



Replacing the Interview

How AI reduces guesswork, predicts candidate success,
improves equity, and helps best-in-class teams hire talent - fast

Created by



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We're (still) doing hiring wrong: the trouble with tradition

There's something missing in the hiring process. All of us can feel it—it's the wound that won't heal. We make small improvements, but small improvements only take us so far when the core is broken. That broken process looks something like this:

- With the clock constantly looming, recruiters—through sheer willpower—hastily filter through hundreds of resumes to find the proverbial needle in the haystack. But those resumes are inherently inadequate: they lack evidence of the soft skills and behaviors that would give the hiring manager a sense of cultural alignment. **89% of mis-hires are due to cultural misalignment, which a resume simply can't predict.**
- Unstructured interviews with variable interview styles are breeding grounds for personal bias, skewing sound decision-making. But even structured interviews lead to inconsistent assessments, because teams lack objective frameworks for what "good" means. For all the time spent on quality-of-hire, only **15% of companies** have defined what a high-performing hire looks like.
- This often means that candidates become indistinguishable from each other, leading to a great deal of uncertainty about who to extend an offer to. This puts new hiring managers, who may be looking for extra assurance, in an uncomfortable position. As for experienced hiring managers, they may be so entrenched in their views that personal bias enters the decision along with "gut feel" and guesswork.
- Despite research showing that most interviews have no correlation with post-hire outcomes, we still depend on a 30-minute conversation to tell us whether a candidate is right for the job. Hiring decisions grounded in interviews are less accurate than a coin flip: we get nearly half of those decisions wrong.
- Teams typically default to a "mindset of more" to solve the problem: more candidates, more interviews, more process, more criteria. But this only exacerbates existing problems while drawing out the indecision. The result? Poor candidate experiences, and bad business outcomes: more interviews mean more time and money spent by the business, missed hiring goals, and ultimately, missed business objectives.

Relying solely on resumes and 30-minute interviews is hardly enough to predict a candidate's success in your organization: Research has shown there's no correlation between traditional hiring practices and post-hire success again and again.

Yet in lieu of other data, that's where hiring teams have been looking—for decades.

With AI, we now have access to an array of meaningful data: the soft skills and behavioral traits that are powerful indicators of cultural alignment and quality-of-hire. Enter Searchlight's TRACY (the Talent Recommendation Agent Customized to You), your AI talent partner that predicts good hires **4x better** than your current process.

None of this is talent acquisition's fault. Recruiting leaders face the heavy task of meeting headcount goals, often with minimal resources, by scaling and repeating existing processes that frankly shouldn't be. The fundamental problem is that businesses either don't know what will truly predict success in a role, or they do, but don't have access to that data on a candidate.

Enter AI.

AI offers a fundamental reinvention of a process that has mostly failed us. We don't need to "clean up" the traditional hiring process; we need a new paradigm altogether—with data-driven signals on what's actually meaningful about talent as they relate to your organization. Behaviors, attitudes, soft skills, and cultural alignment are things candidates can't necessarily tell you about themselves, and things you can't necessarily sort for. After all, they require thousands of data points on post-hire success. The human brain simply isn't up to that task.

AI's superpower is that it can rapidly ingest magnitudes more data than the human brain can, finding patterns that lead to great hire. These patterns allow teams to identify best-fit candidates quickly, with confidence, and without bias—ushering in a new age of quality hires with diminished employee attrition.

Here's how.



"With Searchlight, we saw an almost immediate impact in recruiting efficiency. My hiring managers weren't getting enough signal through interviews, leading to decision paralysis. Searchlight's assessments filled in the data gaps."



Ann Watson

SVP of People and Culture @ Verana Health

Use behavioral data to quickly predict on-the-job performance and eliminate an entire interview

Revolutionizing how we make hiring decisions means looking beyond the often-unhelpful resume and beyond hard skills to behaviors, competencies, and working styles that have empirically proven to correlate to job performance and employee satisfaction. These are signals that hiring teams don't always know to look for—let alone how to look for.

