

Content Manager Hiring Playbook





This playbook should be used as a guideline to hiring a content manager and recommended actions should be combined with your company's current hiring process or protocols.

Though IMPACT will be available to provide insight on your final few applicants, the decision to hire is ultimately up to you and your company.

[Before getting started, please read this guide on hiring top-performing marketers](#)

STEP 1:

Post a Job Listing for a Content Manager

Purpose

To list a job description that will attract the most qualified applicants.

Action

1. [Tweak this sample job description](#) and post to job boards. Recommended job boards include:
 - Local universities/alumni associations
 - Indeed
 - ZipRecruiter
 - Glassdoor
 - LinkedIn
 - flexjobs.com
2. Include the following questions and requirements in the application site:
 - How did you learn about this position and what prompted you to apply?
 - How would you explain what the heart of inbound and content marketing is, in your own words?
 - Why are you interested in a career in marketing, specifically, content marketing?
 - What's your favorite and least favorite part about the writing process?
 - What are your professional goals? In three years? In five years?
3. Request writing samples as part of the application process to give applicants the chance to showcase their writing skills

Bonus: We recommend asking applicants to submit a (no longer than) 5-minute video application where the applicant can answer the questions noted above in action item 2.

Note: Requiring a video submission can help you gauge culture fit earlier in the interview process, as well as to gauge if the applicant is willing to follow directions and take an extra step for the chance of being hired instead of just sending resumes to dozens of companies. This can also replace your request for a cover letter.

STEP 2:

Review Applications

Purpose

To determine who has the basic fit to move to the next step based on their resume, writing, and video.

Action

1. Review the resumes for the following key items:

- How well their work or volunteer experience fits the job description
- A clear record of achievement and learning that relates to content management
- No grammar/punctuation errors?

2. Include the following questions and requirements in the application site:

- Proper grammar and sentence structure
- Clear thought organization or flow
- Any indications of plagiarism (consider running it through a platform like Grammarly to check)
- Formatting styles like subheads, bullet points, numbered lists, bolded text, etc.

3. Review the video application for the following key items:

- Communication skills
- Creativity
- Professionalism (e.g. how they present themselves on camera)
- Personality and/or culture fit within your company

STEP 3:

Conduct 30-Minute Interview

Purpose

The 30-minute interview is the time to learn about your applicant's past experience through behavior- and skill-based interview questions. Your four goals during this phase should be:

- Determine that the applicant understands the role they're applying for
- Make sure you understand if they have the necessary experience, skills, and emotional intelligence.
- Evaluate whether the applicant is a good culture-fit within your organization
- Confirm their desired salary

Action

1. Hold an in-person or video-conference interview to ask roughly 10 of the following questions:
 - What's been your favorite job so far? What has been the hardest job? Why?
 - Can you describe a time that you failed at something and what you learned from going through that experience?
 - What were you doing at your position with (past employer)? How did you get that position? Describe a typical day.
 - What work accomplishment are you most proud of?
 - Who has been your favorite manager and why?
 - Can you tell me about a project you've managed before when you had to motivate people around an idea?
 - If I were speaking to your friends or your former supervisor, what would they say are your strengths? Weaknesses? Give me an example of how these play out.
 - From what you know about this role and our team, what do you think the biggest challenge will be?

- Do you prefer operating with a proven process or figuring out a process as you go? Why?
- If you either had to publish a piece of content late but perfect, or on time with some room for improvement, which would you pick and why?
- Note: Typically, this answer can give you an idea whether deadlines may be an issue to the applicant. Articles may not ever be fully perfect, if you waited until then to publish, you'd be wasting time you could be gathering some organic page and domain authority for SERPs.
- What are you an expert in? How did you develop that expertise? Teach me something about this.
- What do you think are the three biggest challenges facing companies today when it comes to marketing? How have you addressed these in past positions?
- How would you rate yourself in terms of familiarity with on-page SEO best practices?
- What are your salary requirements?
- Any questions for me?
 - **Note:** *If they have no questions throughout the process then that is potentially a red flag. A good content manager would be great at asking questions throughout, if not saving them for the end.*

[Find additional interview questions here](#)

2. [Evaluate the applicant's performance in the evaluation scorecard.](#) You will want to copy and paste whichever questions you plan to ask during the interview beforehand -- this way, it's easy for you to score in real time!

STEP 4:

Conduct 30-Minute Situational Activity

Purpose

To have job applicants participate in an activity that approximates a common situation or task they'll be asked to complete through the duties of their potential role. The situational activity should help determine which of the top applicants demonstrates the basic interview, communication, and rapport-building skills.

Action

1. Create a situational activity in which your top applicants will interview you or your subject matter expert (SME) and write an article based on the interview.

Sample Situational Activity

Follow the below steps to frame your situational activity with your applicant:

- Schedule the job applicant to interview an internal expert to whom they have never spoken on our team OR Schedule the job applicant to interview you as an internal expert.
- Block at least 30 minutes for the interview and set the expectation that it will be conducted over a recorded video conference. Record the interview.
- Inform the applicant up to one week in advance what the topic will be.
 - **Note: You will want to choose a comparison topic** that is specific to your industry and what an SME will likely talk about. For example, *Fiberglass vs Vinyl Liner Pools*. [Read this article as a reference for best practices on comparison articles.](#)
- Inform the applicant they have up to 48 hours (from the time the recording of the interview is sent) to submit a 600- to 900-word article on the topic.

2. Evaluate the applicant's performance in the evaluation scorecard. Be sure to look for:

- Rapport building
 - Did they try to put you at ease and find a common bond before diving into questions? Did their questioning feel like an interrogation?
- Prep quality
 - Is it apparent they did research on who you are and the topic? Did they come prepared with questions? Did they research your company thoroughly?
- Follow-up questions
 - Did all of their questions seem rehearsed or were they able to build off of your answers? Did they rephrase questions to get you to say your answer/idea differently? Did they ask you for clarification on any answers?
- The delivered article
 - Do you feel it captures your tone, voice, and style? Is it accurate? Does it thoroughly answer any questions you would have as a reader on the topic? Does it meet your word-length requirement? Does it follow SEO best practices?

Bonus: Share the recording for **the top five** applicants to your IMPACT team for additional feedback and insight.

STEP 5:

Evaluate Final Applicants

Purpose

To evaluate applicants based on the above application steps and situational activity and identify who are within your top qualifications.

Action

Complete the evaluation scorecard and discuss/consider anyone that averages a 4 or above rating.

Bonus: Send your best applicants to talk with the CEO to help determine who to hire.

STEP 6:

Hire & Onboard Preferred Applicant

Purpose

To make an offer to your preferred applicant and start the onboarding process once they accept and sign!

Action

1. Assign the new hire to read *They Ask, You Answer* by Marcus Sheridan and take them through your company onboarding process, such as filling out a W2 form.
2. Assign them to complete the following free HubSpot certifications (these are useful and available whether or not you are a current HubSpot customer).
 - [Hubspot Inbound Marketing Certification](#)
 - [Hubspot Content Marketing Certification](#)
3. Introduce your IMPACT team! Add the new hire to your upcoming content consulting call.

Note: *The decision to hire an applicant is solely at the responsibility of you and your company. IMPACT cannot be held liable for the outcome of any hiring decision.*