



A Practical Guide to Recruiting INTEGRATORS

Most people have heard of Henry Ford, and most would likely classify him as a top businessman/entrepreneur of the last two centuries.

Fewer people have heard of [James Couzens](#), although he was a U.S. Senator.

Similarly, many know Ray Kroc and can associate him with one brand, that being McDonald's.

Fewer people know Fred Turner, although he was [one of the best operations guys](#) in modern food service history.

In modern business, we tend to over-focus on the Visionary: Jobs, Musk, Zuck, Sergey, and now even Kevin Systrom (Instagram) and Evan Spiegel (Snap). Those are the big names, giving the big speeches, associated with the big money, and disrupting things left and right. That's what we're told to aspire to and aim for. That's the focus.

But within the Entrepreneur's Operating System® (EOS®) there are actually two crucial roles:

- Visionaries (those are the guys in the last paragraph)
- Integrators (those are the Couzens and Turners of the world)

The role of the Visionary and Integrator

Regardless of the business field you are in, active entrepreneurs have to deal with the same or similar challenges and concerns. It's very easy to get confused and overwhelmed by the whole thing. And even though perhaps you have already achieved a milestone in your business, the growth and potential will be your next step. This is challenging as you need the right procedures, tools, and most vitally, someone with whom you can share your goals and dreams.

The EOS® platform was originally created by established entrepreneurs and writers, Gino Wickman and Mark C. Winters to assist fellow entrepreneurs in all manner of industries to get moving, resolve problems, and advance their companies.

The concept of an "Integrator" was introduced by them in their book, *Traction* and was further mentioned in detail in their follow-up book, *Rocket Fuel*. They highlight the essential and dynamic combo of a Visionary and an Integrator as a critical tool to advance a business.

Companies who have utilized the dynamic duo of Visionary & Integrator have made impressive steps towards growth and expansion of their business.

So who are we talking about?

The Visionary is essentially the Dreamer in the equation. They are the ones responsible for generating ideas and plans. In the majority of cases, the Visionary is the CEO, president or owner of the business. While the Visionary is often very clear on their dreams and goals, they aren't always aligning with strategic implementation. This is where an Integrator comes to the rescue.

“Visionaries are often great idea people, but really challenged when it comes to executing and holding people accountable. The yin to that yang is an Integrator, who actually executes against the business plan and keeps the train on the tracks and makes sure everything is working.” -- Ken Paskins, GCE Strategic Consulting

The Integrator's role is to actually help DO or, in other words, implement goals. They are perfectly content with being the second most important person in this process and are often the Vice President, the Manager Assistant, COO, or General Manager. They serve the function of “captain” of the crew that will drive and merge everyone and everything together towards achievement. They will not hesitate to tell the Visionary what they need to do to improve and to resolve issues while keeping conflict at a minimum. An Integrator's role is also to pay special attention to the Visionary's concerns and come up with effective solutions to address them.

While their role is to act by nature, that doesn't mean that Integrator's don't also have a bit of a Visionary inspiration as well. They are big analyzers and critical thinkers of original ideas with a robust and varied experience. They also have a profound understanding of the business model and what makes all business elements glue together.

Shockingly, it is said that only 2% of all business people have all that it takes to be a successful Integrator. But things can shift by working with true Integrator Recruiters who are capable of choosing the best person for your business model taking you one step closer toward successful implementation.

What happens to Visionaries when they lack Integrators?

Nothing great, honestly. We've probably all worked with people who have tons of ideas, some of them even potentially revenue-awesome ideas, but they have no idea how to execute on them or move others towards that goal. There are millions of dead startups in this pile -- great, world-shifting ideas with no execution plan.

Although we don't often think this way in the crush of day-to-day responsibilities, work is pretty simple when you come right down to it: you're trying to align a broader strategy with day-to-day execution. When we talk about employees not being "engaged," as fluffy a concept as that might be, it usually comes back to employees not understanding how their work (the execution) is tied to the big-picture strategy. The disconnect depresses and disengages your staff. No one wants to run in place on meaningless tasks all week.

