How to avoid costly mis-hires.
About the Author

Dr. Brad Smart is an internationally recognized management psychologist and consultant to many Global 500 companies, but also to hundreds of small, mid-size, and growth companies. Brad completed his Ph.D. in Industrial Psychology at Purdue University, entered consulting, and soon after launched Topgrading, Inc. (formerly Smart & Associates, Inc.), based in the Chicago area.

This eGuide and the more detailed hard cover version is based on Topgrading: The Proven Hiring and Promoting Method That Turbocharges Company Performance (Portfolio, 2012). This is Brad’s 5th book, both a Wall Street Journal and New York Times best seller. Brad is frequently viewed as the world’s #1 expert on hiring along with being an experienced executive interviewer and coach, having conducted over 6,500 in-depth managerial interviews in over 200 companies.

As a trusted advisor to CEOs, Brad has been featured on the front-page of the Wall Street Journal profile, CNN, Fortune, Inc., Chief Executive, and numerous other publications.
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Introduction

Whether you are an owner of a 10-person company, CEO of a Global 1,000 company, or a manager of a department, here’s a scenario you probably can relate to:

You have a mixture of talent, and your marginal performers cause you the most frustration. You’d like to spend more time helping your high performers achieve even more, but chronic low performers take up too much of your time and your high performers’ time, dragging down your entire organization. You value talent … you really do, but you only have about 25% high performers. You try to coach the poorer performers, but … it rarely works.

You occasionally replace one, however:

- Recruiters are not presenting quality candidates.
- Resumes are fabricated—C Players hype their resumes to look like A Players.
- Your competency (“behavioral”) interviews are not very revealing.
- Reference checks are generally worthless.
- Too often the people hired disappoint you.
- All those mis-hires are VERY costly.
You are not alone. Thousands of case studies of Topgrading companies show that before starting to Topgrade, only about 25% of the people hired and promoted turn out to be high performers. That means three out of four people hired turn out to be mis-hires.

I met with the top human resources executives from Global 100 companies, and they completed a survey showing the same results as our research: 75% of the people the biggest, most sophisticated companies hire turn out to be a disappointment...or worse!

Most companies successfully hire high performers only 25% of the time!

Most managers live with 25% high performers (A Players), about 50% “adequate” or “good” performers (B Players), and 25% poor performers (C Players). But you know in your heart that even a “good” performer doesn’t cut it if you expect a true high performer, the best person available for what you are willing to pay.

You want to hire only the best people available, at a given salary-level, for every job—that’s what you’re supposedly paying for, right? But most of the time you end up not getting the high performer you paid for, so your talent challenges are your biggest challenge. To Summarize:

A Player = top 10% of talent for the pay = high performer
B Player = next 25% of talent = good/adequate performer
C Player = bottom 35% of talent = chronic low performer
Many Topgrading companies hire and promote high performers 90% of the time!

The good news is that hundreds of Topgrading companies and tens of thousands of hiring managers use the most proven hiring method and they actually hire and promote high performers 90% of the time.

At www.topgradingcasestudies.com you can read dozens of case studies and testimonials from CEOs saying Topgrading made their company more profitable by hiring high performers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE IMPACT OF TOPGRADING ON HIRING TOP PERFORMERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Topgrading</td>
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<td>Since Topgrading</td>
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*Based on before and after case studies using the Topgrading system*
Chapter 1 explains why many managers experience such disappointing hiring results. Chapter 2 shows you how simple and common sense Topgrading methods are and why they work.

In Chapter 2 I’ll walk you through Topgrading Lite. In the meantime, here is a sneak peak at how the magic of Topgrading actually works:

1. Candidates fill out the Career History Form with a “truth serum” that motivates low performers and those with made up resumes to drop out. Good!

2. You scan the Topgrading Snapshot, a picture of the candidate’s career, to instantly eliminate those who do not have high ratings by bosses, job hoppers, and those in your salary range.

3. With almost all honest, high performing candidates you’ve kept, you conduct a phone screen interview next. And then you invite the best of the best candidates in and conduct the famous Topgrading Interview, by far the most revealing interview on the planet.

4. You call references that the CANDIDATE arranges (no phone tag!) to verify you will hire an A Player.

90% hiring success requires more - honest measurement with clearer job descriptions, etc. but you can learn those later and start Topgrading today.
Chapter 1

Why Hiring is Your Most Frustrating Challenge

“You know talent is all-important, but if you are like most managers, you are frustrated with too many costly mis-hires.

