

Back-to-School Report Card: How Would Your Hiring Process Grade Out?

By Scott Cullen

Before another hiring search begins, take an honest look at the strengths and weaknesses that may be helping or hurting your ability to attract top talent.

Back-to-school season isn't just for students. September has a way of reminding all of us that there's always room to improve. If you're an office technology dealer, here's a question worth asking: If your hiring process received a report card today, what grades would it receive?

A's don't come from filling positions quickly when you're desperate. They come from consistently attracting qualified candidates, communicating effectively, making timely decisions, and creating an experience that leaves candidates excited to join your organization.

Unfortunately, many dealerships don't evaluate their hiring process until something goes wrong. A top candidate accepts another offer. A position sits open for months. A promising new hire leaves after six months. Only then does anyone ask whether the process itself deserves a passing grade.

So, as a new "school year" begins, let's hand out a few grades.

Speed to Hire: Grade Yourself Honestly

One of the easiest metrics to calculate is also one of the most important. How long does it typically take your dealership to move from the first conversation with a candidate to an offer?

According to research by LinkedIn Talent Solutions, lengthy hiring processes remain a major reason employers lose desirable candidates. Top performers often interview with multiple organizations simultaneously, and delays frequently signal indecision or a lack of urgency.

That doesn't mean you should rush into a poor hiring decision. It does mean that once you've identified someone you genuinely want to hire, unnecessary delays rarely improve the outcome.

If candidates routinely wait weeks between interviews, or several days just to hear whether they're moving to the next step, your process may merit something closer to a C than an A.

Candidate Communication: More than Just Courtesy

Think back to your school days. Waiting days or weeks for a test grade was frustrating because you had no idea where you stood. Job candidates feel the same way. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) consistently emphasizes that communication throughout the hiring process strongly shapes an employer's reputation. Even candidates who aren't selected often leave with positive impressions when employers communicate clearly, professionally, and respectfully.

CopierCareers®

Unfortunately, candidate "ghosting" tends to receive more attention than employer ghosting, yet many candidates report waiting days or weeks for updates after interviews. A brief email explaining where the process stands won't guarantee acceptance of an eventual offer, but it does demonstrate professionalism and respect.

Interview Preparation: Does Everyone Know the Assignment?

Every teacher begins the semester with a lesson plan. Every interviewer should have one, too. Too often, interviews become a series of unrelated conversations rather than a coordinated evaluation.

One manager asks about technical skills. Another asks many of the same questions. A third spends most of the meeting describing the company rather than learning much about the candidate. The result? Lots of conversation, but very little useful information.

Before interviews begin, determine exactly what each participant is responsible for evaluating. Service managers might focus on troubleshooting ability and customer interaction. Sales managers may assess consultative selling skills. Executives can assess cultural alignment and long-term potential. When interviewers understand their specific roles, candidates receive a more professional experience, and hiring decisions become more consistent.

Candidate Experience: What Grade Would Candidates Give You?

One of the easiest ways to evaluate your hiring process is to consider the impression candidates leave, not just those you hire, but those you don't. From the first phone call or email through the interview process and the final decision, candidates form opinions about how your dealership communicates, makes decisions, and treats people. Professional communication, organized interviews, timely follow-up, and respect for candidates' time all contribute to that experience.

According to SHRM, every interaction in the hiring process shapes an employer's reputation. Candidates who feel respected and informed are more likely to speak positively about an organization, even if they aren't offered the job.

Ask yourself:

- Would candidates describe your interview process as organized and professional?
- Did they know what to expect at each stage?
- Were they kept informed throughout the process?
- Would they encourage another qualified candidate to interview with your dealership?

You may not hire every applicant, but each applicant leaves with an opinion. If your hiring process consistently delivers a positive experience, you're earning an A in a category that can influence future recruiting success.