For the first time ever, AI allows teams to quantify culture alignment (soft skills, attitudes, working styles) by putting a structure and a language around their company's unique culture, then unlocking a more holistic view of their candidates using behavioral data insights. This can eliminate an entire culture interview, since data takes the guesswork out when it comes to cultural alignment.

zapier

“The behavioral data returned from Searchlight was so effective that it gave us the conviction to eliminate an entire interview round dedicated to evaluating a candidate against our values. This gave hundreds of hours back to the business, reduced our time-to-fill by seven days, and improved our candidate experience.”



Supreet Hundal

former Recruiting Operations Lead @ Zapier

Winning Traits for Account Executives

Edit

Details

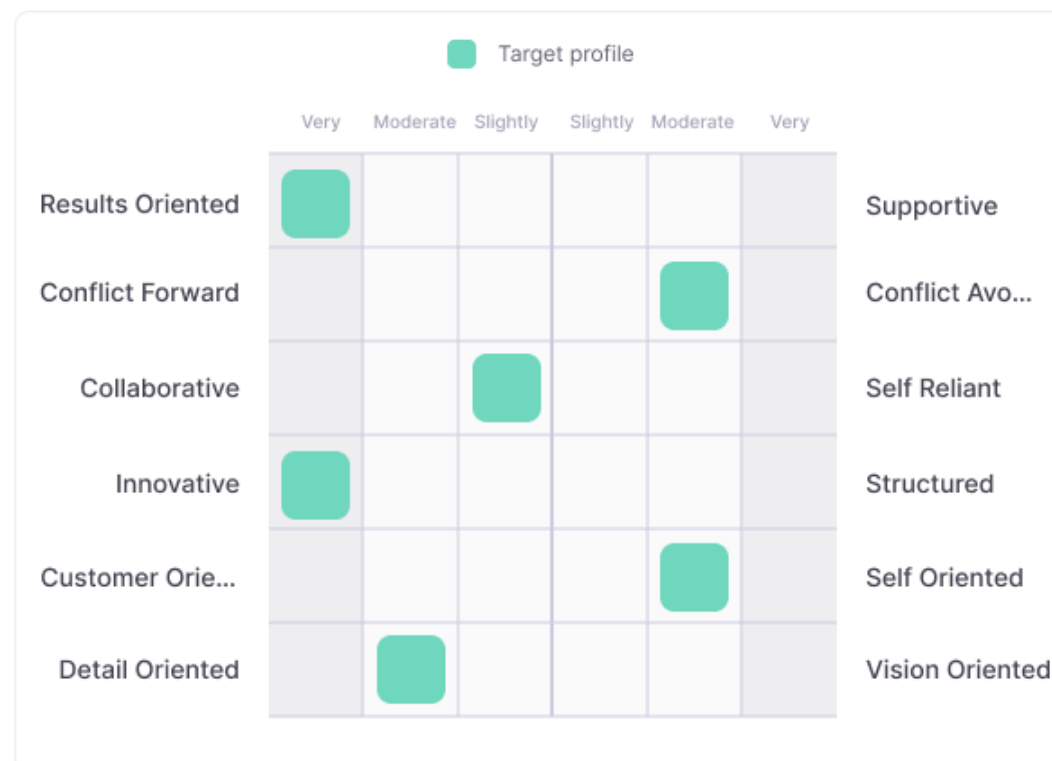
Hire a top performer by looking for these predictive traits.

Trait	Importance
Communication Proactively takes action to achieve and execute results	Superpower
Charisma Generates energy, enthusiasm and a desire to succeed in others	Superpower
Independence Functions effectively without assistance or direction from others	Baseline
Strategic thinking Anticipates and prepares for future events	Baseline
Humility Able to experiment and learn without ego	Baseline
Active listening Listens attentively and understands what is being said	Baseline

Winning Work Styles for Account Executives

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Hire a top performer by hiring someone whose working styles align with your team.



AI can automatically predict the job family and level of a given open role and offer predictive criteria indicative of a top-performing candidate for that role. Searchlight's TRACY is an AI that's the result of decades of research in industrial and organizational psychology and behavioral science, and has been trained on hundreds of thousands of post-hire outcomes to uncover what distinguishes top performers from average performers.¹

Integrating seamlessly into your existing ATS and HRIS, TRACY structures and quantifies your unique organizational culture so that candidates can be meticulously evaluated for cultural alignment. It assesses your current team, generates behavioral profiles, and surfaces the traits and attributes (e.g., fast learner, results-driven, strategic thinking, resourcefulness, intuition) that distinguish your highest-performing employees. These are the predictive characteristics you'll look for in candidates since they're the strengths most highly correlated to performance at your organization.