You’ve read the survey results—when CEOs or any managers convene, they say, “picking the right people” is their biggest headache, most pressing problem, their most frustrating challenge.

Why? Because as mentioned in the introduction, despite the importance of hiring high performers, most managers pick them only 25% of the time. Do you have a team of 25% A Players, 50% Bs, and 25% Cs? If so here is your team:
Topgrading Professionals have conducted more than 25,000 in-depth assessments of managers, and correlated the results with actual performance on the job.

It is obvious to us and our Topgrading clients that the single most important factor in a manager’s success is the talent of the team assembled. Create a team of high performers and you're likely to succeed, keep a lot of low performers and you're more likely to fail.
What Exactly is a Topgrader?

We define Topgrader as a leader who hires or promotes mostly high performers, the top 10% of talent available for the compensation level. So, if there are 10 qualified candidates waiting at your door and eager to take the job for the pay you offer, you pick the #1 best candidate; if there are 100 candidates you at least hire one of the top 10. Do this and you qualify as a Topgrader.

*Over time, here’s what a Topgrader’s team looks like:*
What do A Players Look Like?

Can you imagine having this team with almost all high performers?

You can, and that is not fantasy.
So what are A Players like?
The following chart is an abbreviated, representative summary of competencies for an upper level manager.

A Players Tend to Be:

- **Smart**: intellect and business savvy
- **Drive to succeed**: passionate
- **Trustworthy**
- **Consistent** high performers
- **Adaptable** to adjust to many different personalities
- Surround themselves with **high performers**
- **Very** hard workers
- **Resourceful**: overcome obstacles
- **Effective** leaders
- **Down-to-earth, well-grounded, self-aware**: humble

What is the single most important competency? It’s resourcefulness, a composite of energy, passion, analytic skills, and persistence wrapped into one. In common terms, resourcefulness is getting over, around, or through barriers to success.

A Players all exude RESOURCEFULNESS, in spades. They just don’t give up, and when challenged by opportunities or seemingly hopeless setbacks, their mind is going, 24/7, to somehow snatch success out of the jaws of defeat.
B Players reliably do the basic job; they are rated “good”. But they lack resourcefulness, so they are mediocre at anticipating and preventing problems or opportunities. And when problems occur their solution is to - you got it - run to you for your decision. Too much of your time is spent “carrying” B Players.

For most managers not exposed to Topgrading, all that frustration, wasted time, lessened job performance, and high cost of mis-hires are very understandable. What? Understandable?” Yes...Let me explain.

If your hiring ‘batting average’ is only 25%, then 75% of the times you replace a B Player, you end up with a mis-hire, another B Player or a C Player.

It was smart for you to replace your chronic C Players, the ones that cause the biggest problems and keep you awake at night. And it was (until you learned about Topgrading) smart to retain your 50% “adequate” B Players because you were only 25% successful picking B Players replacements.

But now you are learning Topgrading so it isn’t so smart to “live with” lessor performers.
Why Commonplace Hiring Methods Are So Poor

The major problems with most hiring methods:

1. **Dishonesty.** Candidates know reference checks are generally worthless so they are confident they can fudge their resume and interviews. About 1/3 of resumes contain deliberate falsehoods. C Players easily create resumes to make them look like A Players.

2. **Shallow Interviews.** So-called behavioral or competency interviews are easy to fake. Any candidate could make up good answers to typical questions, such as, “What is an example of your being organized (a team player, committed to success, etc., etc.)?”

3. **Poor Verification.** Reference calls are shallow, so there is typically no credible verification of what the interviewee said.

It’s “common sense” that such flaws produce inadequate hiring results. But why do even the most sophisticated companies in the world “live with” such poor results? I believe poor hiring is so widespread that the business world suffers from widespread self-deception; companies are in denial so they don’t seek out better hiring methods.

No one wants to acknowledge that mediocre hiring/promoting is a big burden that’s causing poor results. Most companies pretend it isn’t there; it’s like a pile of elephant poop in the living room. They don’t seriously measure hiring success and they just “live with” awful results.
Bad hiring is the huge pile of elephant poop that’s stinking up business results.