CopierCareers®

Decision-Making: Too Many Committees Can Lower Your Grade

Some hiring decisions require input from multiple people. That's understandable. But when every decision requires approval from several managers, leading to scheduling delays, additional interviews, and repeated discussions, candidates often begin to wonder whether the organization is capable of making important decisions.

Good candidates generally appreciate a thorough evaluation. Endless evaluation is another matter entirely. If your dealership repeatedly loses finalists because the process takes too long, the issue may not be your candidate pool. It may be your decision-making process.

Onboarding: The Final Exam Begins on Day One

Receiving an acceptance offer isn't graduation. It's orientation. According to SHRM, effective onboarding contributes to stronger employee engagement, improved retention, and faster productivity. New employees who understand expectations, receive proper training, and feel welcomed into the organization are more likely to become long-term contributors.

Ask yourself:

- Is equipment ready before the employee arrives?
- Is training scheduled?
- Does someone serve as a resource for questions?
- Does the new hire understand what success looks like during the first 90 days?

A strong onboarding process doesn't happen by accident. Like any successful lesson plan, it's prepared well in advance of the first day.

Extra Credit: Are You Learning from Every Search?

Schools review test results to improve instruction. Hiring managers should do the same. After each search, ask questions like:

- Why did successful candidates accept or decline our offer?
- Where did we lose strong candidates?
- Which interview questions produced the most meaningful conversations?
- What feedback did recruiters receive that we didn't hear directly?

One advantage of working with a specialized recruiting partner is access to candid feedback candidates may not share directly with employers. Recruiters often learn why candidates walked away, what concerns they had, and how your process compares with competing dealerships. That kind of information can turn a disappointing search into a valuable learning experience for the next search.

Copier Careers is a recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to helping copier channel employers find experienced service techs, copier sales reps, managers, controllers, back office staff, and MPS/MNS experts. Learn more about our commitment to the industry at www.CopierCareers.com.

Copyright 2025, Schwartz and Co., LLC dba Copier Careers. All rights reserved.

CopierCareers®

Final Grade

No dealership earns straight A's every time. Markets shift. Candidate expectations evolve. Competition intensifies.

The best employers aren't necessarily those with flawless hiring processes. They're the ones willing to evaluate those processes honestly and make adjustments before small weaknesses turn into larger problems.

Next time you're ready to hire, take a few minutes to grade your recruiting report card. You may discover that earning an A has less to do with finding better candidates and more to do with becoming a better employer.

Quick Quiz: What Grade Would You Give Your Hiring Process? | Give yourself one point for every "Yes" answer.

- We contact qualified candidates within two business days of identifying them.
- We keep candidates informed throughout the hiring process even if there isn't a major update.
- Every interviewer has a clear role and doesn't simply repeat the same questions as everyone else.
- We can usually move from the first interview to a hiring decision within a reasonable timeframe.
- Candidates leave interviews with a positive impression of our dealership, whether we hire them or not.
- We can clearly explain our compensation plan, benefits, career path, and company culture.
- Our onboarding process is planned before a new employee's first day, not after they arrive.
- We ask recruiters or candidates for feedback after searches so we can improve our hiring process.
- We regularly review our hiring process instead of waiting until a position becomes difficult to fill.
- We treat recruiting as an ongoing business function, not something we do only when there's an opening.

Your Score

- **9–10 points: Honor Roll** - Your hiring process is likely giving you a competitive advantage. Keep refining it as candidate expectations evolve.
- **7–8 points: Passing, but Room for Improvement** - You're doing many things well, but addressing a few weak spots could make the difference between landing a good candidate and a great one.
- **5–6 points: Needs Improvement** - Some elements of your hiring process may be creating unnecessary obstacles. Identify the gaps and implement incremental changes before your next search.
- **0–4 points: See the Teacher** - Your dealership may be losing qualified candidates before you even realize it. It may be time to take a fresh look at your hiring strategy or to enlist the help of an experienced recruiting partner to identify opportunities for improvement.