

Hiring Training Speaker's Notes Transcript

Legend:

- **Notes**
- *Speaker's text*

1 Warm Up (20 mins), slides 1-5

Goals: Share the goals of the training, explain what parts will be more theoretical and which more practically oriented. Agree on or share timing of each section and breaks. Distribute handouts and all respective materials. Set basic rules for discussion. Make sure that participants know each other and if not, run a short introductory round and distribute name tags. Share the agenda and run a short ice breaker.

1.1 Intro (2 mins), slide 1

Present first slide.

Thanks for joining us today and welcome. Before we start, who do we have on the board? Do you know each other? If not, could you shortly introduce yourself and your role in Y Soft?

1.2 Ground Rules (3 mins), slide 2

Present the next slide.

Ok, before diving deep into the agenda, this is how today will look like (describe the timing). Does the time schedule fit everyone? Do we need to adjust it?

This training was designed to support discussion. There's generally no dogma in hiring and there are many angles on each of the topics we'll be talking about. It's ok to ask questions. We'll also have some discussion that requires your active participation and we'll be very happy if you share your experience with the topics we'll be talking about.

When it comes to note taking, you have also received (or you will receive) a handbook, which is basically a rich transcript of what's being said today, accompanied by additional materials so it should be easy for you to go back whenever needed or build on what you've learned today.

Any organizational questions before we start?

1.3 Table of Contents (5 mins), slide 3

Present the next slide.

This is what today will be about.

Intro – *that's what we're finishing right now.*

Strategy – *it's important to start with why it is important to hire like a pro and this section is exactly about that. We'll talk about Y Soft's hiring principles and the why behind them. We'll also touch upon the candidate experience and the Employer Branding strategy.*

Process – *In the process section, this won't be about teaching you how to follow the hiring process since you can find that on Clerbo quite easily. Instead, it is more about explaining its context, so it all clicks together. We'll also discuss distribution of work in the hiring team and give you some tooling introduction.*

Best practices – *This section will provide practical tips for hiring. Starting with a candidate requirements definition which helps you in the selection process, through to the hiring process design, and asking the right questions and working with bias.*

Try Outs – *This is where we'll put into practice what we have learned. There will be a bit of role playing.*

Any questions about the agenda?

1.4 Ice Breaker (10 mins), slides 4 – 5

Present slides 4 and 5.

Round Sharing: 'My extraordinary hiring experience' either negative or positive, interviewer or candidate. The presenter starts (make sure to bring something juicy but remember and also inform others – no names).

To break the ice – I believe each of you has been through some type of hiring process – whether it was as an interviewer or as a candidate. Would you mind sharing some highlights? Feel free to share either pleasant or unpleasant experiences but please leave out names of companies and definitely leave out the names of the people involved.

2 Strategy (50 mins, slides 6 – 20)

Goals: In this high-level part you should explain the main principles we keep on our minds when hiring and why (Y Soft specific). Also, build a solid understanding of general hiring dos and don'ts in terms of candidates experience and HR marketing. The group should understand that becoming good in hiring takes time and requires strategic teamwork. Opening with hiring costs should help you build the sense of importance of the topic.

2.1 Why Hiring Matters (20 mins, slides 6 – 10)

Present next slide.

Why we speak so much about working on our hiring skills? Why do we invest all this time into training you? The first reason is obvious – everything we do as the company; our failure or success is directly dependent on people we have. People usually realize this so there's no need to discuss this further. But why don't we rely more on the benefit of doubt and why not let the probation period reveal true colors of the newly hired Y Softer?

Present next slide.

It's quite basic – We invest in hiring training because hiring is exhaustive and expensive even more so when we end up terminating the new hire after or during the probation period. Can you guess the cost of an unsuccessful hire that is terminated at the end of the probation period?

Present the cost table and final amount.

There are some direct hiring costs – the time of the recruiter, the hiring manager, and the interviewers. Plus, there are direct costs of advertising, tooling and payout of a referral or agency bonus. It is important to mention – there are also costs associated with preboarding and onboarding such as HR administration, IT configuration and preparation of equipment, and putting together the workplace.

As for the new employee's salary - the average salary in IT sector is roughly 65k CZK. When we add social and health insurance and some operational expenses to the base salary, the average monthly personnel cost is almost 100k. Multiply by 3 months...here we go.

Of course, this estimate is extremely rough and unprecise but still – we were conservative when putting it together. You might add items such as trainings, your team's time spent with the new hire and much more. Add all these items together and it shows that every hire is costly and a bad hire costs twice as much since there's not much benefit at the end.

