

The 4 leaks: check and fix sheet

An unstructured loop explains about 4% of later job performance; a structured one about 18% (Sackett, 2022). Same hours, same people. The signal leaks in the same 4 places, and almost every loop leaks in all 4.

LEAK	HOW TO TELL IF YOURS HAS IT	THE FIX	COST
1. The question came after the job ad	Ask an interviewer what the strong answer to their question looks like. If they cannot write it in advance, the question is a recall test.	Write the 3 to 5 things this person must do in year one. Then the evidence for each. Then the question. Then the ad.	One afternoon
2. Nothing written before the debrief	The debrief opens with someone's impression and the room drifts. The first voice decides for the room.	Score and evidence submitted in writing, alone, before anyone speaks. No exception for senior people.	Zero
3. The loop is too long	6 or more rounds. Rounds 4 to 6 re-measure rounds 1 to 3. The candidate is 3 weeks in, with 2 other offers.	Delete any round that produces no evidence against the year-one list. 4 rounds, 1 day.	Coordination
4. The bar lives in people's heads	Ask 3 interviewers what "strong hire" means. You get 3 bars.	One calibration session: the whole panel scores the same recorded candidate, ratings revealed at once, gaps argued out.	2 hours a quarter

What a normal loop measures instead of the job

- **Interview fluency.** Comfort being watched while thinking. A real skill, not the one you are hiring for.
- **Shared vocabulary.** "Eventual consistency" outscores the same idea in plain words.
- **Recency.** Last week's candidate against this morning's. The older memory has already flattened.
- **The first 15 minutes.** In a 2016 study of 691 real interviews, most interviewers decided between minute 5 and 15 (Frieder, Van Iddekinge and Raymark).

The Monday plan

- ☐ **Write the year-one list** for your next hire: 3 to 5 things, and the evidence that would convince you of each.
- ☐ **Delete every round** that produces no evidence against that list.
- ☐ **Require written scores before every debrief.** Send the rule today; it applies to the next one.
- ☐ **Book one calibration session** where the whole panel scores the same candidate. This is the step teams skip.

Expect this: panel disagreement goes up at first. That is the process working; the disagreement was always there and is now visible. Track the spread of ratings on the same candidate. It should narrow by the second session.

You never find out about a false negative: a rejected engineer does not send a report in 18 months explaining what you missed. You only see false negatives once the criteria are written down, because a rejection then traces to a line, and you can ask whether that line was fair.

SmartHiring by Elman Huseynov · the post behind this file: smarthiring.tech/interview-loop-rejects-good-engineers/ · Use it inside your company as you like; please link the post rather than re-hosting the file.