I was a special advisor to an American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) study in which 19 companies participated in case studies, sponsors, or both. Only one company - a Topgrading company - stood out for both measuring success, hiring and promoting people. And that company’s success using Topgrading hiring and promoting was 90% high performers. (All the rest of the companies did NOT even measure quality of hires or they had dishonest statistics.)
Human Resources is Positioned to Lead

In recent years HR has embraced technology, big time! HR systems, including Applicant Tracking Systems (ATSs), have made life easier for recruiters to find candidates and track them through hiring. HR departments typically measure speed to fill and cost to fill jobs, and those numbers look great!

But technology has done nothing for hiring managers; the QUALITY of hires remains abysmal.

**Human Resources has the technology sophistication to lead the way, to introduce Topgrading to improve the quality of hire.**
Chapter 2

*Topgrading Lite: 4 Easy Steps*

“The ability to make good decisions regarding people represents one of the last reliable sources of competitive advantage, since very few organizations are very good at it.”

- Peter Drucker

If you would like to become a Topgrader, you can actually start TODAY! Really...even before you read the rest of this short book. Here are some of the steps you can take today to improve hiring.

**Step 1: Candidates Fill Out the Topgrading Career History Form**

*Topgrading Career History Form*

As you know, resumes are incomplete and too often are deceptive, so you waste a lot of time studying zillions of resumes, trying to figure out which are truthful and wishing they contained more of the information you want. C Players are good at fudging the truth, so you end up interviewing way too many candidates and hiring way too many mediocre performers. Topgrading has a much better method...
Candidates complete the Topgrading Career History Form (which can be YOUR application form) infused with the time-tested Topgrading Intellectual Property. It contains the powerful “truth serum,” the statement that a final step in hiring is for candidates to arrange reference calls with former managers and others. Low performers and those with exaggerated or inaccurate resumes drop out, leaving you with honest, high performers. Good! The Career History Form asks full compensation history, honest boss ratings, and much more.

Step 2: Screen Candidates with the Topgrading Snapshot and Career History Form

“The Topgrading snapshot is amazing! It screens out the fakers and the low performers and even before talking with a candidate you know their full compensation history and how all bosses would rate them.”

- Scott Clawson
  President & CEO / Culligan

You probably think your first contact with a candidate is to review the Career History Form, right? No, you can save a LOT of time by first glancing at candidate Topgrading Snapshots, the colorful pictures conveying the most important facts. A hiring manager or staffing person can easily screen out 50 candidates in an hour, just with the Topgrading Snapshot. Then, with perhaps five impressive Snapshots, it’s worth the time to review their full Career History Form.
Let’s look at two “real” Topgrading Snapshots, with names changed, to see how just the most important information you need is shown.

First, let’s look at a likely A Player—we call him Erik Dorsman. Then we’ll look at a likely C Player—we call him John Doe. Both are actually real people, with names and company info changed.

### Erik’s Snapshot

**2 employers over 20 years**

#### Compensation Over Time

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<td>$200k</td>
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#### Manager Rating and Reason for Leaving

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#### Key

- **S**: Excellent
- **G**: Very Good
- **F**: Good
- **R**: Fair
- **M**: Poor
- **X**: Impossible to provide

#### Chronological History

**Work**

- **1992 - 1997**: Teacher at South Bend Community School (almost 5 years)
  - $22,000 - $35,000 per year
  - Manager Rating: Very Good
  - Reason for Leaving: My Choice

- **1997 - 2002**: Director Information Technology at Educational Management Intl (over 5 years)
  - $44,000 - $84,800 per year
  - Manager Rating: Excellent
  - Reason for Leaving: Not Leaving (Promotion, Different Assignment, etc.)

- **2002 - 2005**: VP Information Technology at Educational Management Intl (over 2 years)
  - $90,000 - $124,000 per year
  - Manager Rating: Excellent
  - Reason for Leaving: Not Leaving (Promotion, Different Assignment, etc.)

- **2005 - 2012**: VP People Development at Educational Management Intl (over 7 years)
  - $131,000 - $156,000 per year
  - Manager Rating: Excellent
  - Reason for Leaving: My Choice
Note in the Dorsman Topgrading Snapshot that the years go across the bottom and show that he was with the same employer from 1997 until 2012. This shows solid longevity—Erik is certainly not a job-hopper!

Compensation is on the vertical axis, and shows Erik's compensation moving higher across his career, starting at about $38,000 and increasing to about $156,000. He has steadily earned more and more money—one mark of a high performer. We can see from his current compensation whether Erik is in about the right compensation range for the job being filled. If he was way too high or too low, he might be an A Player, but just not a good candidate for this job.