Present next slide.

Now, the reason to share this was not to scare you or to paralyze you when making hiring decisions. Hiring is, at the end of the day, a soft social science and, as such, it's really hard to master and you can never expect 100 % reliability. So give everyone space to make some mistakes. Yes, they're costly but it's the only way to learn.

Present next slide.

Let's leave the numbers behind us. It's important to say that the quality of hiring is not the only factor for a successful integration of a new colleague. A good hiring process is only the start of the employee lifecycle. There are other essential parts of an employee life cycle such as onboarding, daily comms and performance management, personal development and also offboarding when it comes to that.

We won't speak about these other parts of an employee lifecycle, we don't have that much time today. However, we want to stress, that while hiring is super important, it's also a part of a greater context and becoming a pro in hiring is only one small part of the story.

Present next slide.

Each of us has a different starting point in this workshop – some might be in the position as a hiring manager for the first time, someone else might have hired 50 people already. Simply speaking, our hiring maturity varies.

Some of you might already know the concept of maturity models. They help to assess the current state of knowledge and experience and they support figuring out what capabilities need to be acquired next to improve the overall performance. It's important to understand that this applies not only to the personal level but also to the company level. We need to learn to crawl before standing up. We won't master hiring in a day.

Figuring how to hire so it works for the company is a process that:

- *Takes time.*
- *Requires strategic cooperation (management, hiring managers, teams).*

Becoming a company that does hiring well requires defining who does what and why and how we can support each other and leverage our combined skills. It's not uncommon that companies fight internally – hiring managers blame recruiters for delivering the wrong candidates, recruiters blame the business for not sharing enough information. That's not the way to grow and if there's anything important to be said today it's the fact that hiring is a complex thing requiring the cooperation of all the people involved on many levels:

- *You ideally need to link your hiring strategy to the company strategy.*
- *You need to be able to describe your culture well and be able to sell it.*
- *You need to understand your values perfectly and be able to recognize them in your candidates.*
- *You need to master your candidate requirements definition.*
- *You need to handle your hiring data well so you can learn from past efforts.*
- *You need to persuade all the people in hiring to actively participate in it.*

And that's just a couple of angles. Consider this training to be one step in this journey but the real work and the real improvement comes with practice and long-term cooperation between you, your teams and HR. This requires an open mind, time, effort and an ability to listen to each other. If you're interested, the maturity model we use is in the annex of your handbook –have a look at it just to realize the complexity of the agenda.

2.2 Hiring principles we work towards to (30 mins, slides 11 - 20)

Present next slide.

Now let's talk about some basic principles we want to work toward. As already illustrated on the maturity model, we're on the journey. That also means, we're definitely not there yet. The good news is that we know where we're heading. The same applies to the principles, which represent an ideal state of things. Sometimes we get closer, sometimes we're really close and sometimes we fail.

Let's start with a short exercise first.

Present the "Bruce & Wayne" slide and have the group discuss whom would they prefer to hire and why.

There's no right answer. Lead the group into concluding that they need to take into consideration business needs (Do I need a short-term contractor to deliver the work and leave?) Do I need someone who'll stick with the company for the next 5 years and help shape it?) or anything else they come up with.

Present Principle 1.

As we mostly hire for long-term roles and we highly value our culture, the recommendation is to stick to hiring more for potential and culture fit. There are several reasons for that:

- **#1 Experience ≠ performance.** *The fact the person spent the last 10 years doing the job doesn't really mean they are a star in what they do. Also, being successful at one company doesn't automatically mean you'll star here since the environment can be dramatically different.*

Present Gates/Jobs slide to illustrate.

- **#2 You can teach hard skills, but you will hardly change the attitude.** *Having an annoying person on board will cause much more trouble in the long run than finding a person who may need additional support at the beginning. Think back and try to remember all the people you had difficulty working with (have attendees actually think and ask them if they remember someone). Did they lack experience/hard skills, or did they lack the attitude/personality you were expecting?*

To illustrate, think about two well-known figures – Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. There's probably no doubt Bill had more experience when it comes to business and reading the market than Steve. He was more experienced, steady, no surprises. Steve failed tremendously several times, got tossed out by the board. But when it comes to innovations and really pushing things further, he was a visionary, and the fact that Apple took him on board again, even though he was definitely a pain, made Apple what it is now. The lesson learned is – the hard skills and experience are an important factor but you need to go much beyond them so you can be sure it will work – attitude and culture fit make a tremendous difference.

