



Recruitment

# Red Queen Hiring & Recruitment Complexity

In a world that never stands still, standing still is not an option. Build a hiring strategy that **keeps you ahead.**



**Stay ahead, not just in pace**  
Outpace your competition with smarter, faster hiring.



**Navigate constant change**  
Adapt to evolving skills, roles and workforce expectations.



**Make complexity your advantage**  
Turn hiring challenges into a strategic differentiator.



**Build future-ready teams**  
Hire for agility, mindset and long-term impact.



**Win the talent race**  
Attract, engage and retain the people who drive results.



The best talent doesn't wait. Neither should you.  
**Think ahead. Hire better. Stay ahead.**



# Introduction

Modern recruitment has become increasingly complex – long interview processes, multiple stakeholder stages, excessive assessments, endless approvals, and repeated interviews. Yet despite all this complexity, many organisations still:

- make poor hiring decisions,
- lose strong candidates,
- struggle with retention,
- and experience repeated recruitment failure.

This raises an important question: why do organisations continue adding more process to hiring if it often produces worse outcomes? Part of the answer lies in what can be described as "Red Queen Hiring" – the concept of running faster and faster simply to stay in the same place. As hiring uncertainty increases, organisations respond by adding more interviews, increasing approvals, creating more layers and seeking greater certainty. But recruitment does not become infinitely more accurate through endless process. The strongest recruitment processes are rarely the most complicated. They are usually the clearest.

# Recruitment Anxiety Creates Process Inflation

Hiring carries emotional and commercial risk. Organisations naturally fear:

- making the wrong hire,
- reputational damage,
- performance failure,
- or costly turnover.

As a result, many businesses respond by adding more process – more interviews, more stakeholders, more assessment stages, more approvals. The intention is understandable: reduce risk through greater scrutiny. But excessive process often creates a false sense of control rather than genuine hiring accuracy.

# Endless Interviews Rarely Create Better Decisions

Many organisations now run recruitment processes involving five, six, or even seven interview stages – often with repeated questioning and overlapping stakeholder conversations. At a certain point, additional interviews stop improving insight. Instead, they often create:

- candidate fatigue,
- stakeholder inconsistency,
- slower decision-making,
- and diluted accountability.

Strong candidates increasingly interpret excessive interview processes as indicators of internal indecision, bureaucracy, or lack of leadership alignment. The strongest recruitment processes are thorough – but focused.



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The  
strongest  
hires  
rarely  
apply

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# False Certainty Is One of Recruitment's Biggest Illusions

One of the core psychological drivers behind overcomplicated hiring is the pursuit of certainty. Organisations often believe: "if we add more stages, we reduce hiring risk." In reality, recruitment will always contain uncertainty. Human beings are complex. Leadership capability is nuanced. Cultural fit evolves over time. No process can eliminate uncertainty completely. At some point, additional process often creates diminishing returns. The goal of recruitment should not be impossible certainty – it should be intelligent judgement.

# Decision Fatigue Weakens Hiring Quality

Overly complex recruitment processes often create decision fatigue internally – too many meetings, too many opinions, too much repetition, too much analysis.

Eventually:

- clarity weakens,
- conviction declines,
- and decision-making slows dramatically.

This creates environments where organisations hesitate, overanalyse, or avoid decisive action entirely. Decision fatigue reduces hiring quality significantly – especially in leadership recruitment.

# Hiring Bureaucracy Often Repels Strong Talent

Strong candidates are usually highly employable – many are already operating successfully in demanding environments. These professionals often assess employers just as carefully as employers assess them. Overly bureaucratic recruitment processes frequently create negative signals around:

- leadership confidence,
- organisational agility,
- and operational clarity.

Strong candidates often quietly disengage rather than openly complain. The organisations losing the best talent are not always aware they are losing it.

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Specialist  
recruitment  
is not about  
volume

It is about  
understanding

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# Over-Processing Creates Emotional Disconnection

Recruitment is ultimately a human decision. But excessive process often removes:

- intuition,
- chemistry,
- leadership judgement,
- and relational connection from hiring conversations.

Candidates can begin feeling processed, assessed, and administratively handled rather than genuinely understood. This weakens engagement significantly. Strong recruitment processes still feel human – not purely procedural.

# More Stakeholders Does Not Always Improve Hiring

Many organisations involve large numbers of stakeholders in recruitment decisions. The intention is often collaboration and risk reduction. But excessive stakeholder involvement frequently creates:

- conflicting opinions,
- delayed decisions,
- diluted accountability,
- and inconsistent messaging.

At some point, more voices create more confusion rather than better judgement. Strong hiring processes usually maintain clear ownership, structured input, and decisive leadership accountability.

# Recruitment Complexity Often Masks Leadership Uncertainty

Overcomplicated recruitment processes sometimes reflect deeper organisational uncertainty. This may include:

- unclear role expectations,
- internal political tension,
- lack of leadership alignment,
- or weak hiring confidence.

