



What to Do When You Can't Find the Perfect Hire

You've written the job description, reviewed dozens of resumes, and interviewed candidates, but none of them check every box. The clock is ticking. The team is stretched. And leadership is waiting.

Here's how to break the "perfect candidate" cycle and start making real progress.



**Perfection is rare in IT hiring.
Progress shouldn't be.**

The Problem with the Unicorn Search

Holding out for the perfect fit often leads to:

- Roles staying open for months
- Missed goals and delayed projects
- Overworked teams covering the gap
- Increased cost from prolonged recruiting cycles

How to Move Forward Strategically

1. Revisit the "Must-Haves" - Go back to your list and be brutally honest:

- What truly must be done on Day 1?
- What can be taught within 30–60 days?
- What's only on the list because the last person did it?
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your current team – what areas can other team members fill in?

→ **Pro tip:** If you're asking for 10 years of experience, 6 must-have technologies, and a product mindset... you're describing three people, not one.

2. Prioritize for Impact - Decide which 1–2 capabilities will move the needle most:

- A backend developer who can ship clean code
- A PM who can unblock the team and keep timelines moving
- A security expert who can tighten audit gaps before quarter-end

→ **Pro tip:** Ask yourself, "If we hired someone who was only great at this one part would that still help us succeed?"

3. Hire for Potential, Not Pedigree - If you're not finding the "perfect" person, look for:

- Adjacent experience (industry, tech stack, company size)
- Demonstrated learning curve and adaptability
- Strong communication and problem-solving skills

➡ **Pro tip:** High-growth teams often benefit more from someone with grit and curiosity than a perfect resume.

4. Use Contract-to-Hire to Test Fit - If you're unsure about a candidate or need to move fast, consider a contract-to-hire model:

- Less risk
- Faster onboarding
- Time to assess real-world performance

➡ **Pro tip:** This is especially helpful when internal consensus is hard or the role may evolve.



Rethink Your Levers

When the perfect candidate doesn't appear, pull a different lever:

- ⬇ Hire more junior, train internally – cost savings + retention potential
- 🔄 Shift to contract-to-hire – speed + flexibility + ability to test fit
- 💰 Adjust comp or perks – unlocks strong candidates quickly
- 🎯 Narrow the role scope – focus on the most urgent needs
- 🌐 Expand your pool – broaden geography, industry, or skill set filters

Your Team's Checklist

- Re-rank the top 3 skills or outcomes this role must deliver
- Eliminate anything that can be taught or supported by the team
- Identify 1–2 promising candidates and re-engage with narrowed expectations
- Consider contract-to-hire to accelerate decision-making
- Align with HR and leadership on what "good enough" looks like now

Tell me more!

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