Integrators get people moving in the right direction, on legitimately purposeful (or at the very least revenue-facing) work.

"The Integrator is a core role in the company. Without the right Integrator, you're not going to realize complete return on investment and you're going to struggle." -- Ken Paskins, GCE Consulting

A Visionary can dream all day, but eventually you need to *take action*. That's why all Visionaries need Integrators.

Per recent *Harvard Business Review* data, [only 8% of leaders are good at aligning strategy and execution](#) -- and those 8% see staggeringly better financial returns.

Key Personal Skills of a True Integrator

A true Integrator should always be on a quest of upgrading their skills and making themselves more efficient. An Integrator should never act as the average "team captain" whose confidence sometimes transforms into arrogance.

A true Integrator should be confident and positive without appearing aloof or cocky. In order to own their role successfully, they have to be:

- Personally accountable
- Decision-makers
- Flexible
- Efficient problem and conflict solvers
- Emotionally balanced and not prone to extremes (e.g. being overly negative and pessimistic or, equally detrimental, positive and unrealistic)
- Individuals who have a winning mindset

But here's the catch--all these personal traits should match their experience and, most importantly, their personal traits also need to align with your core values and what you are trying to achieve by hiring them.

You as the Visionary have visions and goals for the future of your business, right? The level of experience required to manage a \$10m. company is very different from the experience required to manage a \$40m. company. You have to recruit an Integrator who has very precisely relative experience. If they have handled a ship like yours before, let them take the helm. The wise Visionary hires someone who has a larger body of experience in business than him/herself. Far too many Visionaries fail because they weren't smart enough to proactively hire the right Integrators.

Furthermore, you should also consider hiring an Integrator that has worked in a different yet similar field than yours. A fresh pair of eyes can take your business to great new dimensions. If you are worried about the time your Integrator needs to adapt, if you have hired a true and appropriately qualified Integrator-- they will have the skills to adapt quickly and within just a few months of recruitment.

Finally, these personal skills should also match with the key values and vision of your business. Even the most gifted Integrators in the world won't manage to help a company grow if they are mismatched. And, contrary to popular belief, your Integrator shouldn't be learning about your values after they've joined your business. You should evaluate/asses which candidate is the best match for your goals beforehand through a thorough screening process. If your candidate seems to be going in a different direction right off the bat, then you should move on to your next best candidate immediately.

In the book *Rocket Fuel*, the authors highlight these 9 personal traits a true Integrator must possess:

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Passionate approach
- Inspiration
- Ability to create and implement great ideas
- Great problem-solving skills
- Socially engaging and captivating
- Ability to close deals effectively
- Ability to easily learn new things and improve themselves
- Company vision generator and contributor

If all these are a great fit with your business vision and goals, then you have the right Integrator for your business. Search for someone who will embody your vision and enhance it or even fill gaps allowing your business to grow and flourish.

The working relationship between Visionaries and Integrators

According to Gino Wickman of *Rocket Fuel*, the five rules for the Visionary-Integrator relationship are:

1. Stay on the same page
2. No end-runs
3. The Integrator is the tie-breaker
4. You're an employee when you work "in" the business
5. Maintain mutual respect

Items 1, 2, and 5 speak to the same priority: respect. If you're a small business owner looking to scale and need to recruit an Integrator, you don't necessarily have to be best friends with them. They don't need to look like you, have a similar educational background, or the same experience in the same types of companies on their way up. What's most important is that you need to respect their work ethic and commitment. Without that mutual respect, end-runs will happen and you will drift off the same page and that will invariably impede growth.

No. 4 on Wickman's list is interesting. It speaks to the "owner" vs. "employee" mentality. Oftentimes, with vesting or co-founding, both the Visionary and the Integrator might be owners of the business. There are times they can operate as owners, yes. However, when they're on the ground floor doing the actual work of the business, they are both effectively employees and that means:

- No politics
- Unified front
- Full accountability for the seat
- Yes, you can be fired

In other words: no BS. You're not allowed to pull the owner card just because you can. Do the work and be accountable to being great at the job.

