Behavioral Hiring Readiness Checklist

Twelve questions to score your current hiring process honestly, what each range of answers means, and the three changes worth making first.

Twelve questions. Answer each yes or no, honestly rather than aspirationally. Ten minutes.

The point is not the score. It is finding the one or two changes that would move your process furthest, which for most teams are not the ones they expected.

Before the search

1. For your last hire, could every interviewer have named the same top two behaviors the role needed?
2. Was that written down before anyone was interviewed?
3. Did you write what would make someone unhappy in the role, not just what would make them good at it?

During the search

4. Did every candidate get the same core questions?
5. Were those questions about what candidates had actually done, rather than what they would do?
6. Did interviewers know in advance what a strong, adequate and weak answer sounded like?
7. Did each interviewer record a score before the group discussed the candidate?
8. Did the most junior person in the debrief speak first?

At the decision

9. Was there a decision rule agreed before you met the finalists?
0. Can you say, in a sentence, what evidence the last offer rested on?
1. Did you write down what would make that decision wrong?

After

2. Did anything you learned in hiring reach the new hire's manager in their first month?

Reading your answers

YESES	WHERE YOU ARE
10 to 12	Structured. Your gains now come from quality rather than process: better questions, calibrated interviewers, tighter criteria
6 to 9	Structured in parts. Usually the front half is solid and the decision end is improvised, or the reverse. Fix whichever half is weaker
3 to 5	A process in name. Each thing you add from here is worth more than the last
0 to 2	You are hiring on impression. That is also the position with the most to gain

Where to start

If you fix one thing, make it question 6: write the criteria before the interviews. It is half a day's work per role, it requires nobody's permission, and it is what separates a structured interview that predicts well from one that predicts no better than a conversation.

If you fix two, add question 7. Recording scores before the discussion costs nothing and removes the single largest distortion in most debriefs, which is that the first confident voice sets the room.

If you fix three, add question 11. Writing down what would make the decision wrong takes ten seconds, and it is the only one of the twelve that teaches you anything about your own judgment over time.

A caution about scoring well

A team can answer yes to all twelve and still hire badly, because every one of these questions is about form rather than content. Same questions for everyone, agreed criteria, scores before discussion: none of it helps if the behaviors you defined are not the ones the job needs.

The process protects you from bias and from anchoring. It does not protect you from being wrong about the role. That is what the 90-day review in the gap plan is for, and it is the step teams skip most often once the hire is in the door.