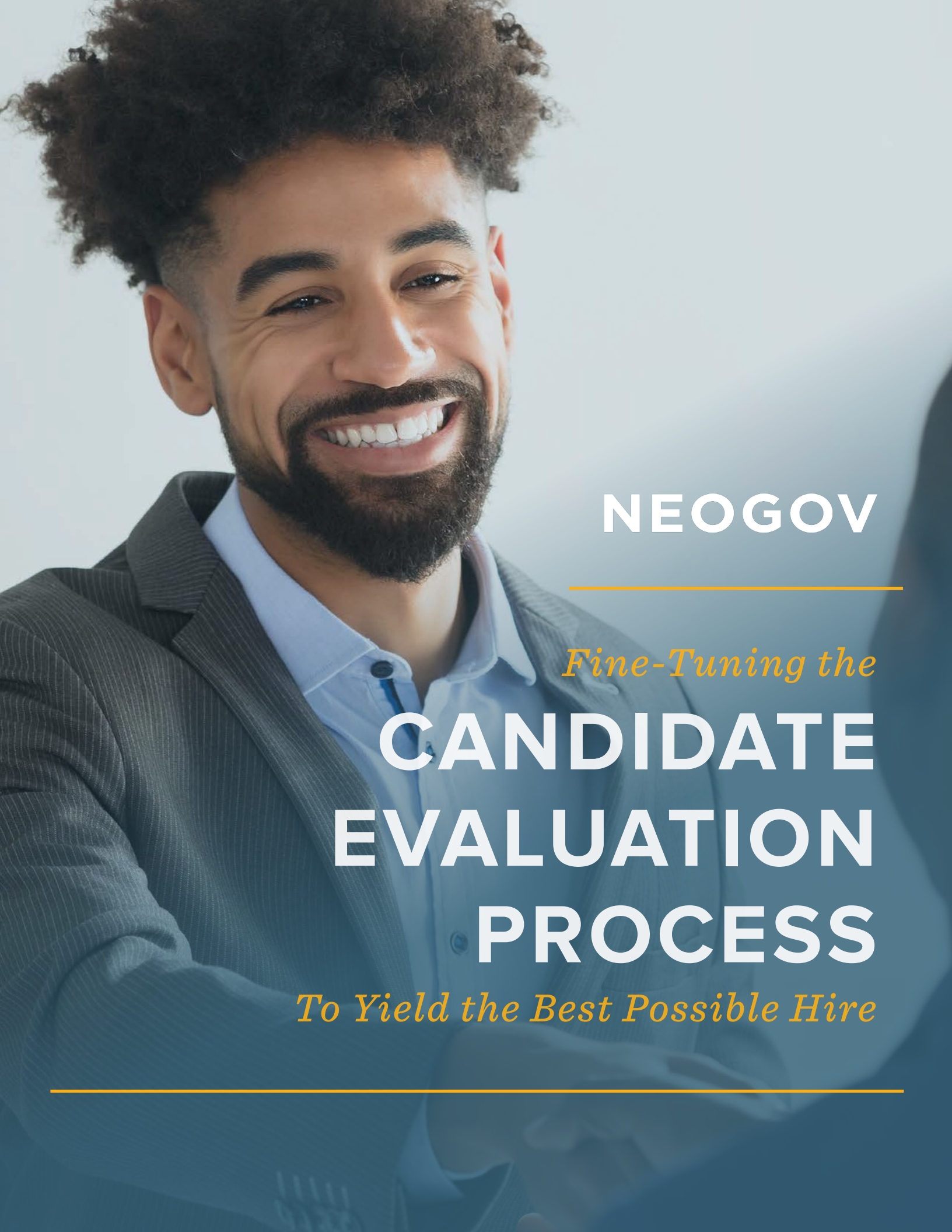


NEOGOV

Fine-Tuning the

CANDIDATE EVALUATION PROCESS

To Yield the Best Possible Hire

TO LAND THE BEST POSSIBLE HIRES FOR YOUR OPEN POSITIONS,

it's important to take a strategic approach to how your hiring committees evaluate applicants and interviewees. If you take a haphazard approach, you may unwittingly disqualify candidates who were great for the role. Similarly, someone who may have seemed great on paper may end up being the wrong fit for your organization.

Using a deliberate approach in posting jobs, standardizing methods for candidate evaluation, and asking more nuanced questions when grading candidates will make it a more efficient process overall. In this guide, we'll address the steps you can take to revamp your candidate evaluation process to make it fair, effective, and capable of yielding great results for your hiring needs.