The AI offers a Predictive Talent Model unique to every role's fingerprint. With that model, teams can:

- Auto-generate candidate scorecards with the attributes most correlated to high performance.
- Auto-calibrate reference checks in Searchlight to assess for those qualities.
- Use the surfaced attributes of high performers in your organization—along with AI—to refine hiring criteria and generate job requisitions, job descriptions, and interview guides that bring in higher-quality candidates from the get-go.
- Uncover what qualities make your organization successful (maybe it's critical thinking rather than pedigree!) and replicate them to create a high-performing, diverse, and equitable culture.
- Cut down on interviewer time. AI means **fewer, more effective interviews**. With cultural alignment covered, hiring teams can focus their skills-based interviews on key candidate strengths and growth areas, which AI also surfaces.

TRACY's Talent Model continues to be trained with every new candidate, hiring decision, and performance metric it processes—which means that with each new data point, AI has a more refined view of your organization's cultural DNA, and what your most successful candidates will embody.

coda

"We're now digging into the signals that are most predictive for quality of hire. Searchlight has taken a lot of guesswork out of our hiring."



Kenny Mendes

Head of People & Operations @ Coda

¹ Searchlight's algorithm trains on on-the-job performance rather than using the "hired" event as the success case. That's because there can be a large discrepancy between hiring teams' expectations of a candidate and the new hire's actual success.

Auto-filter candidates at the assessment stage

Have 1,000 applicants? AI rapidly sorts, filters out, and identifies the top 20 to interview. Sub-par assessment techniques generally result in weak signal, poor filtering, and prolonged time-to-fill. But a combination of AI and behavioral science allows teams to bring predictive, holistic digital assessments into their hiring process.




The problems with candidate assessments are many and varied:

- They occur too late in the hiring process
- They're biased toward positivity and embellishment
- They're inconsistent by assessor
- Feedback is siloed
- They're tedious and inefficient—it might take hours to schedule a call, have the conversation, and take useful notes
- Traditional assessments don't quantify skills or behaviors: they give an incomplete view of candidates' strengths, growth areas, and work motivations—and they can't speak to candidates' alignment with your organization's culture

AI transforms the game by supercharging assessments. Gold-standard templates are sent to candidates' former colleagues and managers and the candidates themselves. Incorporating self-assessments gives organizations a more comprehensive perspective of the talent in their pipeline, because they gather the significant behavioral data points that resumes and interviews overlook or omit.

Assessments are gathered on Searchlight before on-site interviews. The platform automates a three-hour manual process with the click of a button, and hiring teams obtain the data in less than 36 hours on average. AI like TRACY enables highly-predictive assessments—precisely because it automatically customizes the questions to assess for the very criteria it learns will lead to top performance in the organization.

AI-powered outcomes:

 <p>Automated reference checks saved Coda 1.5 - 2 hours per candidate</p>	<p>Udemy's hiring managers received rich behavioral data on candidates within 36 hours of inviting them</p> 
 <p>B-Stock received candidate data reports in 1.5 days - with no work required from the team</p>	

It's important to stress that this is predictive feedback on data-backed, predictive attributes. With AI, hiring teams can assess candidates on behavioral, attitudinal, and cultural alignment (the more precise indicators of success), transforming their entire assessment process. And because the assessment data is consistently structured, teams see less "interpreter" variation—and less bias.



"Recruiters and hiring managers were surprised by the honesty and depth of Searchlight's reference checks. Many of them had never had a negative reference call in their life, so Searchlight's reports were remarkable for their sound credibility."



Cara Brennan Allamano
Former SVP of People @ Udemy



"Searchlight not only fixes the broken reference process, it also educates my managers to make faster, data-driven decisions. Everyone that I've talked to loves having Searchlight's information."



