



FINDING A UNICORN *PLAYBOOK*

CHC Consulting's Guide to Hiring
Rare Talent for Unusual Roles



WHAT IS A UNICORN HIRE?

Every organisation has one.

That role that's impossible to fill.

Maybe it's a mix of contradictory skills
(creative but detail-oriented?).

Or someone who can bridge unusual domains
(a finance-savvy people leader, perhaps?).



Maybe the cultural fit is ultra-specific.

Or maybe... it just feels impossible.

At CHC Consulting, these are our favourite kinds of challenges.

WHAT IS A UNICORN ROLE?



High-impact



Hard-to-define



Unusually demanding



Business-critical

AND... we find them.

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WHY UNICORNS MATTER

- 76% of business leaders say their most valuable hires didn't tick all the boxes on paper. They brought something **rare, intangible, or unexpected**. (LinkedIn, 2022)
- Hiring a unicorn isn't about volume, it's about **precision**.
- These are the people who create new **value**, catalyse **change**, or unlock new **possibilities**.
- You don't just need to fill a gap. **You need to find magic.**



HOW TO FIND A UNICORN

1. Decode the Unicorn

Don't chase shadows, get clear on the silhouette

2. Search Beyond the Obvious

Unicorns don't graze where the herd does.



3. Evaluate for Chemistry, Not Just Competence

A unicorn might not speak your language yet, but they speak your values.

4. Partner With Specialists Who Get It

You don't hunt unicorns with a cattle net

1. DECODE THE UNICORN

The first mistake most companies make is starting the search before they've truly defined what they're looking for. Unicorn hires are often unique because the business context is unique.



What to Do:

- Interview the **key stakeholders** (not just HR)
- Ask: "What would **success look like** in 12 months if this hire is a game-changer?"
- Identify the **2-3 non-negotiables** (skills, style, outcomes)
- Then **define the "weird mix"** that makes this role tricky. That's your edge

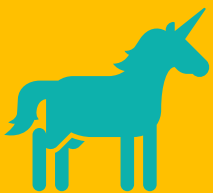
CHC Tip: We often run 60-minute discovery sessions to map the hidden DNA of a unicorn role. This often reveals unseen priorities.

2. SEARCH BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

Traditional search methods won't surface unicorns. Why?

Because Unicorns Often:

- Aren't actively looking
- Don't use traditional job titles
- Have cross-functional backgrounds that don't fit filters



What To Do:

- Search for skills, not titles
- Look in adjacent industries and roles
- Use behavioural and psychometric profiling early
- Consider personality, motivations, and mindset first – and train for skill later

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73% of high-performing
unicorn hires came from
outside the client's **original**
industry or job family.

(CHC internal data, 2024)

”

3. EVALUATE FOR CHEMISTRY, NOT JUST COMPETENCE

Unicorns often **look odd on paper**, they've taken non-linear paths, changed careers, or built unusual skill stacks. That's their **superpower**.

But the secret to a great unicorn hire isn't just what they *can* do, it's **how they connect** with your culture, mission, and chaos.

CHC Tip:

We never let one impressive CV override team chemistry.

Hiring unicorns = hiring humans.



What to Do:

- Use **situational judgement testing** (like Sitch) to see how they think and act
- Have **informal interviews** with cross-functional team members
- Ask **values-based questions**: "What kind of challenge excites you?"
- Focus on **adaptability, influence, creativity, and resilience**

4. PARTNER WITH SPECIALISTS WHO GET IT

Not all recruiters are geared for complexity.

If your role requires magic, nuance, or contradiction, work with partners who:

- Get curious about your business
- Understand behavioural science and team dynamics
- Use structured assessments to reduce bias
- Know how to market to passive and non-traditional candidates

“

CHC's unicorn placements have a 92% 12-month retention rate, compared to a 64% market average for “hard-to-fill” roles.

(CHC data, 2025)

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A close-up photograph of two people shaking hands. The person on the left is wearing a dark suit jacket, and the person on the right is wearing a teal suit jacket with a yellow button. The background is blurred, showing yellow and white geometric shapes.

FINAL WORD

DON'T SETTLE | FIND THE ONE

Unicorn hiring takes more effort, but delivers exponential return. Whether it's your next Chief Flavourist, a behavioural scientist with startup grit, or a multi-lingual commercial lead who gets fintech and people, they're out there.

CHC is known for finding them.



**CHC Consulting
is known as
Unicorn finder**

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Need Help Finding Your Next Unicorn?.

Contact our recruitment team:

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[Book a discovery call here.](#)