The Topgrading Snapshot also shows you the reasons for leaving an employer. Erik's chart indicates that he has left two employers, and both are shown as an A—100% his choice. This is, of course, another mark of a high performer and he also left two jobs with the same employer because he was promoted—another good sign!

The Topgrading Career History Form requests boss ratings and Erik says that his first boss, the school principal, would give him a “Very Good” overall performance rating, and that all the bosses since 1997 would give him an Excellent rating.

For years Topgrading companies have known that the “truth serum”, informing candidates that they will be asked to arrange personal reference calls with bosses and others just before a job offer, works! The best candidates would tell the truth anyway, but the “truth serum” motivates others to be more honest than they might otherwise be, or better yet, withdraw as a candidate!

Now let’s look at a very different Topgrading Snapshot, John Doe’s.
JOHN’S SNAPSHOT  8 employers over about 27 years

Chronological History

Education
1986 - 1988  Anderson College  Anderson, MO, United States GPA 3.0/4.0
Marketing

Work
1987 - 1991  Director of Private/Parochial at Huge Educational Publisher (almost 4 years)
$35,000 - $45,000 per year
Manager Rating: Very Good
Reason for Leaving: Other Circumstances

1992 - 1993  VP Marketing at AAA Publishing (about 1 year)
$60,000 - $60,000 per year
Manager Rating: Very Good
Reason for Leaving: My Choice

1993 - 1994  Director of Marketing at Publisher (11 months)
$45,000 - $60,000 per year
Manager Rating: Very Good
Reason for Leaving: My Choice

1994 - 2001  President at Religious Publishing USA (almost 7 years)
$80,000 - $110,000 per year
Manager Rating: Very Good
Reason for Leaving: Mutual Decision (please explain below)

2001 - 2002  VP Bus Dev at Books, Etc (about 1 year)
$70,000 - $75,000 per year
Manager Rating: Good
Reason for Leaving: Mutual Decision (please explain below)

2002 - 2003  SVP Marketing at Major Books (about 1 year)
$80,000 - $82,000 per year
Manager Rating: Fair
Reason for Leaving: Mutual Decision (please explain below)

2003 - 2006  SVP at Religious Health Assoc. (over 2 years)
$170,000 - $185,000 per year
Manager Rating: Good
Reason for Leaving: Mutual Decision (please explain below)

2007 - 2014  President & CEO at Ryan Publishing (about 7 years)
$220,000 - $235,000 per year
Manager Rating: Good
Reason for Leaving: Mutual Decision (please explain below)
At a glance, you can see that John Doe is quite a job hopper, looking to join his 6th employer in a decade. You can also see that he thinks his bosses would give him low overall performance ratings and there are too many questionable reasons for leaving. In contrast to Erik Dorsman, John Doe would probably not be a good fit for a company seeking A Players.

With no more training than having studied these two Snapshots, you could cut 75 candidates down to 5 people of interest in one hour, and do so with honest, more complete, and verifiable information than you’ve had in the past.

Then you’ll probably want to conduct a phone screen interview before inviting a candidate in for a face-to-face interview. In a phone screen interview answer questions the candidate has about the job and then ask questions about the most recent 2 jobs – using the questions in Step 3.

You’ll save hours and hours of studying resumes and application forms, and prescreening candidates on the phone. Not only do you save a lot of time, but more importantly, you will invite only the very best candidates in for interviews. By screening out C Players and attracting A Players, you will definitely hire more high performers.
Step 3: Conduct the Famous Tandem Topgrading Interview

“The Tandem Topgrading Interview, using the Topgrading Interview Guide, has become critical to our staffing process. It is set up in a logical and systematic way, and permits the interviewers to hear a thorough review of all the previous jobs that got the person to where they are today - the events, motivations, accomplishments, and failures. It’s really opened our eyes to important things that we otherwise would have missed.”

- Rick Steinberg
Vice President of Human Resources / Columbus McKinnon

This is the “silver bullet” of hiring. Every manager we know of achieving 90% hiring or promoting success, conducts the Tandem (2 interviewers) Topgrading Interview, using the Topgrading Interview Guide.
The Topgrading Interview is a chronological interview, starting with the educational years, coming forward to the present, covering every job, and concluding with the usual sections on Self-Appraisal and Plans and Goals for the Future.

It asks many questions about every job, including successes, failures, key decisions, key relationships, boss ratings, and reasons for leaving.

