Spot the Standouts: How to Identify High Performers Before you Hire

A practical Guide for Hiring Managers in High-Growth FMCG Brands

Hiring isn't just about filling seats. It's about unlocking growth. And in fast-paced FMCG environments, the difference between an average hire and a high performer isn't just felt... it multiplies.

But how do you identify those high performers before they're on the team?

This guide will give you practical, no-fluff insights into:

- **What to look for in a CV**
- **What to probe in an interview**
- **Red flags that look like green ones**
- **How to read between the lines**

Whether you're hiring for Sales, Ops, Marketing, or leadership, this will sharpen your lens. Get your FREE guide on the next page!

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SECTION 1:

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WHAT HIGH PERFORMERS *SHOW* ON A CV (THAT AVERAGE CANDIDATES DON'T)

Look beyond buzzwords. Here's what matters more:

✔ **Clear Commercial Outcomes**

> **High performers quantify:** "Grew regional sales by 32% in 12 months"

> **Average candidates generalise:** "Responsible for regional sales growth"

Ask yourself: Did they move the needle, or just keep things ticking?

✔ **Progression with Purpose**

> **High performers show upward momentum** (title, scope, or complexity)

> Look for roles where they took **bigger bets,** not just lateral moves

> Check if they've followed leaders - it often signals they were valued

✔ **Signs of 'Intrapreneurship'**

> Look for candidates who've **built** or **fixed** things:

➔ "Launched new category from scratch"

➔ "Redesigned underperforming process to cut lead times by 40%"

❌ **Watch for:**

Inflated titles with no scope change
Buzzword bingo: "passionate, driven, team player" with no outcomes
Short stints without context - ask why

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YOU'RE NOT JUST HIRING SKILLS - YOU'RE HIRING MINDSET, SPEED, AND IMPACT

✔ **They talk outcomes, not just activity**

> Ask: "What are you most proud of in the last 12 months?"

> High performers will talk in **cause-effect:**
>> *"We noticed X ... so I did Y... and the result was X."*

✔ **They show learning agility**

> Ask: "Tell me about something you learned the hard way".
>> You're looking for **ownership**, not blame.

✔ **They ask questions that show commercial curiosity**

> **Average candidates ask about perks. High performers ask:**
>> "What's the biggest challenge the team's facing right now?"
>> "Where's the business placing its biggest bets over the next 12 months?"

✔ **They show proactive pattern recognition**

> **"I noticed you recently launched [X product] - how has that changed your channel mix?"**
>> Shows prep, interest, and ability to join dots.

❌ **Red Flags to Catch Early**

They blame previous teams or managers
Vague on results or metrics
Struggle with 'what didn't go well' questions
Can't explain their role in team wins.

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THE HIGH PERFORMER INTERVIEW SCORECARD

Use this quick-scoring tool after interviews to rate candidates

Trait	Red flag (1)	OK (2)	High Performer (3)
Quantifies Outcomes			
Shows ownership of mistakes			
Learns fast, adapts fast			
Asks commercially smart questions			
Shows pattern recognition			
Clear team contribution			
Uses "I" instead of "we"			
Cultural add (not just fit)			
Self-awareness and coachability			

Total Score: .... / 27

👉 18+ = Strong candidate
👉 12 - 17 = Worth deeper discussion
👉 < 12 = Proceed with caution

If you want further support on how to run an effective recruitment process, visit our website for lots of tips and tools on our resources page.

Or, contact us directly for no obligation advice.

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