



# I Don't Have Time to Interview!

**H**ow many times have you heard managers complain: "I don't have time to interview people! I'm swamped and understaffed and have to spend every minute and then some just to get my real work done!" And: "Filling jobs is HR's job. Can't you just find me someone?" Sound familiar?

To effectively fill jobs, your HR needs to establish a partnership and a process for working with the managers you support to make sure you find the people with the correct skills mix who will be successful in your organization's environment.

Many organizations have clear processes for both recruiters and hiring managers to use when staffing. Whether it means using a sophisticated applicant-tracking system or some homegrown system with e-mails and online requisitions, the process involved in getting new staff on board is usually well defined. All too often, the hard part is getting managers to work with HR to achieve the mutual goal.

Too many managers are unwilling or unable to actively participate in the hiring process, thereby dooming it to fail. Hiring new staff is too important a task to leave to human resources alone. To make sure you are bringing in the staff with the skills and talent you need to get the job done in your organization, you need the involvement, the support, and the active participation of the hiring managers. The first thing to do is to figure out why they are reluctant to commit his energy to partnering with the recruiter in this crucial process.

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Managers who don't want to get involved in hiring seem to fall into one (or more) of these five categories:

- 1** Insecure managers who are unsure how to hire (“**I don't know how.**”)
- 2** Managers who have been burnt in their hiring efforts before (“**I'm not good at this.**”)
- 3** Managers who are constantly fighting the clock (“**I don't have time.**”)
- 4** Managers who think its HR's responsibility (“**It's not my job.**”)
- 5** Managers who are unfamiliar with the software (“**I don't know your system and don't have time to learn it.**”)

Each of these requires a different approach to resolve the problem, reassure, and engage the hiring managers, and find a way to make them your partner.

## 1 "I don't know how."

To deal with insecure managers, draw them out to find out why they feel this is a skill they can't master. Reassure them and use many questions to get them to open up.

- What will the new hire be expected to accomplish?
- Why does this need to get done? Why is it important?
- What skills must the new person have?
- Under what circumstances will they be expected to work? Are there a lot of deadlines? Is there little clear direction? What's the workplace like?

Use this line of questioning to help insecure managers better understand what they're looking for and what results they will get from hiring someone. Many people are promoted to manager for their technical or business-related skills. Then they have to learn how to do the more challenging part of the manager's job — selecting and managing people.

This is where much of the insecurity comes from. When faced with the challenge of interviewing and hiring someone new, they often feel it is easier to do the work themselves rather than learn how to select new staff. Your job is to remind them that they were promoted to manager because they did a good job and because they're smart enough to do this. Interviewing and hiring staff is a skill, just like any other. It's not intuitive, and it can be learned. Help insecure managers relax and work more openly with you. Give them a roadmap to follow when hiring, and they'll be able to find the right person.

## 2 "I'm not good at this."

A greater challenge sometimes is reassuring managers who have been burnt in their hiring efforts before. When working with these managers, you again ask many questions, but in a different direction.

- What went wrong the last time?

- How can we prevent it this time?
- What's the same and can't be changed?
- What can be changed? How should it be changed?

Get the managers over their fear of making another bad hire. Are they concerned about their reputation? Are they afraid to upset the chemistry of their current department? Everyone agrees that they are overworked and that bringing in some reinforcements would alleviate some of the workload. But managers see an existing, cohesive well-functioning team and are often afraid of the negative impact from introducing someone new. Further, if the last new hire left in a messy termination, this could make the manager reluctant to bring on anyone new. We all know how time-consuming and ugly (if not downright painful) some terminations can be. Find out if this manager is labouring under the "What if I have to fire this person someday?" cloud. If you're worrying about firing someone someday, it's practically impossible to hire anyone.

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## 3 "I don't have time."

Possibly the most difficult managers to pin down are those who are working under unrealistic time constraints. With them, you'll still use questions. However, these manager may not think they even have time to answer your questions, much less interview anyone. You still can find out what you need to know to find the right candidates.

- Go to them on their schedule, whenever you can; don't expect them to make time for you.
- If they won't give you the time to work out the specs of the job, shadow them or their staff to learn about the job.
- Check if they can delegate the first interview to a senior staff person.

