I used to work for an organization that hired by consensus.

Not majority- consensus.

So on the last round of our interview process, the entire organization would come and listen to all the candidates and then try to come to a consensus.

For our organization, we had about 50 people and on any given hiring day maybe 35 or so would show up.

First of all, imagine being a candidate looking at 35 people in the hiring room and secondly as an organization, imagine trying to reach consensus on anything among 35 people.

It was really challenging and what made it even more challenging was that it wasn't very structured.

Instead of walking into that process saying, 'here's the 10 things we're looking for in this candidate' we just had everybody come and listen to the candidates and then decide based on their own thoughts and beliefs and decisions on what criteria were important.

It made it really difficult to get to consensus when everyone was giving different weight to different things about the candidates.

This is a mistake that a lot of organizations make where they don't go into the hiring process with the end in mind, with a set of criteria or expectations that they're looking for. Instead they get to the last step and the people who are in charge of making the decision are all on a different page because they were never in agreement about what they were looking for.

As you plan out each of your hirings, it's really important to ask what you're looking for and start with that end in mind. Now this is going to be a lot easier with some criteria than others.

For some that are more objective, this will be very easy- things like if the candidate needs a certain license or certificate or degree or for their schedule they're required to work nights or weekends.Or they have to have a certain clearance. Things like that.

It's really easy to vet from the beginning, but other things you might be looking for will be a little more challenging. For example, if you're looking for somebody who's a good team player or a hard worker or really creative. How can you look for those things and be a good judge of that during an interview process?

Really think about, among the many things on your dream candidate wish list, what do you really need to know in this process?

Some organizations have these really drawn-out processes in hopes of really finding out

everything they can possibly know to make the best decision they can.

I was looking for a part-time job at one point as a dog walker when I got to step four of the hiring process. Finally I asked how many more steps there were. There were seven steps in their hiring process and at that point, I just said, forget it.

What else did you possibly need to know?

Think about what the steps are in your process and if they are necessary to get you the information that you really need to know.

How will you know when you know it?

Peter Schultz, the former CEO of Porsche has this quote that goes around a lot which is, *hire character and train skill.*

This is a philosophy of hiring. It's not the only one. You have every opportunity to agree or disagree with it. But I do challenge you to consider it.

What are you really looking for in your candidates?

And what if you have someone who's great, but maybe doesn't have the skills yet that you would like in that position? Is there an opportunity to hire that great person and give them the skills they need? That's a decision for you to make.

As always, it's important for you to come up with a way for you to check your biases. Biases show up everywhere and they especially show up during a hiring process.
From the way you go through certain resumes to who you call for interviews to how you conduct those interviews to how you assess those interviews into who you actually end up hiring. How are you going to check your biases along the way?

A couple of ways you can try to do that- some organizations implement a resume review process that's considered blind, which is they take names and addresses off of the resumes as you look through them.

Another way is to have multiple people looking through resumes and being part of the interview process, so you're getting a broader perspective.

The third is to have that criteria from the beginning so that you are being as objective as possible.

Again, it's not a hundred percent objective, but you can do a more effective job of looking for candidates who match what you're looking for instead of candidates from certain groups or backgrounds or whatever bias you have that can really show up during this process.

One of the most effective ways to know how a candidate is going to perform whatever it

is they'll perform in this position is to perform it for you during the interview process.

Now, this will be a lot easier in some positions than others.

In my background as an educator this was really easy to ask people to come in and do a sample lesson.

If you do anything computer-based or creative or writing there's lots of ways to simulate this but of course you can't do this in every position. So if you're not able to do it, is there a way for you to look back at past work that these candidates have done to get a sense of what they're capable of?

I highly recommend using a rubric through your process. This helps in a couple of ways.

1) to keep the process structured and to have a good sense of what you're looking for and also to go back to helping you check your biases.

If you are trying to be as objective as possible and really focusing on the skills and the traits that you're looking for in your candidates, figure out who you want to be involved in your hiring process and in what way.

If you have an HR, how much is HR responsible for?

Do they know what you're looking for?

Are they vetting candidates in the same way you'd like them to be vetted?

Who else is involved when you're hiring someone?

For a certain position, the person who will be their supervisor should certainly be a part of it. It's also good practice to have someone who will be supervised by this person be a part of the process.

You may also consider other members of the team, volunteers, board members, stakeholders, clients- however you can involve all the many people who are part of your organization will create a much more robust process and help with different perspectives and understandings of how this candidate might fit in.

If you'd like to do scenarios in your selection process know that past experiences are far more valuable information than hypotheticals. With hypotheticals, people can and do say anything.

If you ask them what they would do in a certain situation, it's easy for them to come up with the great perfect answer but what you're looking for is what they have done in the past.

 You can ask about a scenario where they had a conflict with a co-worker or they made a

big mistake or they ran up against a big problem or whatever the case may be and then ask them what they did in that situation versus hypothetically what they would do.

Always, always have a backup plan.

There are so many things that happen during hiring processes.

I feel like I've been through every single one, but every time I say that a new one pops up.

There will be instances when you make an offer and your candidate rejects it.

Or they accept it but then don't end up taking the position.

They change their mind.

Or they start that first week and realize this isn't the job for them.

Or they do something really egregious and end up getting fired.

There are so many things that can happen.

Make sure that even when you select that candidate that you have a plan B if things don't work out. There are lots of ways to make your selection process more effective.

I also want to remind you that nothing we do is a perfect science. Even if you come up with a really great process, that doesn't mean that every hire is going to be a great one. That's just how it goes. When hires don't go well, there's a chance to go back and reflect and see what you might have missed or what you might have done differently.

But know that you know, you can do the best you can and even when you do the best you can it doesn't always get you the result you want.

It is a really, really important part of the work you do- making sure you get high-quality people on board and that they stick around. So, the most important question for you is, how can you more effectively select high quality staff?