

The Intake Call Cheat Sheet

8 questions to ask before you open a single req

A great search starts before the job posting goes live. Use these questions to align with your hiring manager, surface the real requirements, and set yourself up to find the right person — not just a warm body.

01 What does success look like at 90 days?

Get specific. 'They're ramped up' is not an answer. Push for measurable outcomes, key relationships, and early wins.

02 Why is this role open?

Backfill vs. growth vs. restructure changes everything — your sourcing strategy, your sell, and sometimes your timeline.

03 What's the one thing this person must be able to do?

Hiring managers often have a list. Help them find the non-negotiable. That's your north star for screening.

04 Who are the must-have stakeholders this person will work with?

Understand the internal relationships now. It shapes culture fit questions and helps you write a better job story.

05 Have you tried to hire for this role before? What happened?

Previous searches reveal red flags, unrealistic expectations, and internal dynamics you need to know upfront.

06 What's the realistic timeline — and who needs to sign off?

Approval chains kill offers. Know who's involved in the decision before your finalist is waiting three weeks for a yes.

07 What's the one thing that would make someone fail in this role?

This is your derailer question. It tells you more about the culture, the team, and the real job than the job description will.

08 If I bring you three strong candidates, what would make you choose one over the others?

Forces the hiring manager to articulate their real criteria — not the criteria in the JD. Use this as your final benchmark.

Want to go deeper? *The Modern Recruiter* covers intake calls, screening frameworks, and the full recruiting process — built for people who take this craft seriously. haeltalent.com