When candidates click Submit to send you their Topgrading Career History Form, it becomes possible for you to click to get the Topgrading Interview Guide prepopulated with 100% of the Career History Form information.

Just read (to yourself) what the candidate filled out about a job, read and ask the built-in questions, take notes on the responses, ask follow up questions, and turn forward to the next page until you’ve completed the interview.

Using the Topgrading Interview Guide makes absolutely certain that you are conducting the most thorough interview possible using the tested and proven Topgrading questions.

On the next page is a sample of just a few of the many in-depth questions that the Topgrading Interview Guide provides about each job:
(I see you worked for EMI from 2005 until 2012 as VP People Development, reporting to Jeff Wilson, CEO)

1. What were your key responsibilities and accountabilities?

2. What results were achieved in terms of successes and accomplishments? How were they achieved?

3. What would you say were mistakes experienced in this job? What would you do differently? (As time permits, get specifics.)

4. What did you like most and least about this job?

5. What is your guess as to what (Jeff Wilson) really felt were your strengths, weaker points, and overall performance?

6. How would he rate your overall Performance Rating (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor)?

7. What circumstances contributed to your leaving? (Always probe for initially unstated reasons.)
You are probably thinking, “But it’s too time consuming for two interviewers to take one to three hours for a chronological interview.”

Let’s run some numbers. Suppose you calculate a mis-hire costs $200,000 and you and others waste a total of 200 hours on each mis-hire. And suppose you mis-hire three sales reps, and fire all three, before hiring a good one.

After all, your hiring success is average—one success in four. Your results are typical for sales managers. You waste 3 X $200k = $600k plus 3 X 200 hours = 600 hours with your three mis-hires. Six hours for a tandem interview with 90% success would, according to your own calculations, save $600k and about 600 hours.

The sentence that makes absolutely zero sense is, “I don’t have time for three-hour tandem interviews that will at least triple my chances of hiring a high performer ... but I can afford to waste $600k and over 600 hours.”

Solo Topgrading Interviews can achieve 50% success, but a Tandem Topgrading Interview can achieve 85%+ success.
Step 4: Conduct Candidate-Arranged Reference Calls

This step is easy and “puts the cork in the bottle.” You’ve screened candidates with the TOLS software and then conducted the phone screen and thorough Tandem Topgrading Interviews. You know you have gotten the deepest insights ever into the candidates. And why not?

After all, they knew they’d have to arrange reference calls with former bosses and others, so they happily told you the whole truth as they went into the details of their successes, mistakes, decisions, and relationships.

After the Tandem Topgrading Interview, if you and your tandem interviewer want to move toward a job offer, just go through your notes and pick out the people you want to talk with – certainly all bosses in the past decade, and for managers, some peers and subordinates. Ask the candidate to arrange the calls and within a day or so they will typically get back and say yes, all are willing to talk and here is their cell number and availability.
This is your chance to verify everything the candidate said and every (tentative) conclusion you and your tandem interviewer have arrived at. The auto populated Topgrading In-Depth Reference Check Guide essentially walks you through building rapport, asking for an appraisal, you’re explaining the job, and you’re asking the reference to assess the candidate in relation to that job.

You’re done! And your chances are very good you will hire an A Player.

Topgrading more than triples successful hiring because just by practicing those four easy Topgrading steps that you just learned, you can solve the biggest problems in hiring, the problems that account for 75% mis-hires:

• Rampant dishonesty by weak candidates who easily get away with fudging their resumes and faking their interviews

• Insufficient information, because most companies use superficial, 45-minute competency (“behavioral”) interviews to screen candidates. Candidates can control such interviews and easily gloss over weaker points.

• Lack of verifiability, as most reference checks get little valuable information. Since most reference checks are either fact checks with Human Resources departments, are not done at all, or they are conducted with the candidates’ buddies as references, even the weakest of candidates can get away with problem #1, rampant dishonesty.
Why Topgrading Works!

There’s a treatment and cure for your talent headaches, and it’s not a pill. It’s the … you knew this was coming … Topgrading methods that are revolutionary in infusing hiring with honesty, thoroughness, and verifiability of candidate information, producing 75% and even 90%+ success.

Topgrading solves the hiring problems of dishonesty, incomplete information, and lack of verifiability.

High performers are generally truthful in their resumes and interviews, but low performers too often hype positives and hide negatives. Topgrading hiring has a “truth serum,” (#1 above) that scares away weak candidates who had falsehoods in their resumes and would have tried to fudge their interviews. That “truth serum” makes sure candidates understand that THEY will eventually have to ARRANGE reference calls with former bosses.

