

Quick-Start Implementation Kit

KIT 1: STARTUP / HIGH-GROWTH

For Founders, First HR Hires, and COOs Owning Talent | Under 100 Employees

What This Kit Is For

You are hiring, but you do not have a dedicated recruiting function yet. Someone - a founder, a COO, a first HR hire - is owning the process informally and the informal approach is starting to crack. This kit gives you the minimum viable structure to hire with discipline without building infrastructure you cannot sustain. It answers one question: what do I do Monday morning?

PROOF OF CONCEPT: THIS MODEL IN PRACTICE

A a single-source global manufacturing and total energy solutions company implemented this model and produced the following results across a two-year period:

\$2M+ OPEX Savings	18 days Average Time to Fill	100% Offer Acceptance Rate	350+ Total Hires Completed	\$1M+ Year 1 Annualized Savings
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The model began as a cost problem - agency spend exceeding \$350,000+ annually with volume projected to multiply 2-3x. It became the infrastructure that hired a CEO, three Presidents, a VP of Finance, and a CHRO. The same VP of Talent who built the cost case that justified the investment went on to recruit the full executive architecture of a scaling global company. The parent company preparing for public markets subsequently adopted the RCoE framework for executive recruiting across its business groups - institutional validation that the model scales beyond a single implementation.

In the first 90 days: 5 salaried positions filled at 15-day average TTF and 100% offer acceptance rate - within the window required to justify the cost of the Talent Strategy Advisor role. The ATS was activated from unused shelfware to functioning infrastructure. SOPs were established. Hiring Manager training was built as a self-serve video module. The business case was proven before the full model was complete.

SECTION 1: TSA-LITE ROLE DEFINITION

At this stage, a dedicated Talent Strategy Advisor is not feasible. What is feasible - and required - is a single person who owns hiring outcomes, not just hiring activity. That is the TSA-Lite: whoever in your organization is accountable for whether the right people are in the right roles.

ROLE TITLE

TSA-Lite (Founder, COO, or First HR Hire operating in talent strategy capacity)

WHO HOLDS IT	Whoever owns hire outcomes - not just process. If a bad hire happens, this person answers for it.
AUTHORITY	Can pause a search and require role redefinition. Can challenge comp ranges. Can escalate offer disputes to the CEO.
TIME COMMITMENT	20-30% of capacity when hiring is active. If it exceeds this consistently, you need a dedicated recruiter, not a better framework.
NOT THIS ROLE	Not a scheduler. Not a coordinator. Not the person who posts jobs and screens resumes. If this person is spending their time on logistics, the function is broken.
UPGRADE TRIGGER	25+ hires per year or second location expansion. At that point, read Section A of the full Blueprint for the dedicated TSA build path.

SECTION 2: DECISION RIGHTS MATRIX

Ambiguity about who decides what is the fastest way to create hiring chaos at this stage. This matrix does not need to be formal governance. It needs to exist, be shared, and be followed.

Decision	Who Decides	Who Consults	Can Pause?
New role approval	CEO	TSA-Lite	CEO only
Success profile definition	TSA-Lite + Hiring Manager	CEO for senior roles	TSA-Lite
Comp range setting	TSA-Lite with market data	CEO for exec roles	TSA-Lite
Sourcing channel selection	TSA-Lite	Hiring Manager	TSA-Lite
Candidate advancement	Hiring Manager	TSA-Lite	TSA-Lite
Hire / no-hire decision	Hiring Manager	TSA-Lite	CEO only
Offer design and approval	TSA-Lite + CEO	Hiring Manager	CEO only
30/60/90 day review	Hiring Manager	TSA-Lite	N/A
Search reopen after failure	TSA-Lite	CEO	TSA-Lite
Agency engagement	CEO only	TSA-Lite	CEO only

SECTION 3: 10-STEP HIRING WORKFLOW CHECKLIST

No ATS required to run this. A spreadsheet or simple PM tool is sufficient until you reach 25+ hires per year. The discipline matters more than the technology at this stage.

Step	Stage	What Must Happen
1	Role Validation	TSA-Lite confirms the role is necessary and correctly scoped. No search launches without this gate cleared.
2	Success Profile	3-5 behavioral competencies defined. Not a job description. What does success look like at 90 days?
3	Comp Range Lock	External market data cited. Internal equity checked. Range approved before sourcing starts.
4	Sourcing Channels	Select 2-3 channels maximum. Job boards, LinkedIn, referrals. No agency until 3 weeks of internal sourcing have failed.
5	Intake Screen	TSA-Lite or recruiter screens against success profile. Not against resume aesthetics.
6	Manager Review	Hiring manager reviews screened candidates within 48 hours. SLA is mandatory.
7	Structured Interview	2-3 interviewers maximum. Each owns specific competencies. No redundant coverage.
8	Decision Discussion	Written scorecard submitted by each interviewer before verbal debrief. No exceptions.
9	Offer Design	Offer built within approved range. Comp, title, and start date confirmed before verbal conversation with candidate.
10	30/60/90 Review	Scheduled at offer acceptance. Not optional. This is the data that tells you whether the search process worked.

SECTION 4: 5 METRICS TO TRACK MANUALLY

No dashboard required. One spreadsheet row per hire. These five metrics tell you whether your process is working before the problems compound.

