signs of low Mindfulness. Candidates high in Mindfulness are quick to communicate the impact of outside influences. They recognize and verbalize the power of team mentality.

Listen for:

- Impact: does this candidate recognize how their actions affect others?
- Emotional intelligence: does this candidate show sensitivity to tone, timing, and context?
- Listening: does this candidate allow others to finish speaking and ask clarifying questions?
- Adjustment: does this candidate modify behavior when they sense tension or confusion?
- Presence: is the candidate's demeanor steady, respectful, and attentive throughout?
- Self-awareness: does the candidate understand their own triggers, patterns, and growth edges?

Red flags in Mindfulness:

- Interrupting
- Dismissing others' perspectives
- Poor emotional regulation
- Lack of awareness of impact
- Tone-deaf statements
- Self-centered explanations
- No meaningful examples of receiving or acting on feedback

Humility

Humility is the most important character trait of an ideal candidate. Let me say that again. Humility is the most important character trait of an ideal candidate. No matter the role being filled, Humility must be high. It projects how a candidate will function on a team and how they will receive feedback.

Key Question:

"Tell me about your previous role. What cool things were you able to accomplish and how did you do it?"

Follow-up questions:

- "Was there anyone else involved?"
- "Why do you consider that an accomplishment?"
- "How did others respond to your success?"

As they tell their story, look for indicators that they respect others and are pursuing personal growth. Also look for the red flags of blame-shifting and excuse-making. Humility is the most important character trait of an ideal candidate. You may think otherwise, but you're wrong.

Listen for:

- Does this candidate own mistakes openly and specifically?
- Does this candidate give credit to others, unprompted?
- Does this candidate accept and describe feedback without defensiveness?
- Does this candidate describe personal growth honestly, including setbacks?
- Does this candidate use “we” language rather than “I” dominance?
- Does this candidate show curiosity? (“I wanted to learn...” “I asked for help...”)

Red flags in Humility:

- Blame-shifting
- Entitlement
- Dismissiveness of others
- Nothing-is-my-fault language
- Inflated self-importance
- Resistance to feedback
- Minimizing or rationalizing errors

Don't flex on Humility. Not even a little. If Humility is the lowest score of all sections, or if it scores below 8, do not hire that candidate. No exceptions. No compromises.

Defining Trait

The Defining Trait is the one trait that predicts success in that specific role. In this part of Story Sifting, you are listening to determine whether the Drive and behavior the candidate displays align with the Defining Trait of your Wanted Poster.

Tailor your questions to reflect the role being filled. Present scenarios that require the candidate to demonstrate the Defining Trait naturally. A few examples:

- If the Defining Trait is “Detail-Oriented”: “What are some of the things you like to focus on or emphasize when you're working?”
- If the Defining Trait is “Uplifting”: “Tell me about some of the other people on your previous team. Who was your favorite and why?”

As the candidate answers, listen for evidence that their internal motivation aligns with the Defining Trait. A candidate can show high Drive and still be misaligned if the source of that Drive doesn't serve the role. When that happens, the Defining Trait score should reflect it.

Follow-Up Questions

Follow-up questions are the most important tool you have. They move candidates away from rehearsed answers and into real experiences. Real experiences reveal behavioral patterns. Patterns reveal the person.

Use follow-up questions to move candidates away from rehearsed answers. If you can get candidates to share experiences and real-life situations, behavioral patterns will emerge. You want to know who they are, how they react in challenging situations, and what is important to them.

Three universal follow-ups that work in any stage of any interview:

- “What happened next?”
- “Why?”
- “What did you learn?”

Be careful not to overshare during the interview. It is not your time to tell a story, no matter how much you want to. Keep the focus on the candidate. Ask. Listen. Ask again.

Closing the Interview

Always close with these two questions. Every time.

- “What question should I have asked you that I didn’t?” or “What story did you want to tell me that I never got from you?”
- “Do you have any questions for me?”

These questions give the candidate a chance to fill in any gaps your questions created. They also communicate something important: you aren’t just evaluating them. You’re beginning a relationship.