The Topgrading Career History Form, Topgrading Snapshot, (#2 above) and then the Tandem Topgrading Interview (#3 above) combine to cure the “lack of information” headache. For example, the Topgrading Interview covers the candidate’s entire career—every success, failure, key decision, and key relationship (including boss ratings), for every job … and a lot more.
Topgrading also cures the “lack of verifiability” headache by requiring candidates to arrange reference calls with former bosses and others you choose (#4 above). Aah … Topgrading brings truth and honesty, complete information on the candidate’s career, and, as frosting on the cake, everything a candidate claims will be verified through reference checks that the candidate arranges.

This is how Topgrading will permit you to double, triple, or even quadruple your success hiring and promoting high performers. That simple fact will then permit you to dramatically change your organizational culture—to raise the performance bar for everyone. And Topgrading coaching methods will help you develop and retain top talent. The result, as the CEOs of our case studies state, is improved organizational performance.

Topgrading ROI

Unlike any other hiring approach, Topgraders produce analyses of ROI. For example, most companies easily conclude that if they avoid even one staggeringly expensive mis-hire, their ROI of their investment in Topgrading is sky high.
Most companies easily conclude that if they avoid even one staggeringly expensive mis-hire, the ROI on their investment in Topgrading is sky high!

If half the managers avoid JUST one mis-hire in the next five years, Topgrading costs will be paid for … for a hundred years!

On an individual manager level, Topgrading will pack your team with high performers, which will assure your improved personal performance and greater career success. And there is frosting on the cake for you personally: because you will be able to delegate to a higher percentage of A Players, you will be able to enjoy that elusive thing … that most dream of … what is it called, oh yeah, work-life balance.

From a company point of view, documented case studies are the strongest evidence of Topgrading success.
Chapter 3
Topgrading Case Studies

"Mediocrity knows nothing higher than itself, but talent instantly recognizes talent."

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

In the 3rd Edition of Topgrading there are 40 half-page case studies and eight full length ones (some are holding companies with many separate companies) that demonstrate the success that all sizes of organizations are experiencing in hiring not just “ok” performers, but true high performers in positions ranging from entry level jobs to CEO.

You can also visit: http://www.topgradingcasestudies.com and read the long versions for all of the case studies that are available. This bit of online innovation gives you the details of HOW spectacular results are achieved, enabling you to emulate an approach, perhaps without even talking with the company. And it provides hundreds of examples of advice and wisdom from CEOs and heads of HR.

You can view the companies on the following pages:
## Master Chart of Topgrading Case Studies

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<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Pre-Topgrading</th>
<th>With Topgrading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Development</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>94% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Heart Association (2005)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>95% (upper management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argo</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>96% (Assist. VP and above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azura</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>75% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batesville Casket</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benco Dental</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>60% (management)</td>
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<td>Carestreem Health</td>
<td>Est. 30%</td>
<td>74% (total IT department)</td>
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<td>Columbus McKinnon</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>85% (exempt jobs, globally)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corwin Beverages</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>92% (non-entry jobs)</td>
</tr>
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<td>DenTek</td>
<td>10% 0%</td>
<td>92% (staff) 100% (management)</td>
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<td>DPT</td>
<td>17% 20%</td>
<td>75% (hired, total company)</td>
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<td>80% (promoted, total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Inc.</td>
<td>12% ??%</td>
<td>78% (teachers) 89% (corporate staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMC (2005 case study)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>95% (sales reps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electric</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>More than 80% (high potential managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghSMART</td>
<td>Startup</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSI</td>
<td>Est. 22%</td>
<td>90% (executives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes Lemmerz</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>85% (managers promoted globally) 74% (managers hired globally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillenbrand (2005 case study)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>81% (management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Instead (franchise)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>88% (caregivers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Success Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT Foxx Organization</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>80% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K&amp;N Management</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>86% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labshere</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Ninos</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>85% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MarineMax (total company)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>95% (dealership general managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100% (region managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mint.com</td>
<td>Startup</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netsurit</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>75% (promotions, management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Nursing Education (fictitious name)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>87% (school deans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Next Door</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>85% (corporate and caregiver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OnyxMD</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous Pharmaceutical Company (fictitious name)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>75% (sales reps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProService Hawaii</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>91% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Door Interactive (total)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>90% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Santa Teresa</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>74% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundy’s</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80% (store directors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>100% (senior management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Marketing</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>90% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Tide</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>67% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergia One</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>83% (total company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tekmore (new name – 2005)</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>95% (managers hired/promoted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triton</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>80% (total staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Technology (2005 case study)</td>
<td>??%</td>
<td>98% (total company)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This small book began with a typical hiring scenario. Let’s revisit it, but show how Topgrading transforms “typical” to a much more effective process, with much better results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Topgrading Hiring</th>
<th>Post-Topgrading Hiring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The resumes of candidates are usually incomplete and packed with hype.</td>
<td>The Career History Form and Topgrading Snapshot quickly tell you the most important facts about candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your interviews are not very revealing.</td>
<td>The tandem Topgrading Interviews, using the Topgrading Interview Guide, are extremely revealing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference checks are generally worthless.</td>
<td>Candidate-arranged reference calls are revealing and motivate the candidate to be honest in the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too often the person hired disappoints you. Your results are: only 25% High Performers Hired</td>
<td>Your results, after deploying Topgrading are: 90% High Performers Hired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of all talent management practices, the single most important, by far, is hiring and promoting high performers.