Ask the group if they have any more thoughts on the topic or any experience they could share.

Present next slide.

Ok, next one! There are some things that we simply know because other smart people have already found it out. It would be just stupid to reinvent them or learn the hard way. So here's one principle based on scientific facts and empirical experiences of many companies.

People are biased and we're not naturally built for making hiring decisions. Since we're social creatures, we tend to base our decisions more on previous experience and gut feeling than on what we see or data we collect. When interviewing a person, there's more than 10 types of bias you can be sure you'll suffer from. The other problem is that almost every interviewer in the world thinks they're good at interviewing (meaning they are good at predicting how the person will perform) Again, this was proven to be wrong. They are just not. Google did quite an extensive research on that.

Present Principle 2.

Fortunately, there's a way out called structured hiring and we'll speak about it more down the road. Put simply, structured hiring is about defining precisely what you're looking for and then trying to keep the way you interview and evaluate candidates for the same role consistent.

Ask the group if they have any more thoughts on the topic or any experience they could share.

Present next slide.

The last principle might seem rather straightforward, but every recruiter could easily pull out 10 different stories to confirm that the reality is different. While it's very important to work with a candidate's buy-in and overall candidate experience, you want to make sure that what you're communicating about the job and the company is authentic, transparent and true. If you mislead them, you can be sure that not only their onboarding will be super hard since what they thought about the job, the company or you as their

manager or colleagues will be constantly challenged by the reality but you can also harm the trust the person has toward you as a manager or the company itself.

Present Principle 3.

*There's a difference between a good candidate experience built on correctly set expectations, excellent communications and pleasant interviews compared to being overly positive about the role, the company and its challenges. **Hiring is not a moment for fake advertising.***

Present next slide.

And to wrap up the principles, here's a short video from Simon that kind of sums it all.

Play the Simon Sinek video on successful hiring and ask the group if they have any inputs or thoughts.

Present next slide. Have the group come up with the three principles to revise.

3 The Process (85 mins, slides 21 – 33)

Goal: In this part the group should broaden their horizons in terms of how they understand cooperation in hiring team. Ideally, they should be leaving this section understanding who does what and who helps whom. The hiring process section helps them understand why they need to follow certain steps (both for external and internal hiring). The tooling section is minimalist – its aim is not to teach participants how to use it but to provide an overall idea of the logic behind.

3.1 The roles (20 mins, slides 22 – 24)

Present next slide.

We've already talked about the fact that hiring as a high-level company discipline requires cooperation on many levels. The same applies to hiring at the team level. When you need a new hire, this is the core hiring team.

Present next slide.

The critical roles in the hiring team are you as the hiring manager and your team or manager-less team, your HRBP and the Recruiter. Each possesses a different set of skills, knowledge and competencies needed for the hiring to run smoothly. You need to work closely, which requires quite a lot of communication (= time investment) and there's a great advantage if you already know each other. That should be the case with your HRBP and we're trying to do the same with recruiters whenever possible.

- **Hiring Manager/Team** – you're the only one person that understands perfectly the job you're doing and the mission and context of your team, it's also you who does the hiring decision
- **HRBP** – is there to be your second brain when it comes to making people decisions – they should bring you additional input, help you figure out whom you need and what will help the team in the long run, all based on your past cooperation. Another important dimension of their role is that they link you with the rest of the company – they will help you figure out what's the salary level for the new person and generally support you in the whole process of adopting a new member.
- **Recruiter** – is the specialist who knows the labor market, knows perfectly how to handle the candidate experience and can guide you through the hiring process

Any questions?

Present next slide.

Have the group sort out all the activities into HRBP/Recruitment/Hiring Manager or Team columns using a whiteboard and post-its or a Miro board. Have a discussion on each activity since most of these will fit into more than one column depending on the role (owner, consultant, etc.).

If there are any other activities identified during sorting, add them.

3.2 Recruitment process (40 mins, slides 25 - 27)

Present next slide.

Ok, now we know who does what so let's put it on a simple timeline.

Present next slide.

Now we're looking at something called the hiring process which you can find on Clerbo in detail. Now it's not about you remembering all these steps by heart but understanding why we follow it.

Discussion with HRBP

If you think you might need a new person on your team because the workload is just higher, you miss specific skills or if someone leaves, the first person to go to is always your HRBP. You'll have a discussion about the situation and if the conclusion is that you need to hire, they'll be able to guide you further.