Elizabeth Shober-Smith
Former VP of Talent Acquisition @ Udemy

Instantly surface top candidates with AI-generated recommendations—while reducing bias

Rooted in behavioral data, AI can serve up recommendation scores with predicted candidate performance and a quantified culture match. TRACY surfaces a stack-ranked list of top candidates in your pool, alongside a prediction score. The shortlist of standout talent, tailored to your organization's particular culture—and therefore most likely to succeed with you—cuts quickly through the noise and takes the guesswork out of team alignment.

AI also provides teams with structured, visual candidate data such as peer rankings, quantified soft skills, career interests, strengths and gaps, growth areas, competencies, and working styles.

The result? Hiring teams reduce the number of candidates that need to be interviewed, and spend time in meaningful discussions with the talent most likely to succeed at their organization.

The screenshot displays the Searchlight TRACY interface for a job posting titled "Account Executive II". The interface is split into two main sections: a candidate list on the left and a detailed profile for the top candidate, Tonya Jackson, on the right.






Candidate List (Left Panel):

Name	Predicted Performance
• Tonya Jackson	Top Candidate
Vivek Ramadoss	Top Candidate
Arlene McCoy	Above Average
Lihong Zhao	Above Average
Armando Lopez	Above Average
Christa Fontaine	Above Average
Ben Proctor	Average
Sarah Harding	Average
Giyoon Ko	Average
Abioye Nwadike	Average
Joseph Griffith	Average
Ashkon Shabdar	Average
Isha Patel	Average
Ke Quoc	Risky

Tonya Jackson Profile (Right Panel):

- Save candidate** (button)
- Predicted Performance:** Top Candidate (Potential bar raiser)
- Inputs:**
 - Quantitative Factors: **Good** (Neutral + Good + Great)
 - Qualitative Factors: **Great** (Neutral + Good + Great)
- Why is Tonya rated "Top Candidate"?:** Searchlight's AI detected patterns in Joseph's behavioral profile that match those of top-performing hires across Searchlight AI's dataset. [Read More about How Predicted Performance is calculated](#)
- Power Skills:**
 - Strengths:** Conscientious (4), Dependable (4), Attention to Detail (2), Collaboration (2), Adaptable (1)
 - Growth Areas:** Citizenship (4), Persuasive (3), Poise (1)
- Legend:**
 - Self-selected attribute
 - Relevant to Role or Organization
 - 123 Number of times selected

AI-powered outcomes:

 Snapdocs gathered and analyzed predictive talent data 80% faster	Coda hired 3x more candidates and caught a 6% false positive rate , preventing costly mis-hires 
 B-Stock improved time-to-fill for Customer Success roles by more than 40% , made eight successful hires in six weeks, and immediately improved its average pre-employment rate	Udemy decreased time-to-fill by 40% while increasing offer volume by 4.8x YoY 
 Zapier reduced time-to-fill by 7 days	

By predicting post-hire performance, TRACY is an **AI gets 4 out of every 5 hires right** (as opposed to the **1 out of every 5 hires traditional interviews get right**). That means organizations can **hire top performers four times as often** and continuously raise the talent bar by partnering with AI.

- Make 4x better hiring decisions by “getting it right” over 80% of the time
- Prevent 3 out of every 5 mis-hires by proactively detecting candidates likely to be low performers at your organization
- Reduce attrition rate by 25% through downstream effects on retention
- Reduce time-to-fill by 40% by surfacing the most qualified candidates
- Lower cost-per-hire by 20% through new recruiting efficiencies
- Satisfy hiring managers by presenting them only the best candidates
- Bring a new level of decisive confidence to hiring teams, empowering them to take risks, move faster... and succeed

coda

“There were times when interview feedback almost made us pass on a candidate—but Searchlight’s quantified and corroborated data disproved our impressions, and showed that the candidate had the strengths and culture alignment we needed. I’d say that about 5% of our hires were great candidates we would have turned down without Searchlight.”



Harry Dannenbaum

Head of Recruiting @ Coda

Hiring teams use these predicted top-performer lists to quickly align on whether a candidate will make their existing team stronger. The predictions confirm “gut feel” or “spidey-senses,” validate decisions, and improve next-stage interviews. That’s because AI automatically identifies key areas of strength and opportunity—intelligence that can be used to refine questions and dig deeper with candidates into potential growth areas.