**Companies consider themselves “Topgraders” when they have 75% - 90% high performers and they report that the other parts of talent management become relatively easy:**

- Reducing turnover is a breeze when Topgrading assures a close-to-perfect job fit.
- Coaching high performers is fun; coaching underperformers is a pain.
- Succession planning is easy with a solid “bench.”

When entire companies soar in revenues and profits, growth opportunities open up, people earn more money, and—as an added huge bonus—Topgraders have such strong teams they can delegate a lot of tasks and enjoy a significantly better balance in their lives!

**Good Luck On Your Journey!**
Topgrading Resources

Tools To Get You and Your Organization Started Topgrading Today!

All of the following resources can be found on our website which is located at:

www.topgrading.com

Begin Topgrading today!
Follow these steps as your Topgrading skills increase:

1. Implement the four key “Getting Started” recommendations described in Chapter One of this book.

2. Try out our breakthrough Topgrading Online Solutions (TOLS), which includes the Topgrading Snapshot. This combines the Career History Form, the Topgrading Interview Guide and the one-page color graphic Topgrading Snapshot (and other tools):

www.topgrading.com/topgrading-snapshot-2/
3. After you start using TOLS, if you’re ready to move ahead with deploying Topgrading in your organization, we’ll be happy to discuss your options and we’ll be monitoring your process to make sure we are there to help and answer any questions you may have.

By following this simple process, you’ll quickly see for yourself how to avoid expensive mis-hires and how Topgrading can dramatically improve your organization.

More Advanced Topgrading Resources

By using the additional Topgrading Resources, you can learn about such things as:

1. **Our Two-Day Topgrading Workshops**—In addition to thoroughly learning and practicing the basics, you’ll get the latest insights and case studies. You’ll get all your questions answered and become capable of truly leading your organization to Topgrading success.

   [www.topgrading.com/professional-services/training-workshops/](http://www.topgrading.com/professional-services/training-workshops/)

2. **The 7-Hour Topgrading Toolkit**—This toolkit features DVD versions of the Topgrading Workshop and is designed to train managers in Topgrading. The toolkit includes the 3rd Edition of Topgrading and other books, workbooks, audios of the DVD.

3. **Second Opinions (and other services)**—Our team of Topgrading Professionals is always available to conduct “second opinion” interviews for finalists for senior executive positions. If your organization is making a change in the “C Suite” positions, you should consider having us conduct final interviews to further assure your organization that you have selected the right person for a position of leadership.

www.topgrading.com/professional-services/topgrading-assessment/

4. **Speeches**—Our team of Topgrading Professionals, including Brad Smart and others, are available to make speeches (keynotes, organizational kickoffs, etc.) for your company, organization, association, or elsewhere.

www.topgrading.com/professional-services/speeches/

5. **Use the (free) Topgrading Calculators at:**

www.topgrading.com/resources/topgrading-calculators/

These calculators are designed to help you calculate the real costs of mis-hiring in your organization. Use them with your company’s cost data and the numbers will absolutely stun you.
Get Your Questions Answered

1. Email questions to sales@topgrading.com and we’ll get back to you promptly.
2. Call 847-244-5544 and we’ll be happy to talk in person.