To make it clear that you understand the kind of environment in these groups, the intense time pressure under which they work, be sure to make "working under extreme time constraints" one of the strategic skills you'll seek in candidates for the job. This shows the managers that you do understand what they're going through and will increase their confidence in your ability to work with them. Further, if they feel that you really do understand, they'll be more likely to cooperate with you to ensure that you get the right person. Another way to gain the managers' confidence is to speak their language. Link strategic hiring to performance management. These are bottom-line, results-focused managers, so show them you can operate the same way.

## 4 "It's not my job."

Some managers tell you that hiring people is HR's job. The bottom line is that HR can't do it alone. You have to convince these managers that filling jobs effectively is a collaborative effort.

- You need their input if you are going to find and hire the best person for the job.
- Without it, you'll just keep churning and churning.
- You can fill jobs quickly, but you'd rather fill them only once.
- Your goal and their need is to be effective, not simply efficient.
- Speed is not the answer; quality is.

You may be questioned or challenged by these managers: "Can't you do your job? Why do I have to hire people?" Your response must be: "Yes, I certainly can hire someone. But I want to hire the right

someone, not just anyone.” Again, find out what is at the root of their reluctance to collaborate. Are they really insecure managers under the surface, or those who’ve been burned before? Remind them that they deserve the best hire. Working in partnership with you in the planning phase is the best way to ensure that they’ll get that person.

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***5 “I don’t know your system and don’t have time to learn it.”***

Managers who claim to be unfamiliar with the applicant software are becoming rare, but a few still hide behind this excuse. Usually this is just a mask for the real issue, and part of working with them is getting to the bottom of their reluctance.

- Explain that hiding away from the software is no excuse in today’s environment.
- Tell them it’s easier than they think.
- Work with them to get to the real issue.
- Offer to go through the software again to familiarize them with the system, but do not let it become standard

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operating procedure. You have your job to do, and using the software is part of their job.

Bluntly put, blaming it on the software is probably the lamest excuse. It usually means that the manager is challenged on time, past history, or lack of experience. Your job is to find out what’s really going on so you can use the right tools or the right line of questioning to get to the right solution.

To be effective in meeting the needs of managers, keep the lines of communication open so you know what they need and can anticipate when they’ll need it.

The key to creating a partnership with your managers is not to demand that they accommodate your requests. You need to sell them on the benefits of working with you and the value of their input. You really are trying to find them the best person, but you can’t do it alone. Jobs keep changing, and the needs of the organization keep evolving. To be effective in meeting the needs of your managers, keep the lines of communication open so you know what they need and can anticipate when they’ll need it. The better you get at predicting what you can do to help their business run smoothly, the more they will see you as the partner you strive to be. Then you won’t have to go

chasing after them; they’ll be soliciting your input because they fully understand the value and benefit of working more closely with you.

You need to sell managers on the benefits of working with HR and the value of their input. HR is really trying to find them the best person, but can’t do it alone.

#### DBR

Ronald M. Katz is president of Penguin Human Resource Consulting, which delivers training and consults on performance management. For more information, visit [www.penguinhr.com](http://www.penguinhr.com). Reprinted with the permission of ERE Media at [www.ERE.net](http://www.ERE.net).

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**Australia:** 613 9245 0245  
[hrsolutions@au.drakeintl.com](mailto:hrsolutions@au.drakeintl.com)

**Canada:** 416 216-1067  
[solutions@na.drakeintl.com](mailto:solutions@na.drakeintl.com)

**Hong Kong:** 852 2848 9288  
[Drake@drake.com.hk](mailto:Drake@drake.com.hk)

**New Zealand:** 0800 840 940  
[solutions@nz.drakeintl.com](mailto:solutions@nz.drakeintl.com)

**Philippines:** 632 7532490  
[weoutperform@drakeintl.co.uk](mailto:weoutperform@drakeintl.co.uk)

**Singapore:** 65 6225 5809  
[rharrison@sg.drakeintl.com](mailto:rharrison@sg.drakeintl.com)

**South Africa:** 011 883 6800  
[Solutions@drake.co.za](mailto:Solutions@drake.co.za)

**United Kingdom:** 0800 111 4558  
[solutions@drakeintl.co.uk](mailto:solutions@drakeintl.co.uk)