In all cases, you'll need to start with defining the Job Description since it contains the information you'll need for:

- *finding the appropriate salary level*
- *defining the business case for your new hire*
- *the hiring request you'll be sending to recruitment and your supervisors*
- *and finally for the new hire employee contract*

Official Hiring Request

Whatever it looks like (we used to do these annoying Excel forms, now it's more in emails, we're slowly inclining toward HelpDesk ticket), it serves two purposes:

- *informing the recruitment team about your hiring need*
- *informing respective stakeholders that you plan to hire, whom exactly, why and how much the cost will be – for this reason the hiring request should be as complete and detailed as possible.*

While it's definitely possible to change requirements during the hiring process, any such change with impact on the final cost needs to be reapproved.

Hiring Request Approval

Once your hiring request reaches the recruitment team, they'll create your requisition in the recruitment system Greenhouse. They'll input the basic information – the cost of the hire, location, team, department, division, cost center and they trigger approval processes. For every new hire you need official approval of:

- your Division Manager
- the HR Manager

Why? It's pretty simple – while the HR Manager is responsible for ensuring the whole company fits into the annual payroll budget (what we pay employees, including SHI, bonuses, meal vouchers, car allowance etc.), your division manager does the same for your division.

Two important things to know about the payroll budget:

- *Salaries are by far the biggest budget = biggest cost we have in the company – compared to Opex, Cost of Sales, Operations budgets etc.*
- *another tedious thing about the payroll budget is that making cuts in it is not easy, not only on the personal level (because it effectively means letting people go) but also on the financial and time perspective level – imagine you put yourself in a situation when your payroll budget is too high and the company can't sustain it anymore:*
 - o *If you want to let people go because they're too expensive, you're still looking at two months' notice period + usually 3 months of severance pay. That means that you can only reduce it only after 5 months and also the people won't be working during this time, which again impacts the company performance.*

Intake meeting

The intake meeting is where you, as the hiring manager/hiring team, meet your recruiter and usually also with your HRPB and you discuss the role, its advertising and hiring process design in detail. While you have your Job Description, which captures basic hard and soft skills, the recruiter will dig much deeper – what type of personality you're looking for, how does a team fit look like for you, what kind of experience should the recruiters be looking for when preselecting, what are the selling points of the job and your team specifically.

Effectively, after that meeting the recruiter should be able to put together:

- *Candidate scorecard (set of criteria you'll be using when interviewing your candidates)*
- *The hiring process stages*
- *The job ad and job promotion strategy*

They will share with you all three of these, you'll refine it and when you're sure you understand each other perfectly, you're off to a good start to begin the selection process.

Selection Process

The selection process differs from role to role and depends on what you've agreed upon on during the intake meeting. Usually, it's the recruiter who does the preselection, initial phone screens and then it's a combination of whatever you need – interviews, practical tasks, social rounds, on site visits. Mind that anything is possible if it makes sense both for you and the candidate.

Thanks to Greenhouse, you'll be always able to see the stage your candidates are sitting in the pipeline. It's the recruiters job to help you keep oriented in what's happening and what you can expect next.

Job offer

You got your person? Perfect. After finding a consensus on the start date, salary and some additional details, the recruiter will prepare an official document called the job offer. The critical parts are the job title, JobDescription, supervisor, additional benefits, start date and job location.

It's important to understand that the job offer is (almost) a sacred document. Once extended, there's no actually no way to pull it back without legal consequences.

Again, every job offer must be approved.

- *If the job offer stays within the initially approved range, it's only you and the HRBP who approves it. The HRBP checks it mainly because of internal equity (do we hire the new person on the correct salary level?).*
- *If the offered salary goes beyond what was initially approved by the division and HR managers, you'll need to get their approvals too.*

It's the recruiter who handles the job approval process for you – again we use Greenhouse for this so you always the status.

Present next slide.

New Hire

If the candidate accepts the offer, we go for a beer, celebrate and then send all the details to the HR admin and Onboarding Specialists who'll be there for you during the preboarding and onboarding phase. Please note that this is just the beginning – there will be a lot of work with getting ready all the preboarding and onboarding materials and, as we discussed it at the beginning, a successful hire doesn't make a happy employee and team so you'll need to step up your game while welcoming the new person in your team.

3.3 Internal hiring (15 mins, slides 28 – 31)

There's one distinctive chapter hiring and that's internal hiring. We all realize that getting a new job or getting a new team member is tough when it comes to setting the right expectation, handling it so everyone feels ok and leaves with a good feeling about the company should they get the job or not.