Thank you for your interest in Topgrading and for reading this short book. I hope it helps you improve talent in your organization!

Sincerely,

Brad Smart
Topgrading Testimonials

“In a previous start-up I worked for, hiring was done haphazardly. At Mint.com, I’ve had very rigorous hiring. We use a technique called Topgrading, which reveals patterns in behavior. In the history of Mint, I’ve only fired two people and one left voluntarily.”

- Aaron Patzer
Founder / Mint.com

“The tandem interview process is one of the best tools in our arsenal for getting an in-depth understanding of high-potential managers.” (2012 quote)

- Bill Conaty
SVP Human Resources / General Electric (retired)

“There is no doubt that Topgrading contributed to our 6,000% growth in revenues since we began Topgrading.”

- Jim Twining
CEO / Southern Tide
“Brad Smart is the #1 thought leader in the world on hiring best practices. As the global talent leader for a publicly traded top medical technology company, I know of no other hiring method that comes close to what Topgrading achieves if you want to hire ‘A’ level, high performers at every pay level.”

- John H. Dickey
Sr. Vice President, Corporate Support / Hillenbrand

“With over $70 billion in assets, Topgrading is key to our strategies, and the strategies that have generated the majority of our profits would not have been possible without Topgrading.”

- Ken Griffin
CEO / Citadel

“Brad’s Topgrading methods helped us maximize talent at GE.”

- Jack Welch
Author of Winning & CEO / General Electric (retired)
“Topgrading is the #1 reason for our company success.”

- Scott Mesh
CEO / Los Ninos Services

“In the fight against cardiovascular disease and stroke, Topgrading helped us raise an additional $50 million over the previous year. Topgrading has saved lives.”

- Cass Wheeler
CEO / American Heart Association (retired)

“There is no doubt about it – the company as a whole has performed better because of Topgrading. A Player executives do a better job of setting direction, four times as many A Player store directors of course get better results, and when we’ve Topgraded entry level employees and the social media rave about how positive and energized the whole store is, record sales no longer surprise us!”

- Bob Mariano
CEO / Roundy’s
“During the last three years of the recession we have continued to grow revenue, we’ve been one of Utah’s fastest growing companies, and we’ve won multiple awards as a “Best place to work.” Having 94+% A Players at Access is one of the key reasons for this success. Topgrading has been the foundation to help us attract, hire, and retain these A Players.”

- Larry Maxfield
CEO / Access Development

“Brad and three of his team have all conducted Topgrading workshops for our managers, and all four received top ratings.”

- Kevin Silva
former SVP Human Resources / Argo

“Topgrading has allowed us to triple the projected sales for the office. A Player caregivers impress clients, who refer us, and A Players refer other A Players for us to hire.”

- Michael Steinberg
Franchise Owner / Home Instead Senior Care
“Topgrading has been an invaluable tool for DenTek in hiring and retaining high-level performers. Over the past six years we have blossomed into a world-class consumer goods company with explosive growth and great opportunities, due largely to the hard work of A Players recruited through the Topgrading process.”

- David Fox
President / DenTek Oral Care

“No company can expect to beat the competition unless it has the best human capital and promotes these people to pivotal positions. Topgrading is the definitive manual for becoming a high performer and recognizing those traits in others.”

- Larry Bossidy
Author of Execution & Chairman / Honeywell (retired)
“If you read it with the right kind of attention, Topgrading is the most important book ever written.”

- Pasquale Scopelliti
  Recruiter Magazine

“We’ve grown from one to forty-six locations and have experienced 50% to 100% growth annually since Topgrading.”

- Ken Sim
  Founder / Nurse Next Door

“After implementing Topgrading for all new hires and promotions, I am thrilled. Our organization has embraced the philosophy and process and we are seeing the results...the right people in the right positions.”

- Tim Tevens
  President & CEO / Columbus McKinnon
Topgrading methods are the most effective and proven. Proof? Forty case study companies featured in the 3rd Edition of Topgrading more than tripled their success hiring not just “good” performers but true high performers ... and the case study CEOs say Topgrading made their companies more successful.

Topgrading methods are commonsense, but they are not yet commonplace. Topgrading is unique in assuring honest candidate information, complete candidate information, and all conclusions validated in reference checks arranged by the candidate.

By avoiding common hiring mistakes, you can avoid costly mis-hires, create high performing teams, turbo-boost your career, and enjoy more work-life balance, because you can delegate more to your outstanding team ... all because you implemented Topgrading.