

FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

25 Strategies Anyone Can Use

Forming an effective team while avoiding overlooked talent involves looking beyond familiar circles and systematically evaluating hidden skills and capabilities.



Mapping and Assessing

- **Define the work:** Write the specific skills, tools, and outcomes needed before seeking a person for the task.
- **Inventory internal skills:** Maintain a directory or skill matrix of coworkers' talents, past roles, and certifications.
- **Look for project success:** Ask colleagues to identify people who successfully handled similar tasks or solved similar problems.
- **Weigh workloads:** Verify whether the best-suited person has the time to take on new responsibilities (or whether you can adjust your deadline).
- **Identify informal leaders:** Notice people to whom others naturally turn for advice or assistance in your department.
- **Use objective assessments:** Implement tools, like CliftonStrengths from Gallup, to map individuals' talents rather than relying on subjective impressions or office popularity.
- **Audit current skills broadly:** Look beyond job titles at employee profiles, past projects, or secondary proficiencies to find team members with relevant and possibly underappreciated capabilities.

Communicating and Networking

- **Broadcast your need:** Post a summary of the project goals and the need for assistance in team channels or meetings.
- **Ask trusted managers:** Talk to team leaders who are reliable judges of their team members' daily bandwidths and strengths.
- **Seek peer recommendations:** Ask project team members who they like working with on work with similar deliverables and deadlines.
- **Look outside of silos:** Avoid defaulting to the same people by expanding applications for new initiatives.
- **Talk with recent hires:** Newer employees often bring relevant experience from their previous workplaces (and their frontline view may highlight practical insights that management overlooks).

Matching and Delegating

- **Match strengths to tasks:** Assign sub-tasks based on what each person does best.
- **Consider growth potential:** Be open to someone who may not yet know everything, but who has shown the ability to learn quickly.
- **Check work style fit:** Choose people whose communication style matches the pace and urgency of the project.
- **Value diversity:** Include people who think differently and challenge the status quo rather than selecting for agreement.
- **Involve people early:** Let potential helpers see the project scope so they can self-select if they feel genuinely interested.
- **Evaluate commitment alongside skill:** Use a capability-commitment matrix to balance technical skill with a willingness to contribute and collaborate.
- **Define expectations:** Tell the chosen individual(s) exactly what success looks like and when deliverables are due.

Implementing and Following Up

- **Set up a kickoff chat:** Meet briefly to confirm everyone understands their assigned parts of the workflow.
- **Build-in psychological safety:** Create an atmosphere where team members feel safe sharing ideas, approaches, and viewpoints.
- **Establish check-ins:** Schedule regular updates to resolve issues before they affect the work.
- **Acknowledge expertise:** Give credit to the people helping you so they stay engaged and finish strong.
- **Document contributions:** Keep track of who did what, so you know whom to approach for the next similar task.
- **Review and debrief:** Ask the team what worked well in how the group was assembled.