The best part? Surfacing candidates with data-backed predictive signals brings consistency and scalability to the hiring process—meaning repeated success in the quality of hiring decisions. It also reduces bias in various ways²:

- By focusing on soft skills, behaviors, and competencies rather than pedigree, AI identifies and includes talent that took non-traditional educational paths to get where they are today
- By reducing “gut feel” through objective data, subjective interviewers with entrenched ways of thinking can’t unwittingly wield their biases
- Underrepresented talent traditionally understate their accomplishments and abilities, but a corroborated assessment approach using former colleagues and managers helps elevate them



“We cut our time-to-fill in half with Searchlight. Interviews don’t tell us everything we need to know. Searchlight gives us insight from managers and peers about what makes a person stand out on a team, and what their motivations and management style are.”



Brandon Jackson

Technical Recruiting Manager @ B-Stock



“The Customer Success hires we made with Searchlight were by far the strongest people we hired in two years of recruiting for our team. This success created demand for Searchlight in other departments across the business.”



Chad Herring

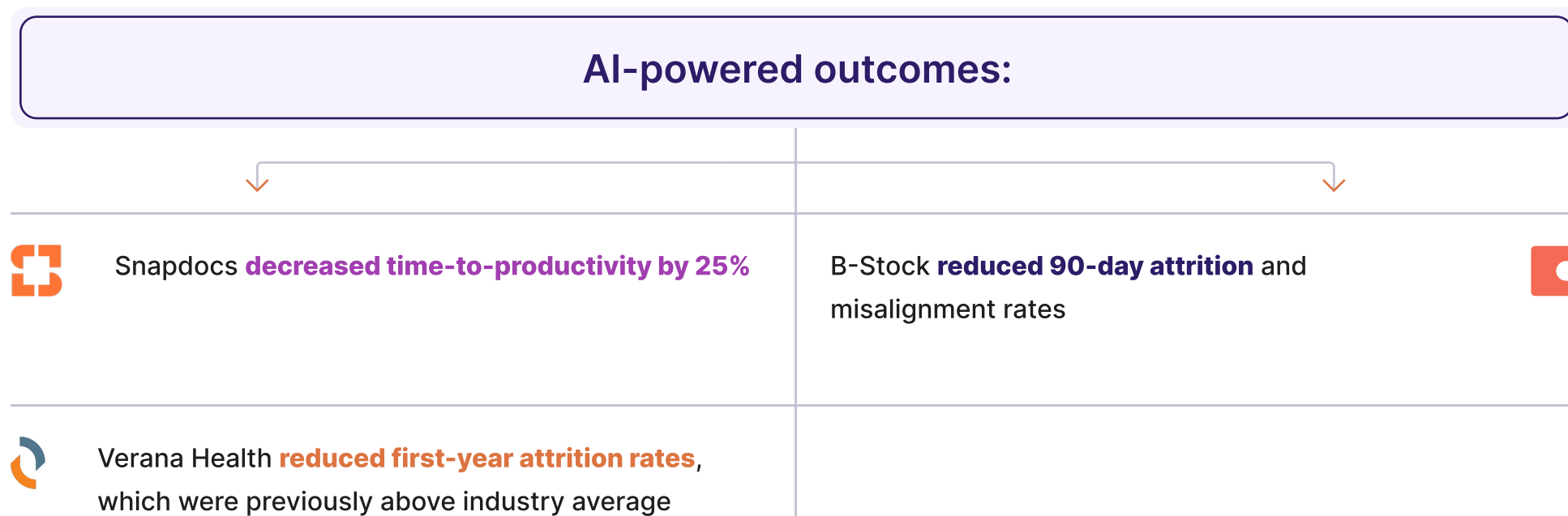
former Chief People Officer @ Snapdocs

² Searchlight’s AI stack was built on ethical principles from the ground-up—including continuous bias monitoring and mitigation to proactively eliminate discrimination. TRACY has passed the most rigorous third-party auditing (all impact assessment results showed no bias at the 95% confidence level).

