

30 minutes in 5 blocks

The meeting where the hire is decided, designed. Scorecards are locked before it starts, ratings go up at once, the lowest rating speaks first, the hiring manager decides in writing. Never a vote.

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHY
Before	Every scorecard submitted and locked. Nobody sees another's until their own is in. Including the most senior person.	Opinions contaminate each other within seconds.
0 to 2 min	All ratings on one screen at once.	The room sees the shape of the disagreement before anyone speaks.
2 to 5 min	The hiring manager reads the bar written before the role opened.	The question becomes "does this candidate clear it", not "do we like them".
5 to 20 min	The lowest rating presents its evidence first. The strongest advocate goes last.	The first opinion spoken sets the range for everyone after it. Make the objection cheap to state.
20 to 27 min	Only the disagreements. Did two interviewers see different evidence, or apply different standards?	Evidence gaps get another round. Standard gaps get calibration.
27 to 30 min	The hiring manager decides out loud, with a reason, in writing.	A vote is a hire nobody owns.

The 4 questions that unstick a room

1. **"What specifically did they say or do?"** One person is describing an observation and the other an impression.
2. **"What would have changed your rating?"** Forces the standard into the open. No answer means the rating was a feeling.
3. **"Would you want them on your own team next quarter?"** People answer this more honestly than "are they good".
4. **"What is the risk if we are wrong?"** A false positive and a false negative cost different amounts. Say which.

The 4 shapes, and what each means

SHAPE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO
Everyone yes, nobody enthusiastic	The classic weak hire. The room mistakes absence of objection for agreement.	Ask directly: "who is genuinely excited?" Silence is a no.
One strong no against 4 yes	The most useful thing in the room, if it carries evidence.	Ask for the evidence. Ask whether it is about this role or any role.

SHAPE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO
Split on level, not on hire	Two decisions have been mixed.	Decide the hire first, then the level from the ladder.
Nobody has real evidence, only adjectives	The scorecards were the problem, not the candidate.	One more round with a specific question. If it recurs, calibrate the panel.

Write down, the same day, in the ATS

Decision: _____ **Level:** _____

The reason, one paragraph: the evidence that carried it, the objection that was raised, and why it did or did not change the decision.

For a rejection: the 2 or 3 scorecard lines the recruiter can turn into feedback within 48 hours.

For a hire: what the panel was unsure about, so the new manager reads it in month 2 and the 90-day checkpoint has something to check.

In 9 months, compare this paragraph with the hire. Almost nobody does, which is why almost no loop improves. A debrief that runs an hour is re-litigating; if 30 minutes is short, the scorecards were the problem.

SmartHiring by Elman Huseynov · the post behind this file: smarthiring.tech/hiring-debrief-meeting/ · Use it inside your company as you like; please link the post rather than re-hosting the file.