Now this gets a million more times important when it comes to internal candidates. Why? Because we want them to stay. And they will. And to put it very bluntly, if you piss them off, it will backfire on many levels.

Present next slide.

By default, YSofters can apply to any open position so there is never a role that is only available to external candidates. The fact they're already working for the company can't block them from applying. What you can do if you wish is to open the position to internal YSofters only. So effectively, you can select from internal and external applicants or only from internal applicants.

Present next slide.

There are bright sides to internal hiring – it supports internal mobility which is good for the company since people like to grow and gain new skills and experiences. Onboarding is easy since they already know the environment, they can also bring in useful input from other departments and divisions. The risk of a mis-

hire is much smaller since there's already tons of references. So generally, internal hiring is a good thing and companies with high internal mobility usually benefit from that.

On the other hand, you need to be super careful, transparent, and super fair when handling an internal applicant. The worst-case scenario is an internal employee applying for a role and suffering from a badly handled hiring process – should the trouble be its length, form, mishandled feedback or anything else. Also, it's important to realize that when you do an internal hire, the hiring need will just move somewhere else. This is a small cost for a successful internal growth, but you might end up negotiating with the previous manager about the transfer date.

Present next slide.

There's a couple of tips that might help with internal hiring.

Stick to hiring principles and best practices twice as much as when hiring externally. *There's no more to say.*

Fairness & Feedback. *Transparency on all the levels includes proper communication to the company that you're opening an internal role, giving everyone the same chance to apply, treating all the candidates the same regardless if you know them – they might eventually end up comparing their experience. Mastering the feedback. The people need to understand why they are or why they are not accepted.*

Trust HR and the internal hiring process. *When it comes to internal candidates, we follow the internal hiring process which differs in two details:*

- *We encourage the employee to discuss their decision to apply for the role with their current manager*
- *We organize F2F feedback sessions after the interview, making sure the employee understands and accepts the outcome and also sees other options how to grow in Y Soft*

Overcommunicate and be swifter than you usually are. *Just try to prevent and delays or uncertainty as it severely impacts other teams in Y Soft and the Y Softers in the process.*

Any questions or inputs?

3.4 Tooling (10 mins, slides 32 and 33)

Present next slide.

Last but not least in this section – quite introduction to tooling.

Present next slide.

Since we've mentioned Greenhouse several times, here's some details. Y Soft has recently adopted an applicant tracking system called Greenhouse. Companies use these systems for several purposes:

- *Tracking all the candidates, logging outputs of interviews and selection processes*
- *Collecting data not only for recruitment analytics but most importantly for planning and forecasting payroll costs*
- *Making the sharing of information in hiring teams easy – everything you need is on one place, accessible any time via SSO*

- *Easy design of their recruitment processes*
- *And many more*

Every YSofter participating in a recruitment process will be properly trained to use the system. No worries, it's a web app, quite intuitive and it's not rocket science.

Of course, feel free to combine Greenhouse with whatever works for you – sometimes it may help to set up a dedicated Teams/Webex channel for quick operational comms etc. The only thing you want to avoid is double work so please – there's really no point in sending your feedback about a candidate in email when you can and you should use the scorecard in Greenhouse.

Provide a quick GH tour – open Testing & Training role, show candidate pipeline, interview kit, scorecard and couple of reports.

4 Hiring Best Practice (60 mins, slides 34 – 54)

Goal: This should be more practical part of the training where participants get a grasp on some tips and tricks that can help them with hiring. It's also the opportunity to set some solid foundation they can build their hiring skills on.

4.1 Candidate Requirements (20 mins, slides 35 – 40)

Present next slide.

Now to the more practical stuff!

Present next slide.

Put simply, job requirements are skills, experience, and qualities you consider necessary for the role. They are an important part of any job description. When done correctly, they work as a preliminary determinant for the fit for the role. The recruiter uses them to deliver you candidates that meet your expectations and wraps their interviewing process around them. It's extremely important for the hiring team to be aligned on them all the time. When things go wrong and you don't get the candidates you want, you usually circle back to the requirements, refine and start over.

Present next slide.

A quick introduction to hiring terminology since that's usually where a lot of confusion happens. When we want to hire a person, we start with a job description which is a formal, a bit boring, but important internal document that captures the scope of the role (what they do, what they're responsible for) and candidate requirements (skills, experience, qualities needed for the job). This document is not used for hiring only – we use it to determine the person's salary, we revise it when we promote people, we revise it when we change the scope of the role for existing employees.