Leverage predictive AI for individualized onboarding

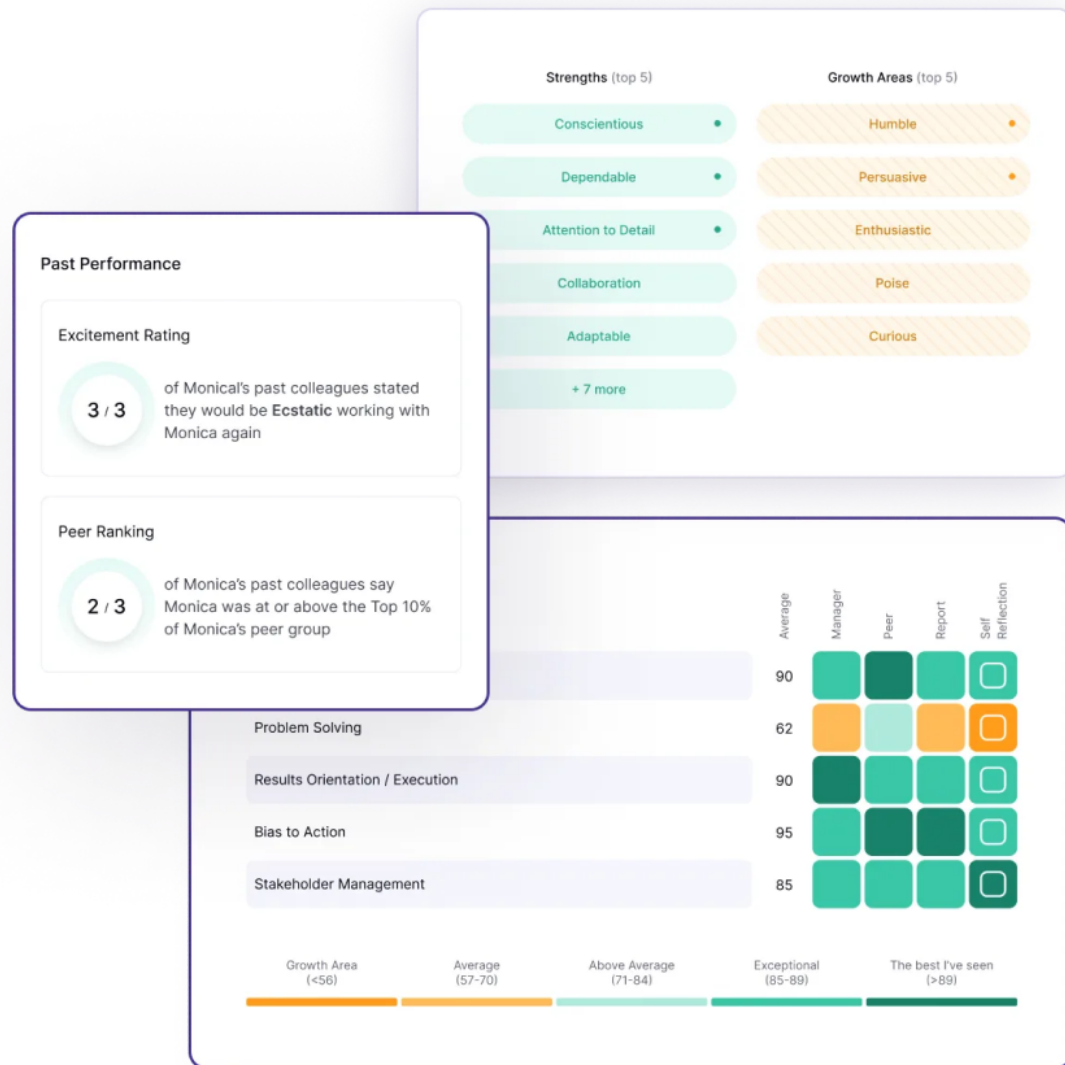
The hiring process doesn't end at a signed offer letter: 46% of new employees will churn within 18 months on the job, after all. Hiring needs to seamlessly roll into onboarding and development, and businesses need clear and compelling approaches to new-hire ramp-up to prevent regrettable attrition

In an ideal world, this means onboarding journeys tailor-made to every new hire, and a combination of AI and behavioral insights are invaluable here. AI serves up not only a predictive score, but also actionable insights concerning each new hire, with targeted growth areas and suggestions on how to manage and collaborate with new hires to maximize hiring outcomes.



