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### **Hiring for Hybrid Roles: Look for Competencies, Not Skill Sets**

To stay competitive today and into the future, organizations have to be lean and agile. "Lean" often means cutting superfluous positions and trimming salaries, while "agility" usually involves hiring employees who fulfill divergent responsibilities, operate cross-functionally, and move forward without having to cut through layers of corporate bureaucracy.

At more and more companies, this twin emphasis has, unsurprisingly, led to the establishment of hybrid roles: roles that combine skills that traditionally have not been

found in the same job. However, when looking for people to fill such roles, a company's skills wish list does not often line up with reality.

What's the first thing many hiring managers think of when looking to fill a hybrid role? It's usually something like: "Where am I going to find someone who possesses skill set A and the tangentially related (or even totally unrelated) skill set B?"

Taking this overly skills-focused approach can lead to hiring the wrong candidate. After all, just possessing the requisite experiential skills does not automatically mean a candidate will be able to work effectively in a hybrid role. Yes, we all want employees who can hit the ground running, but we shouldn't let short-term needs blind us to the more important question: Can this person truly succeed in a hybrid position?

## **5 Competencies a Candidate Needs to Succeed in a Hybrid Role**

A critical component of success in any role, hybrid or otherwise, is intrinsic motivation, an individual's personal blend of behavioral drivers and inhibitors. In a job context, we can view these motivations as performance competencies. With that in mind, here are five core competencies to look for when hiring for a hybrid role:

**1. Learning agility:** The ability to recognize relationships between concepts and take knowledge from one context in order to solve problems in another.

How it applies to hybrid roles: Instead of getting locked into looking for a candidate who has the exact skill set you need, look for someone with a proven ability to quickly adapt the skills they already have to new contexts.

**2. Continuous learning:** This means taking personal responsibility for professional development and exhibiting the discipline to follow through in acquiring the necessary skills.

How it applies to hybrid roles: Your candidate might not have the exact work background you desire, but if they're oriented toward continuous learning, they'll be motivated to catch up.

**3. Tolerance for ambiguity:** In a hybrid role, an employee must be comfortable working without clear guidelines, structure, or known outcomes. They need to view novel situations as positive challenges rather than sources of stress.

How it applies to hybrid roles: Exact skill alignment won't matter if the candidate is uncomfortable with the inevitable gray areas that will exist between their two distinct areas of responsibility.

**4. Information seeking:** This refers to the underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people, or issues. That often involves asking questions, digging for info, and conducting environmental and situational scanning.

How it applies to hybrid roles: The candidate who is motivated to know and observe what's going on is more likely to be effective at filling in the gaps of a hybrid position and developing the savvy to handle challenges that arise.

**5) Initiating action:** This means taking the lead to tackle (or prevent) problems, develop opportunities, or improve outcomes, which may sometimes require going beyond the scope of a formal job description.

How it applies to hybrid roles: If required to address disparate job requirements, the candidate who does not need to seek permission or feel beholden to strict guidelines is apt to be more comfortable and effective.

Targeted or structured behavioral interview questions can help uncover a candidate's potential in these five competency areas. For example, to gain insight into a candidate's learning agility, you might ask: "Tell me about a time when you utilized your experience in one area to help solve a problem in another. What was the challenge, and how did you solve it?" For initiating action, consider a question like: "Describe a situation in which you took action when decision-makers or leaders were not around. What was the issue, and how did you resolve it?"

Such questions can help to shine a light on a candidate's motivations, but consistently and objectively measuring these competencies is the best way to gain insight into performance potential. Few companies have the resources to develop their own performance competencies, but some existing pre-employment assessments can provide the same or comparable information to inform your hiring decision. Just make sure you are using an assessment that is scientifically validated for measuring personality traits in a job context.

The overarching takeaway is to avoid eliminating otherwise promising candidates for hybrid roles because their skill sets do not match a diverse checklist. To do so would be focusing on the short-term need (filling the role) at the expense of the long-term goal (successful performance). Skills can be taught or adapted; the capacity to function effectively and thrive in a hybrid position cannot.

\*Source: Tom Schoenfelder; Principal Scientist and Head of Academic Research and Partnerships- Caliper, Calipercorp.com

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National Sales Manager- Life Safety Solutions

Field Applications Engineer/Trainer- Access Control- West Coast Territory

Regional Sales- Full Line Solution- NYC - 5 Boroughs & Long Island

Manager of Sales Engineering: Video/VMS- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Access Control- South Central Region/Texas

Major Projects/System Integration Sales- Connecticut

Regional Sales- Eastern US- Enterprise Access Control

Regional Sales Manager- VMS/Critical Incident Software- Southeastern US

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Access Control Software- Toronto/Ontario Region- **COMPLETED**

Product Manager/Business Development- HVAC/Life Safety

Federal Accounts/FICAM Sales Director- Enterprise Access Control- **COMPLETED**

Senior Product Manager- Video Surveillance

Regional Sales Manager- Access Control- Southeast (Atlanta)

Product Manager- Enterprise Access Control/Identity Management/Cloud Solutions

Federal Sales- Mobile Software/BYOD- Washington D.C. - **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Access Control Software- Mid-Atlantic Region

VP Channel Sales- Enterprise Solutions - **COMPLETED**

Field Sales Engineer- Western US- Enterprise Access Control- **COMPLETED**

Vertical Market Regional Sales- Access Control-Higher Education/Campus

Manager of Sales Engineering: Access and Identity Management Software-VA/DC-  
**COMPLETED**

Regional Sales- Connected/IoT offerings- Intelligent Building Software- NYC

Regional Sales Manager- Cloud-Based Access Control: Midwest- **COMPLETED**

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