The job ad is something we put out to attract candidates. It's marketing text. It can be emotional; it can contain more or on the contrary less information – anything that fits your purpose.

Your primary responsibility when hiring is the job description including requirements, that's what matters and that's what you put together as the first thing when discussing your hiring intention with HRBP. It's the

recruiter's/marketing responsibility to create the job ad – you're definitely welcomed to participate but putting together the Job Description is usually where you bring the most important value.

Now let's proceed to some advice regarding those candidate requirements:

Present next slide.

The list of job requirements is not a wish list. You should always stand firmly on the ground when formulating requirements. This doesn't mean not being demanding but you should always keep in mind that finding Batman is much harder than finding Robin and training him. If you want to formulate nice to have's, indicate they're nice to have's. By having too many requirements, you limit the pool of candidates you'll get to see and sometimes you might miss great hires. Companies good at hiring usually know that you need to be creative and think backwards a bit – you have a great candidate? Ok, let's see what we can do so we design them the right job.

Present next slide.

It's always better to list specific requirements than vague ones. Be as much specific as possible. Instead of going for communication skills go for presentation skills, negotiation skills, writing skills, active listening - just really think about the daily work of that person. Your HRBP and Recruiter should help you to do this since this information is essential for them to understand whom you're looking for.

Present next slide.

This goes hand in hand with being specific but with every requirement you should have an idea how you will measure that the candidate has it. Instead of "senior finance expert" you can go for experience with specific finance agendas and their scale like "experience with handling P&L reporting for a global company, etc."

Present next slide.

*When thinking about the requirements, you can use following structure – remember we're **talking about JD requirements**:*

***Hard skills** are teachable/measurable abilities - e.g. knowledge of human/programming language, usually the hard skills are a result of some kind of experience or education.*

- ***Experience** – always list specific skills or agendas than generic "6 years in the field" as there's no proof that having that experience equals having those skills.*
- ***Education** – include it only if it's a must (specific certification etc.) – the same principle*

Translating your requirements from a job description to a job ad should be the master skill for your recruiter. It may happen that at the end they will use something like education or experience in the requirements section of the job ad so it's easier for the candidates to relate to the job ad so make sure that what you're using in the job description and subsequently in the scorecard is measurable and is really proof that the desired skill is there.

***Soft skills** - relate to how you work and interact with people – e.g. negotiation, presentation, active listening. Now, we've already talked about the need to be specific here so we want to avoid vague*

requirements such as “great communicator” or “good soft skills”. A good way to be specific is to imagine situations that will require such a skill and try to name them properly.

Culture & Team Fit – while some things will be derived from the company culture (YS 6A), others might be role or team specific. If you want to do a culture assessment based on YS 6A your recruiter will help you to put together an interview section designed specifically for that. Some teams prefer to do this differently and we generally do not enforce YS 6A assessment. The message here is that while culture fit is extremely important, there are more ways to check it, we’re not dogmatic about YS 6A and it’s up to your agreement in the hiring team how this will be done.

Practical details – that’s really like everyday stuff - willingness to travel, work on shifts whatever is needed for the job.

As for hard skills and soft skills – that’s what you usually put in the job description. When you transfer your job description to a scorecard that’s what you’re consistently using when assessing your candidates.

4.2 Structured hiring and working with bias (slides 41 – 45, 20 min)

Present next slide.

Now when we know who we’re looking for, let’s look into how to do the interviewing part. We’ve already discussed principle 2 “We strive for inclusive hiring and try to limit any kind of bias”. Sounds simple, but it’s not. The barrier we need to overcome is called “Interview Bias” and “trying to limit it” is not easy at all.

Present next slide.

To get on the same page and understand what a bias is, let’s watch this short video.

Have a short discussion on some of these questions:

- **Have you ever found yourself in a situation of being biased? Have the group share their experience.**
- **When bias, diversity and inclusiveness is discussed, do you stick to obvious categories like gender, ethnicity or age or do you also think about other types (first impression, affinity etc.)?**

Present next slide.

These are 3 common types of interview bias.

- **First impression bias** – candidate walks in the door, they look great, they sound great, we unconsciously jump into conclusion they will be great. We’re strongly influenced by the very first piece of information we receive. It makes us less diligent.
- **Affinity bias** - If we share an affinity or quality with the candidate, we assess them in a better light (you studied at the same university, they have similar hobbies, you worked at the same company etc.)
- **Confirmation bias** – we unconsciously seek only the information that support our early finding or assumptions about the candidate. Also, we under-weigh, undervalue or ignore the information that might conflict with them.