Rather than resolving these issues directly, organisations sometimes compensate by adding more process. But process cannot fix strategic confusion. Clarity must come first.

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Quietly  
operating  
at the  
highest  
level

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# Strong Hiring Requires Clarity, Not Endless Assessment

Exceptional recruitment processes are rarely chaotic. They usually demonstrate:

- role clarity,
- stakeholder alignment,
- structured evaluation,
- efficient communication,
- and decisive leadership.

Strong organisations know what they need, why they need it, and how to assess it effectively. This reduces unnecessary complexity significantly. Clarity improves hiring outcomes more than endless process.

# The Psychology of Over-Hiring

Many organisations unconsciously believe: "more process equals better hiring." This often feels psychologically safer. Additional interviews create the illusion of rigour, control, and reduced risk. But recruitment quality is not measured by process volume. It is measured by:

- judgement quality,
- leadership alignment,
- and decision-making capability.

Strong hiring requires intelligent assessment — not process theatre.



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Recruitment  
with  
judgement

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# Speed and Simplicity Are Increasingly Competitive Advantages

In modern hiring markets, strong candidates move quickly. The organisations securing exceptional talent often demonstrate:

- decisiveness,
- clarity,
- responsiveness,
- and confidence.

This does not mean rushing recklessly – it means reducing unnecessary friction. Simple, well-structured recruitment processes often outperform over-engineered ones significantly.

# Candidate Experience Suffers in Overcomplicated Processes

Long and fragmented hiring processes frequently damage candidate experience. This creates:

- frustration,
- uncertainty,
- disengagement,
- and declining emotional connection.

Candidates increasingly assess communication quality, process structure, leadership alignment, and decision speed. Weak candidate experience damages employer reputation, offer acceptance rates, and long-term talent attraction. Recruitment processes communicate organisational culture.

# Recruitment Is Increasingly About Trust

Strong hiring decisions increasingly rely on:

- trust,
- judgement,
- communication,
- and leadership confidence.

Not endless assessment layers. Candidates want confidence that organisations understand the role, know what success looks like, and can make clear decisions. Trust-driven recruitment often creates better outcomes than fear-driven recruitment.



Recruitment

—  
Trusted  
where it  
matters most  
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# Overcomplication Often Slows Organisational Momentum

Recruitment delays create broader business consequences:

- operational gaps,
- leadership instability,
- increased pressure on teams,
- and slower organisational execution.

Many organisations underestimate the hidden cost of hiring indecision. Strong recruitment processes protect momentum. Weak ones often stall it.

# Leadership Confidence Shapes Recruitment Quality

The strongest hiring organisations often display:

- calmness,
- decisiveness,
- alignment,
- and leadership clarity.

Weak recruitment processes often reflect hesitation, uncertainty, or fragmented leadership internally. Recruitment quality therefore often mirrors leadership quality. The two are closely connected.

# The Best Hiring Processes Feel Structured but Human

The strongest recruitment experiences balance:

- rigour,
- professionalism,
- efficiency,
- and human connection.

They are structured but not bureaucratic, thorough but not exhausting, decisive but not reckless. Candidates leave these processes feeling respected, understood, and confident about the organisation. That emotional response matters enormously.



Recruitment

—  
Built  
on  
trust  
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# The Future of Recruitment Will Likely Become Simpler

As competition for talent increases, organisations will likely move toward:

- faster decision-making,
- clearer interview structures,
- stronger leadership alignment,
- and more relationship-driven hiring.

Complexity rarely creates exceptional hiring on its own. Clarity does. Trust does. Judgement does. Leadership does.

## Conclusion

Many organisations unintentionally overcomplicate recruitment in pursuit of certainty. But endless interviews, excessive approvals and hiring bureaucracy rarely guarantee stronger outcomes. In many cases, they create:

- decision fatigue,
- candidate disengagement,
- slower hiring,
- and weaker recruitment experiences.

The strongest recruitment processes are usually clear, structured, decisive, and human. Because ultimately, exceptional hiring is not about eliminating uncertainty completely – it is about making intelligent, trust-driven decisions with clarity and confidence. And increasingly, the organisations that hire best are not the ones running the most complicated processes. They are the ones with the strongest leadership judgement.

# About Maxwell Stephens

Maxwell Stephens is a specialist Facilities Management recruitment consultancy supporting organisations across the UK. We recruit FM professionals across:

- Facilities Management,
- Estates,
- Workplace Management,
- Property Operations,
- Building Services,
- and FM Executive Leadership.

Our approach combines deep sector understanding with long-term relationship-led recruitment. For more information, visit [www.maxwellstephens.com](http://www.maxwellstephens.com) or contact us at [info@maxwellstephens.com](mailto:info@maxwellstephens.com).



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