Predictive data allows managers to personalize early conversations with new hires and fine-tune each ramp-up plan thanks to signals on strengths, gaps, career interests, working styles, and more. This is especially helpful intelligence for first-time managers preparing for how new hires might fit into the team, and for more experienced managers to accelerate time-to-productivity.

Individualized onboarding guides play up each hire's singular strengths, proactively address their gaps and growth areas, and allow managers to lean into each employee's work motivations, invest in their career growth early, and know how to best support them along the way. Tuning onboarding plans to AI-assisted assessment feedback also means employees stay longer in previously high-turnover roles.



“We cut our time-to-fill in half and I’m not sure we would’ve been able to onboard all our hires in the necessary, timely fashion without Searchlight.”



Brandon Jackson
Technical Recruiting Manager @ B-Stock



“Searchlight adds so much depth of information for a reference. You can not only use it to make a hiring decision, but also as a tool for the person’s growth plan after you’ve hired them.”



Rich Adao
former Global Head of Technical Recruiting @ Udemy



“With Searchlight, our managers instantly know a couple of areas where they can coach a new hire from the get-go, and other areas where we can leverage that person’s strengths from the start. We can paint a more accurate picture of the qualities of our high performers.”

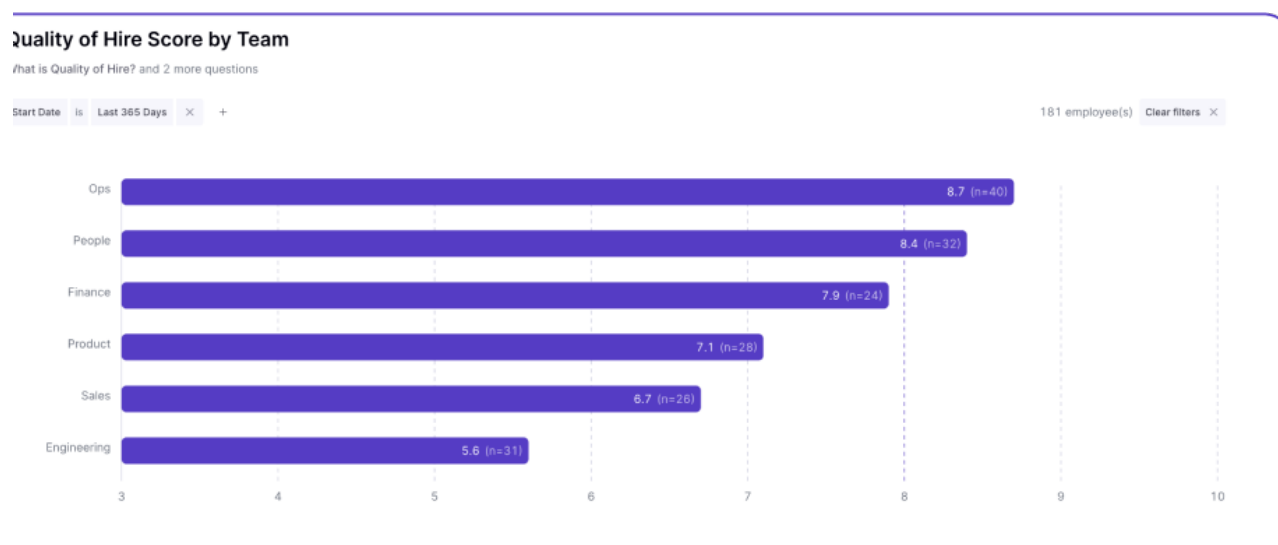


David Wiedeman
VP of Enterprise Sales @ Udemy

Objectively measure quality-of-hire for the first time—and continually improve it through a virtuous feedback loop

Hiring candidates who are culturally aligned to the company and possess the attitudes and behaviors essential for team harmony (and whose onboarding has been tailored to their personal strengths and gaps) leads to stronger engagement and on-the-job performance.

CEOs and boards of directors want to know that the business is maintaining employee quality for all the time and money it spends on hiring. For decades, talent acquisition leaders have been under pressure to report on a fundamentally-elusive KPI: there's been no way to systematically quantify quality-of-hire. Without a representative metric to convey whether recruiting is bringing in great hires, C-levels and boards remain uncertain—and even suspicious—of talent acquisition's business impact.