Present next slide.

Biases will always be there; it's just how our brains work. There's no way for them how to not be there. Now let's talk about how to work with them.

- **Know about them** – the first step is accepting the fact they're there and having the intention to work with them.
- **Discuss them with your fellow interviewers, monitor each other** – it's ok to help others to work with biases consciously.
- **Slow down the decision making** - don't rush, write things down, verbalize gut feelings.
- **Stick to structured hiring** – the recruitment team can help you with this.

Now we finally get to structured hiring.

Present next slide.

The idea behind structured hiring is simple. It starts with a set of solid, verifiable requirements. Based on that you develop an interview kit – a set of questions with interview structure, precisely defined to verify what you're looking for. The deal breaker here is to use the same set of questions for every candidate you assess for the role. Another part of the interview kit is a scorecard which will help you summarize your feedback closely tied to the requirements you were focusing the interview upon.

The best practice is to definitely fill in the scorecard before debriefing and sharing your ideas with others.

Present a sample scorecard.

The fact that structured hiring is more predictive and so far the safest way to get close to a good candidate and interviewer experience has been confirmed by many different studies (your learning materials contain links for further reading, research and case studies). So far the biggest described and documented "in practice" experiment happened in Google who tried it, verified it works and decided to stick to it.

Btw, in addition to finding out that structured interviewing works the best, they also found out other facts, e.g. that there's no linear relationship between the number of interviews (or interview stages) and the level of candidate success predictability. They concluded that after being interviewed by 4 people, the level of new information gathered significantly drops. This resulted in the fact that they never conduct more than 4 interviews, whatever the role is (Laszlo Bock: Work rules).

4.3 Interviewing skills (40 min, slides 46 - 54)

Present next slide.

In this section we'll cover some of the more but also less obvious interview practices.

Present next slide.

Let's start with the legal minimum. We need to say that we don't follow these principles just because they are required by law but also because we believe it's a good and ethical thing to do.

While interviewing, you should never ever base your decisions or even take into consideration the following factors:

- *Religious beliefs of the candidate*

- *Sexual orientation of the candidate*
- *Family situation of the candidate (marital status, children...)*
- *Political opinions of the candidate*
- *Physical/mental health of the candidate*
- *Ethnicity of the candidate*
- *Any other discriminatory factors such as age, gender etc.*

It's important to understand that direct questions about these factors are forbidden and you need to also be careful about all remotely connected/indirect questions such as "Is there someone to take care of your children in case they're sick?" as an alternative to "Do you have children?" The principle is key here.

The simple advice is to stick to skills, personality and experience. Questions?

Present next slide.

We've talked quite a lot about defining requirements correctly, having the right interview structure and so on in order to make a good hire. However, that's only one part of the hiring equation and one which reflects only the interest of the company. It's also important to realize that offering and accepting a job is a standard business situation where two equal partners – the employer and the potential employee shake hands. Meaning it's equally important to provide the candidate with enough time and space to find out what they need to know about the company, the job and the team.

There are several reasons why a good candidate experience matters, some related to the job market, others related to sustainability of hiring.

- *The current unemployment rate in the Czech Republic is around 3%, which basically means that everybody who wants a job, has a job. The supply of vacant jobs is much higher than the demand. There are many companies fighting over the same talent. And obviously, it's hard to deliver if you don't have the right people on board.*
- *Also, a bad hiring experience usually puts both onboarding and retention of the candidate at risk (e.g., if you build some false expectation, if it takes too long, if the feedback is not precise etc.).*
- *Striving for a good candidate experience is sometimes misinterpreted as having easy interviewers but that's not the case. Generally, what matters most is the overall hiring process management and hiring culture.*

Present the EVP mark.

There's also a small thing called the Y Soft's EVP which is essentially a set of descriptions of Y Soft as an employer we consider to be unique. The employer branding team uses them to tone all the communications, visuals. We consistently use these descriptions in campaigns and candidate communication. The ideal case scenario is that all YSofters understand it the same and can relate to it and work with it, The middle ground scenario is that people participating in the hiring process know it and use it. We offer another training designed to learn how to work with the Y Soft EVP and you'll also find the EVP in your handbook.

Present next slide.

