

Stop guessing who will perform:

a smarter way to hire top talent

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Every company wants to make better talent decisions.

Leaders invest in interviews, assessments, competency models, and increasingly, AI-enabled hiring tools to identify candidates who are most likely to succeed.

Still, performance remains inconsistent.

The issue is not a lack of information. Most organizations have more candidate data than ever. The issue is that too many hiring decisions are still built around signals that suggest potential, but do not directly measure whether someone can perform when the role demands it.

Experience, personality, confidence, and culture fit can all provide useful context. But they are not the same as capability.¹ And when organizations confuse those signals with performance predictors, they create a gap between who seems right for the job and who is actually equipped to succeed in it.

Why hiring decisions keep falling short

Most hiring processes still rely on proxies.

A strong résumé can point to relevant experience. A confident interview can suggest communication skills. A personality assessment can help explain work style. Each data point may have value, but none of them directly answers the most important question: Can this person perform this specific role at the level required?²

That gap matters.

Personality assessments describe behavioral tendencies. They do not show how effectively someone applies judgment, persistence, adaptability, or problem-solving in the moments that matter most. Skills and competency models can help define what a role requires, but they often become too broad, too complex, or too slow to keep up with the work itself. AI-driven hiring tools may promise greater objectivity, but many still rely on generalized patterns that miss the nuance of real roles, real teams, and real performance expectations.³

The result is a familiar cycle: more tools, more data, and more confidence in decisions that still do not consistently produce better outcomes.

What actually separates top performers

Top performers do not always look dramatically different from everyone else on paper.

In many cases, high performers and lower performers have similar backgrounds, comparable experience, and many of the same underlying capabilities. The difference shows up in how strongly those capabilities are developed and how effectively they are applied in context.

In one B2B sales organization, high and low performers demonstrated many of the same capabilities. What separated the



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top performers was not a completely different skill set. It was the level at which they operated the capabilities that mattered most for success in that specific role.⁴

Across the most critical capabilities, high performers scored between **12 and 27 percent** higher than lower performers. When those differences were viewed together, the performance gap became even more meaningful.⁴ The people delivering stronger results were not simply more experienced or better interviewers. They were stronger in the areas that directly drove outcomes.

That distinction is important. Performance is not just about having the right capabilities. It is about having the right capabilities at the right level for the role.

A more precise way to understand talent

Capability Intelligence changes the way organizations evaluate fit between a person and a role.

Rather than relying on indirect indicators like past experience, personality, or perceived potential, Capability Intelligence identifies the specific behavioral and cognitive capabilities a role requires and evaluates how well an individual aligns to those requirements.

That precision matters because roles are rarely as standardized as they appear. Two employees may have the same title, but the capabilities required to succeed can vary significantly based on the organization, market, team structure, customer expectations, and performance goals. Without a clear understanding of those requirements, hiring becomes an exercise in approximation.

Capability Intelligence replaces approximation with alignment. It helps organizations define what success actually looks like in a role, identify the capabilities that drive that success, and evaluate people against a standard tied directly to performance.

For hiring teams, that creates a more reliable way to understand whether a candidate is likely to succeed. For talent leaders, it creates a stronger foundation for development, mobility, succession planning, and workforce strategy.⁵

From intuition to evidence

When organizations evaluate talent through a capability lens, the decision-making process changes.

The question is no longer whether someone feels like a strong candidate. The better question is whether that person has demonstrated the capability to perform at the level the role requires.

That shift has practical value. It helps explain why two candidates with similar backgrounds can produce very different results. It makes the drivers of performance more visible. It gives leaders a clearer way to identify people who are ready for future opportunities, not just people who look ready based on experience or tenure.

It also helps reduce overreliance on instinct. Intuition will always play some role in hiring and talent decisions, but it should not carry the weight of

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prediction on its own. Capability Intelligence gives leaders a stronger evidence base, making decisions more consistent, more defensible, and more closely tied to business outcomes.

Where to start

Organizations often lose momentum with new talent strategies because they try to apply them everywhere at once. Capability Intelligence is more effective when it starts with a focused business problem.

Begin with a role where performance varies widely or where the cost of a poor hiring decision is high. Look at the people who consistently deliver results in that role, not simply those who are perceived as strong. Then identify the capabilities that differentiate them and pay close attention to the magnitude of those differences.

From there, those insights can be applied to real decisions: refining hiring criteria, targeting development, identifying future-fit talent, and improving workforce planning.

The goal is not to overhaul the entire talent strategy overnight. The goal is to make the next decision more precise, prove the value of the approach, and scale it with confidence.⁶

Better performance starts with better prediction

For years, organizations have made talent decisions using the best tools available: experience, interviews, assessments, manager judgment, and instinct. Those inputs are not useless. They are simply incomplete.

They were never designed to predict performance with precision.

Capability Intelligence offers a more direct path. By focusing on the capabilities that drive results and the level at which those capabilities must be applied, organizations can make clearer, more reliable decisions about who is most likely to succeed.

That matters because hiring is not just about filling a role. It is about improving the outcomes that depend on that role.⁷

The stronger the alignment between capability and role requirements, the stronger the odds of performance. And when organizations understand why people succeed, they are better equipped to hire, develop, and retain the people who will move the business forward.

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