Configure your QoH formula

- Recommended QoH inputs
 - QoH survey - Performance
 - QoH survey - Belonging
 - QoH survey - Alignment
 - QoH survey - Enablement
- Other
 - Quota Attainment Connect CRM or CSV
 - Performance Rating Connect HRIS or CSV
 - Promotion History
 - Tenure
 - QoH survey - Custom question
 - Engagement Score


Add Custom QoH Input

AI-powered outcomes:

 Udemy **increased first year retention by 20%**

Snapdocs improved quality-of-hire and **increased employee lifetime value by 1.5-4x**



 Verana Health set a people and culture OKR for quality-first hiring, measured by having a **quality-of-hire score above an 8**

AI not only augments data that's already in organizations' ATS and HRIS with its own assessment that's more consistent and accurate than interview feedback, it also measures employee outcomes more holistically and much earlier than a first-year performance review does. That's because AI continually connects hiring data to post-hire outcome data. **By the end of year one, the AI almost wholly understands, has conformed to, and is personalized to your organizational culture and its most qualified, best-fit candidates.**

On-the-job performance of new hires provides unique insights back to the team about what successful hiring looks like, and delivers feedback to the Predictive Talent Model for recalibrating and fine-tuning future interviews and assessments. In other words, hiring outcomes are translated into actionable recommendations on what qualities to search for—and who to hire—when the next role opens.

With AI, recruiting and hiring teams have access to a learning loop that continuously improves quality-of-hire. For the first time, talent leaders can:

- Be confident when reporting on quality-of-hire (as a quantifiable OKR) to C-levels and boards of directors, or in QBRs
- Provide specific, measured insights into each department's quality-of-hire and what made quality lower in some teams and higher in others—and relay those insights back to teams to bring in more best-fit hires
- Know exactly where to focus their quality interventions, and monitor those interventions over time
- Raise the value and visibility of talent acquisition by demonstrating the business impact of investing in good recruiting practices



“Searchlight helps us get more nuanced when it comes to defining the behavioral preferences we want for the next hire, customized by each hiring manager. By using Searchlight as a repository of success profiles, hiring managers and recruiters stay disciplined in hiring against their success criteria.”



Supreet Hundal

former Recruiting Operations Lead @ Zapier



“Searchlight is my best partner: a comprehensive solution that operationalizes quality of hire and reduces employee attrition.”



Ann Watson

SVP of People and Culture @ Verana Health

A new hiring paradigm with Searchlight's TRACY

TRACY stands for the Talent Recommendation Agent Customized to You, and she's your AI talent partner that reduces guesswork and accurately predicts candidate success—all while improving fairness and speed in your hiring process.

At Searchlight, we've spent the past five years working to give recruiters and hiring managers superpowers to build high-performing teams using artificial intelligence and behavioral science. TRACY is the result of thousands of hours of product research, tight feedback loops with our valued customers, and hundreds of thousands of data points on candidates and post-hire success in all kinds of roles.

While most AI solutions focus on making existing workflows simpler, TRACY flips the script entirely and proposes a new paradigm for hiring by focusing on a set of data points with a greater correlation to quality-of-hire than traditional interviews have.

Ultimately, TRACY's AI saves hundreds of hours of interviewing time, simplifies and shortens the hiring process, maximizes onboarding and minimizes new hire attrition, improves quality-of-hire, and drives home the value of talent acquisition to executives.

TRACY meets you where you work, integrating with all major ATS and HRIS systems. She takes security and compliance very seriously. She's been independently audited to have no bias. And, she predicts great hires 4x better than your current resume-and-interview process, meaning you hire four times as many top performers for your organization.

Finally, an objective, data-driven approach to consistently hiring high-quality, best-fit talent that's repeatable at scale.



"Searchlight was extremely easy to implement, integrating into our existing systems with a few clicks. They also have a stellar customer success team that is a pleasure to work with! The responsiveness and immediate action taken by the customer success team continues to add value to the partnership."



Heather Weidekamp

Sr. Manager of People & Culture @ Verana Health