RETHINK YOUR HIRING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The hiring manager and hiring manager's manager will generally be involved in this process, but also consider relevant team members and/or interdepartmental collaborators who should be on the shortlist of people to help interview candidates. All of these people will have the strongest sense of what traits and skill set your ideal candidate will possess. You should also try your best to ensure that there is some diversity represented in the hiring committee to get a variety of perspectives. **This will also minimize the risk of a "like me" syndrome that can unduly influence an interviewer's opinion, causing them to like someone for personal reasons or shared affinities, rather than based on their qualifications for the role.**

REEVALUATE JOB POSTS AND REQUIREMENTS

Ideally, you'll start this process before you even write the job posting and create the requisition, but for the jobs you've already posted, it will be beneficial to go back and take a look at them, as well. Have a conversation with all of the relevant stakeholders – HR, the hiring manager, team members, and so forth. Examine what functions and skills make up the role and then decide what elements would make up a qualified candidate. Think about whether candidates who show potential may be able to be trained on the job on certain functions. If that's the case, make sure you mention that in your job posting. Eliminate as much as possible "nice-to-haves" like advanced degrees or proximity to the office if they aren't absolutely necessary. These can make qualified candidates feel out of their depth unnecessarily.

Doing all of these things is a preliminary way to attract the best talent. It also gives you concrete factors to refer back to once you start analyzing candidate scores.



USE THE CORRECT INTERVIEW RUBRICS

Making your interview process systematic through the use of interview rubrics can help ensure you are judging candidates based on their aptitude and qualifications as opposed to any undue influence by biases. **Instead of providing your hiring committee with a traditional scorecard, create a rubric scale with specific criteria tied to each question to reduce the risk of subjectivity.** This is where referring back to your original job posting and requirements will come into play. Create a rubric that covers all of the skills the new hire will need. Use a scale of 1-5 (1 lowest, 5 highest) to make things simple for everyone.

Figure 1

Interview Rubric Scale (Sample)

	1 (LOW)	2	3	4	5 (HIGH)
Rate candidate based on experience according to this scale	Has never presented to a group of 50+	Has presented 2-3 times to a group of 50+	Has presented 3-5 times to a group of 50+	Has presented 6-9 times to a group of 50+	Has presented >10 times to a group of 50+
Public Speaking					

Don't be afraid to have committee members ask some or all of the same questions – if the scoring is generally consistent across the board, you'll know the entire team agrees about the candidate's prospects. Conversely, if there is disparity between committee members on the rubric, it could be a great opportunity to discuss frankly why each person ranked the candidate the way they did.

There's nothing stopping you from ranking candidates on things like culture fit using a 1-5 rubric as well, but be specific about what that means. It definitely should be a consideration before hiring someone, but defining what your organization's culture is in no uncertain terms along with the other skills will reduce the risk of bias.

REFRAME INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BETTER ANSWERS

What skills or experience make you a great fit for this role?

This is a better alternative to simply asking someone why they want to work for your organization, because it gives you actual insight into what they bring to the table in terms of their relevant experience.

Where does this position fit into your long-term career goals?

Instead of asking where a candidate sees themselves in five years, this question will give the candidate an opportunity to share what has prepared them for the role and what they are looking to achieve in their career. It's unrealistic to expect that every single candidate will want to remain in the job they are interviewing for the rest of their career. Getting an understanding of what they strive for professionally will allow you not only to decide if they are the best fit, but also help you provide the kind of support that will lead to retention.

What was the most challenging element of your last job?

This will give you a better understanding of what challenges the candidate came up against in their previous job as opposed to just stating what they didn't like about it. It will also give you the opportunity to ask follow up questions about what they did to tackle and overcome those challenges.

What kinds of professional development or training would you benefit most from?

This is a great way to get a sense of what an employee sees as areas for improvement, and whether or not that is in line with the sorts of on-the-job training you may be able to provide. It's a much better question to ask than "What's your biggest weakness?" since most people will say something like "I work too hard" or "I'm a perfectionist" by default.





ASK CANDIDATES TO SHOW, NOT TELL

What you're grading is just as important as how you grade candidates. You'll obviously have an impression of them by how well they interview, but asking for examples of previous work or skills testing is another great way to determine who is truly the best fit for the role. It's easy enough for a candidate to express mastery of a certain skill in an interview even if they are a novice at best. Testing the candidate or having them show you examples of a similar task they've done previously will give you a fully-rounded view on how to grade a candidate in a given area.



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