You generally want to make sure that:

- *The candidate has well managed expectations – not only about the job, the company and salary but also about the hiring process itself – they always know what comes next, how long it will take etc.*
- *You treat candidates as partners, equals since that's what you are – interviewing is not an inquisition but a dialogue.*
- *You're 100% transparent about the job, the candidate position about the process and all connected development.*
- *You aim for a swift process and timely communication. Nobody likes to wait.*
- *Providing good feedback that the candidate can work with is essential. The holy grail is a rejected candidate thanking you for what they learned about themselves.*
- *You collect feedback from candidate as well so you can continuously improve what you do.*

Any additional ideas?

Present next slide.

Now getting to the interview itself. Before any interview you should always follow this simple checklist.

- ***Read the interview kit and know your role*** – it's important to understand what's your role in this specific interviewing process – are you the only interviewer? Are you one of many? How much time do you have? What are you supposed to share?
- ***Get familiar with scorecard*** (= requirements). What are you supposed to learn and how do you plan to do it?
- ***Get familiar with candidate's profile*** - this is not as important as it might sound but it might help you to focus your questions around their previous experience
- ***Sync with the Recruiter and other interviewers*** - who's going to focus on what and why?

Present next slide.

Now the tough part - the actual interview and how to ask the right questions. We've already talked about interview biases and how to work with them – knowing how to ask a question so you don't get a biased answer steps up your game. Let's start with simple exercise of discussing if the following questions are suitable for interviews.

Discuss each question, make a conclusion about its risks and find a suitable alternative if needed.

Present next slide.

To wrap it up, these are the questions you generally want to avoid or reduce (don't worry, you'll always ask them partially, sometimes even intentionally):

- *Closed-ended questions*
- *Leading questions*
- *Quirky wannabe-Google questions*

As for the last ones (E.g. "If you were an animal which one would you be and why?" or "How many golf balls can fit in a school bus?" or "What's the color of success?" or "How would you solve problems if you were from Mars?") - Try to avoid these unless you're perfectly familiar with their methodology (you know what you're validating/testing by using them and how to analyze the answer). If you're about to crack one

of these questions, discuss it with the team prior to the interview. Always bear in mind the candidate experience. Experiment carefully, wisely and consciously.

Present next slide.

If you're a beginner to interviewing, focus on your questions. That's your 101, that's what you need to master in the first place. If you're a pro or if you think you've got enough headspace, start with sharpening your active listening. Mastering your active listening is a long journey. For some people it might come easy, for others it can be quite hard.

Discussion: How do you understand active listening? What does it consist of? Write down all the suggestions.

Ok, let's start this with a short video of a conversation. Try to observe how the communication style changed in the middle of the sequence and what was the effect. In the video (hyperbolic though), Amy switches on her active listening and we can see the dynamics of the social interaction immediately changes.

Discussion: What did she do differently? Write down all the observations

Present next slide.

So first of all, she paid attention non-verbally – she kept a reasonable amount of eye contact, and was not distracted by anything else (e.g. in her case the dinner, in your case checking your phone during the interview etc.) But further she:

- *Encouraged him – either directly (“Tell me more”) or indirectly by expressing sympathy (“No way!”)*
- *Paraphrased – repeated what he has already said*
- *Reflects – mirrors his feelings (“That must be hard for you!”)*

Another set of useful techniques are:

- *Summarization*
- *Appreciation*

There's one more piece of good advice – Don't judge! When you judge, the communication partner usually recognizes it immediately and will react to that.

It's important to understand that we need to balance these and use them wisely. You should understand these competencies as tools that you can use if they're needed – do you need to dig deeper? – encourage. Do you need to build trust and feeling of understanding? - encourage, reflect. Do you need to clarify? - summarize.

On the other hand, if you want to observe the candidate's social skills and ability to handle pressure, work with silence. Just let them react to when you are not saying anything.

Discussion: Are they any other useful techniques you use during your interviews? Share.

5 Try outs (slides 55 – 57, 60 mins)

Goal: Participants can try out what they've learned practically. They are immediately provided feedback and can ask further questions.

Have the group to choose one of the practical exercises described in deck. Hand out necessary materials and facilitate the session. Run debrief.

6 Closure (Slide 58, 10 mins)

Ok, this is the end of today's sessions. You've done a great job. As discussed at the beginning – remember the maturity model, learning curve and the fact that becoming a pro in hiring requires time and coordinated effort of all the people on the hiring team. Ask for feedback, share feedback – that's how you'll grow. Another way is definitely to do some self-study – your handbook offers tons of additional materials and if it fails to meet your needs, there's always your recruiter, HRBP or old-fashioned Google.