Questions to ask to find the right Integrator

- Do they have the skills and knowledge to comprehend how various systems function together within the company or are they are only skilled in one aspect of the business model?
- Do they acknowledge and share the same visions/goals expressed by the Visionary?
- Are they capable of efficiently assessing and developing models for grown business lines or new/emerging business lines?

- Can they lead manage and grow people? Can they get the most of their teammates and lead the team to achieve results?
- Are they masters at resolving issues and conflict?
- Are they skilled diplomats? Can they sustain staff morale high when issues arise?

Broader attributes you're looking for:

- A proven history of growing people
- Ability to minimize conflict and offer resolutions
- Ability to form connections and get along well with people
- Ability to assign tasks while monitoring results

Your Integrator recruitment checklist

The following is a checklist of all the key skills and attributes you should look for when searching for a great Integrator.

FAVORABLE BUSINESS SKILLS/TRAITS

- Strategic thinking skills. The right Integrator should think strategically and in a way that helps your business flourish. The questions you need to consider are: Do they understand thoroughly the business dynamics and functions? Can they lead all these procedures? Can they take ambiguous ideas and transform them into actions and tangible results?
- Leadership skills. Leadership skills are essential for managing and making the most of a team's potential. For example, does your candidate have a proven track record for creating and growing teams? Can they inspire and raise the morale of team members? Can they lead by example? Are they capable of resolving conflict among team members when issues inevitably arise? Are they effective communicators and do they know how to make the most of their team?

FAVORABLE PERSONALITY TRAITS

- Are they reliable?
- Will they assume responsibility for their ideas and actions?
- Do they show effective problem solving skills?
- Are they adaptable and flexible?
- Are they emotionally stable? Can they make grounded and viable decisions?
- Will they aim high?
- Do they have a winning mindset? Do they know what it takes to win?

FAVORABLE EXPERIENCE TRAITS

- Have they already worked as Integrator in a similar industry?
- Can they bring new experience to the table?
- Do they understand the business and its dynamics?

FAVORABLE COMPATIBILITY TRAITS

- Are the skills of the Integrator compatible with my industry?
- Does the candidate share a similar vision with me?
- Will the Integrator adhere to the core values of my company?

FILLING THE GAPS

- Do they offer a new perspective on the ideas brought to the table?
- Can they point out mistakes and gaps?
- Will they do whatever it takes to fill gaps and fix mistakes to improve business procedures?
- Will they challenge me in a positive way?

The bottom line

A real Integrator ideally has to be business savvy, experienced, a great leader, a great communicator and a DOER -- not just a thinker; that is the job of the Visionary.

Integrators may also bring some of their ideas to the mix but their main duty is to help convert ideas into actions and positive results.

Often, in the hiring process, there's too much focus on speed -- "I need this guy now," or worse, "I needed him yesterday!" (Or her, of course.) Try to remember, finding the right Integrator is crucial to the success of your business. Take time with it. Invest in the process. Use outside firms if necessary (and vet those firms thoroughly!) This matters. This isn't a task to rush. This is the future of your business. If you need help, this is what we do. We help. Email us at info@gcestrategicconsulting.com or give us a call 678-626-7416.

More About GCE Strategic Consulting

With GCE Strategic Consulting, we work with business owners who embrace the principles of the Entrepreneur's Operating System® EOS® to get the results that they both need and deserve at an investment they can afford. We do this by offering a fractional executive who gets full-time results,

focusing on the greater good of your business, or by hiring and training the right Integrator for your business.

As a company, we fully believe what *Rocket Fuel* preaches: good Integrators are in great demand and only make up 2% of the population. We are dedicated in supporting you as a Visionary whether you are at \$500k or \$50m. We provide a three legged stool that no one else in the market has: Fractional Integrators to do the work, training for those you want to groom as Integrators and recruiting the right Integrator to grow your business.

Email us at info@gcestrategicconsulting.com or give us a call 678-626-7416.