What the Interview Is Not

Because this system is built to reach beyond performance to behavior and character patterns, the interview should never become:

- A personality test
- A casual conversation
- A charisma evaluation
- A résumé review
- An improvisation contest

Hypothetical questions turn interviews into improvisation contests. A smart candidate will say what you want to hear. They know how to play the game. They've played it before. You learn nothing about who they actually are.

Moving away from hypothetical questions is one of the hardest habits to break. But it has to be broken. Every question you ask needs to better inform your decision to hire or pass. If a question doesn't do that, drop it.

The résumé was used to confirm minimum skill requirements. That's all it was for. You may reference it to ask follow-up questions about past experiences, but it should never be the focus of the interview. Focus on behavior and character. That's where the real information is.

Personality and charisma only matter if they affect Defining Trait, Drive, Mindfulness, or Humility. Outside of that, they are irrelevant. A candidate's charm can lead you to flex on your standards. Trust the system. Stick to the criteria you wrote on your Wanted Poster.

SECTION 7 BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS REFERENCE

Use this section to calibrate your scoring. These are not checklists. They are patterns. A single example doesn't define a candidate. A recurring pattern does.

DRIVE

<u>Positive</u> Evidence of High Drive	Negative Deduct for These Patterns
- Continued despite difficulty. Didn't quit when it got hard. - Acted without being told. Self-initiated. - Took ownership of outcomes, including failures. - Describes long-term goals or self-directed growth. - Describes finishing what they started. - Drive clearly aligned with the type of work the role demands.	- Avoidance of difficulty. Retreats under pressure. - Excuse-making. Circumstances always explain the outcome. - Passivity: "I just did what I was told." - No examples of self-initiated action. - Blaming circumstances or others for low performance. - Quitting early or frequently. - Drive is present but clearly misaligned with the role.

MINDFULNESS

<u>Positive</u> Evidence of Mindfulness	Negative Deduct for These Patterns
- Recognizes how their actions affect others. - Shows sensitivity to tone, timing, and context. - Allows others to finish speaking. Asks clarifying questions. - Adjusts behavior when they sense tension or confusion. - Steady, respectful, and present in demeanor. - Strong self-awareness: knows their own triggers and growth edges. - Acknowledges the role others have played in their development.	- Interrupts or talks over others. - Dismisses or minimizes other perspectives. - Poor emotional regulation. Visible frustration. - Tone-deaf statements about others or past situations. - Self-centered explanations. No acknowledgment of impact. - Takes all credit for personal growth without mentioning others. - No meaningful examples of receiving or acting on feedback.



SECTION 7 BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS REFERENCE

Use this section to calibrate your scoring. These are not checklists. They are patterns. A single example doesn't define a candidate. A recurring pattern does.

HUMILITY

<u>Positive</u> Evidence of Strong Humility	Negative IMMEDIATE Deductions
Owens mistakes openly and specifically. No minimizing. Gives credit to others, unprompted. Accepts and describes feedback without defensiveness. Uses "we" for wins. Uses "I" for mistakes. Shows curiosity: "I wanted to learn..." "I asked for help..." Describes personal growth honestly, including setbacks.	Blame-shifting. Nothing is ever their fault. Entitlement. Expectation of credit without earning it. Dismissiveness of others' contributions. Resistance to feedback. Defensiveness when questioned. Minimizing or rationalizing errors. Inflated self-importance in group accomplishments. Nothing-is-my-fault language throughout the interview.

Red Flag Guide

1- Point <u>Deduction</u> Caution	• Vague or overly general answers • Mild deflection of responsibility • Lack of detailed examples • Minor inconsistency in stories • Minimal initiative in problem solving • Mild avoidance of feedback topics • Frequently makes excuses • Discomfort with accountability topics • Overemphasizes personal credit above team credit • Signs of ego-driven behavior • Inability to articulate lessons learned • Displays strong defensiveness
2- Point <u>Deduction</u> Behavioral Risk	• Significant and consistent blame-shifting • Considerable entitlement • Disrespect toward past employers or colleagues • Dishonesty or embellishment • Victim mentality • Resistance to feedback • Emotional volatility or instability • Evidence of instability (frequent unexplained job changes)
Automatic <u>Disqualifier</u> End the Interview	• Dishonesty or manipulation • Severe entitlement • Aggression • Ethical violations • No accountability whatsoever • Open disrespect • Victim mentality with complete refusal to self-assess • Blame-shifting and blatant accusations Any one of these ends the interview.