Metric	What It Measures	Healthy Range	If Below Range
Time to Fill	Days from role approval to offer accept	Under 30 days	Diagnose by stage: where is it stalling?
Offer Acceptance Rate	Percentage of offers accepted	90%+	Comp misalignment or experience breakdown. Diagnose which.
30-Day Retention	New hires still in seat at 30 days	95%+	Role design or onboarding failure

Source of Hire	Which channel produced the hire	Track by role type	Identifies which channels to invest in and which to drop
Interview-to-Offer Ratio	Interviews conducted per offer extended	3:1 to 5:1	Above 7:1: standards too high or criteria unclear. Below 2:1: desperation hiring.

SECTION 5: PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2 ACTIONS ONLY

Phase 1 (Months 1-2): Honest Assessment

Answer these five questions before building anything else. If you cannot answer them, you do not have a process problem yet - you have a visibility problem.

- Do you know why your last three searches took as long as they did?
- Is every currently active search operating with an approved comp range set against external market data?
- Do candidates know what they are being evaluated on before their interviews?
- Do you track offer acceptance rate and do you know why the last declined offer was declined?
- Does the person running talent at your company have the authority to pause a search? Have they ever used it?

Phase 2 (Months 2-4): Three Foundational Installs

Intake discipline

No intake, no search launch. This is not a process suggestion. It is a gate. Every search that launches without a completed success profile and an approved comp range is a search that will cost you more time and money downstream than the intake would have taken.

Interview structure

One scorecard per role. Competency ownership assigned per interviewer before the loop begins. Written scores submitted independently before any verbal discussion. This eliminates the single most common cause of mis-hires: social consensus overriding individual evaluation.

Offer governance

Every offer anchored to the pre-approved range. Any exception requires documented rationale and CEO sign-off. Not because exceptions are wrong - because undocumented exceptions become your compensation structure.

WHAT YOU CAN SHOW THE BUSINESS IN 60 DAYS

Proof points you can produce before the structural work is complete

Activate your ATS - stop using it as a database

Configure intake as the launch gate. Every search that starts without a completed intake record gets closed until intake is done. One rule, enforced once, changes behavior immediately.

Require written scorecard submission before any verbal debrief

Send a simple email to every active interviewer: from this point forward, scores are submitted in writing before we discuss. No technology required. No system change required. Elimination of groupthink and anchoring bias starts day one.

Pull your last 10 hires and calculate offer acceptance rate and 30-day retention

You do not need a dashboard to know if your hiring is working. Ten hires, two numbers, one spreadsheet. If offer acceptance is below 90% or 30-day retention is below 95%, you have a structural problem that is already costing you money.

Set a comp range before every search - with a market source cited

One external data point per role. LinkedIn Salary, Glassdoor, Levels.fyi - whichever fits the function. Document it before sourcing starts. This single habit eliminates the most common cause of late-stage offer declines.

Establish one decision rights rule in writing

Who approves a new open role. One rule, one owner, one communication. At your stage, ambiguity about this single decision costs more than any process inefficiency.

SECTION 6: WHAT NOT TO BUILD YET

Premature infrastructure is as damaging as no infrastructure. Every item below is something startups build too early and then have to undo.

What to Skip	Why It Is Tempting	When to Add It	Blueprint Reference
Full enterprise ATS	It looks like a solution to chaos	25+ hires per year	Section C
Complex governance committees	Feels like building a real function	3+ recruiters on staff	Section B
Predictive analytics platform	Looks impressive on a capabilities slide	Year 2+ with clean data history	Section D
Employer brand architecture	Marketing will want to help	When you have a dedicated TA function	Section B
5+ round interview loops	Thoroughness instinct	Almost never - for most roles	Section C
Agency partnerships as standard	Speed when you have no pipeline	Stop-gap only after 3 weeks internal failure	Section F

Phases 3-5 of the Blueprint	The full model is compelling	100+ employees or 25+ hires/year	Section E
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SECTION 7: 30-DAY ACTIVATION CHECKLIST

Use this to confirm Kit 1 is implemented, not just read.

WEEK 1 - Foundation

- Name the TSA-Lite owner. Share the decision rights matrix with all hiring managers. Document the last three search failures and identify the common breakdown point.

WEEK 2 - Process

- Map every active search to the 10-step workflow. Identify which steps are being skipped. Build the intake template for your most common hire type. Create a competency scorecard for that same role.

WEEK 3 - Metrics

- Create the manual tracking spreadsheet. Backfill your last 10 hires with the 5 core metrics. Identify which metric is furthest from healthy range. That is your first priority.

WEEK 4 - Governance

- Run the Phase 1 five-question assessment. Confirm no active searches are running without intake. Schedule a monthly talent review with whoever owns hiring decisions at your company.

Where to Go Next

This kit covers Phases 1-2 only. When you cross 25+ hires per year or expand to a second location, advance to Kit 2 or read the full Blueprint sections directly.

Section A: Full TSA role architecture and upgrade path from TSA-Lite

Section B: Organizational design models for when you have 3+ recruiters

Section C: ATS selection criteria and full workflow library

Section D: Full metrics architecture and automated dashboard design

Section E: Phases 3-5 of the transformation roadmap

Kit 2: When you cross 100 employees or 25+ hires per year