

At BLANKSLATE Partners, we often help our clients recruit for exceptionally difficult roles. These roles require a niche skillset, which usually means we're usually drawing from a very limited candidate pool.

When you're choosing to hire from a small batch of candidates, the question of *hiring for culture fit or skills* is going to surface.

For startups and SMBs with a low headcount (between 5-50 employees,) every team member makes a huge daily impact. So when someone doesn't fit the culture—and we've all worked with that one person *no one* seems to click with—it's a big drain on morale and productivity.

But what happens when your back's against the wall, and you feel like you don't have a choice? When your candidate pool is so limited that you're considering hiring for skill only—even when you *know* that the candidate isn't the right fit for the company? We won't let that happen.

Here are a few alternatives that will expand your options and help you feel *in choice*.

## **1) Hire for Culture Fit: *It's Time to Train***

Before you start writing a job posting, ask yourselves these questions:

Do you have the bandwidth within the existing team to train and develop the skill set required internally?

Do you have the required skillset internally already in order to train/develop

When is the critical hire date for the project/company?

If the answer to any of the questions above are yes, then think about stepping back. Look at developing talent from within. Alternately, consider hiring that one candidate you really liked that wasn't there technically. Take the leap, and train the candidate you like best.

## 2) Is the Required Skillset a *Forever Skillset*?

Sometimes that *to-die-for* skill is intrinsically tied to a project deliverable, so it's important to be realistic. Will this product become a mainstay in your company? If this is the case would you (the company) be open to hiring the skillset on contract?

Consider how long you would need someone on contract, and if you need them full time. If you do hire someone on contract, it's not any less important that they fit the company values and culture. Stay with me here...

Can you outsource the build or need?

## 3) Open Your Borders

Many startups and SMBs don't think they could ever afford to immigrate top talent or "compete with the big boys for talent!" But a lot of the time, this is just a story they believe, it's not actually grounded in fact. In the last two years BLANKSLATE has immigrated top technical talent from Brazil, China, UK, Ireland, Mexico and the USA. What's more, these wonderfully talented people specifically wanted to work in the startup community. So taking all that into consideration, there's still a few things to factor in:

Time - Depending on where the individual is coming from, the salary they will make, and the likelihood of finding a Canadian that can do the role—these factors affect the immigration process. We always coach our clients to factor in approximately two months when budgeting for time, but know that it can take more (up to 6 months) or less (as quick as 10 days) depending on the above.

But—your top talent could still work remotely on contract for you while they wait!

And—they can still come to Canada to meet the team, onboard, and learn the techstack.

So before you commit to hiring someone you *know* doesn't gel with your values, consider the other options and other routes you could take. Feel free to reach out to BLANKSLATE for help and advice—we offer a free 30 minute consult to all new clients.