RULES OF THUMB

Keep these in mind as you implement Wanted Posters into your hiring process.

- Just because you like the person doesn't mean you should hire the person. Rely on the criteria of your Wanted Poster.
- Skill is trumped by character. Stick to your minimum skill requirements. Don't flex because someone is overqualified.
- Polish may hide severe faults. Dig under the surface using story-driven questions.
- If a candidate scores 36 or above but you still have reservations, you missed something. Go back and ask the questions you left out.
- The interview is not a competition between candidates. It is a comparison between the candidate and your predefined standard. When someone clears the standard, hire immediately.
- If a candidate scores 35 or lower, don't hire them. Regardless of urgency. An empty seat costs less than the wrong person in it.

APPENDIX A WHY MOST HIRING FAILS

Most hiring failures trace back to one root cause: leaders are unclear about who they are actually looking for. When that clarity is missing, hiring becomes reactive and inconsistent. Here are the six most common failure patterns.

1. Hiring Too Late

Most leaders don't start hiring until someone has already quit, been terminated, or announced they're leaving. That desperation changes every standard. You lower the bar. You rush the process. You convince yourself that someone who doesn't fully fit is "close enough." The Wanted Poster eliminates this by establishing the profile before any vacancy exists.

2. Lack of Clarity

Job descriptions communicate tasks, responsibilities, experience, and skill sets. They almost never define the person. The character, the behaviors, the internal qualities that predict long-term success. When the ideal candidate isn't defined, leaders end up hiring whoever interviews the smoothest or whoever feels most familiar.

3. Overvaluing Skill

Most leaders mistakenly believe more skill equals a better candidate. Skill can be taught. Character cannot. Once a candidate meets the minimum skill threshold, additional skill no longer increases the likelihood of success. It often distracts from evaluating what actually matters: humility, drive, and cultural alignment.

4. Chemistry-Based Hiring

"I really liked them." "We got along well." "They seemed confident." These are predictors of comfort, not performance. Personality chemistry, first impressions, and ease of conversation tell you nothing about how someone will perform, integrate into the culture, or handle difficulty. Comfort is never a reason to hire someone.

5. No Scoring System

Without an objective scoring system, bias dominates. Emotions override logic. Different interviewers apply completely different standards and the result is inconsistent decision-making. The Wanted Poster scoring system transforms the interview from feelings-based to evidence-based. And makes it repeatable and trainable across your entire organization.

6. Waiting for Someone Better

When a candidate meets the Wanted Poster standard, hire immediately. Waiting for someone "better" generates lost opportunities, hiring delays, team disruption, and increased workload for current staff. Hiring is not a competition between candidates. It is a comparison between a candidate and a predefined standard. The standard is set. When someone clears it, the decision is made.

APPENDIX B DEFINING TRAIT REFERENCE LIST

Use this list as a starting point when brainstorming Defining Traits for a role. Circle every word that could apply, then narrow down to one using the five questions in Section 4, Step 3. Feel free to add words that aren't on this list.

Character-Based	Performance-Based	Leadership -Based	Technical-Based
Humble	Driven	Decisive	Analytical
Honest	Detail-Oriented	Clear	Innovative
Reliable	Thorough	Communicator	Problem-Solver
Empathetic	Consistent	Visionary	Logical
Selfless	Proactive	Developer	Systematic
Resilient	Accountable	Servant-Leader	Technical
Patient	Precise	Influencer	Data-Driven
Courageous	Efficient	Courageous	Investigative
Loyal	Resourceful	Coach	Process-Oriented
Curious	Strategic	Inspiring	Collaborative
Integrity	Methodical	Organized	Outgoing
Adaptable	Follow-Through	Delegator	Warm
Uplifting	Quality-Focused	Culture-BUILDER	Persuasive