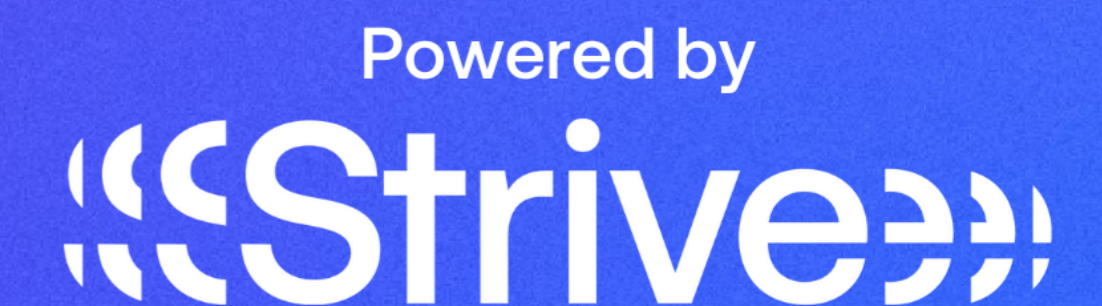


Inside Early-Stage GTM Hiring: Lessons from a VC Talent Leader

April 9th, 2026



Access the full recording of the session here:

<https://youtu.be/iEwQQs8MCyI>

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More than 5,000 high-growth companies, like Deel, Synthesia, Replit, and Brex, are already recruiting on Metaview.

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Strive build world-class go-to-market teams for some of the most disruptive, Venture Capital Backed tech companies, all over the world.

Our team has successfully hired for some of the hottest vendors across the US and EMEA, backed by the likes of Sequoia, Insight Partners, A16Z, Accel, Index, Intel, SFV, GV, Craft, Boldstart, NEA, CRV... the list goes on.

Strive don't just place people, they build entire teams.

SECTION No: /01

Upcoming Events

/01

VENT VIRTUAL EVENT VIRTUAL EVENT VIRTUAL EVENT VIRTUAL EVENT

THURSDAY 7th MAY 12pm - 1pm EST

Winning the Race for GTM Talent

With Shaked Auz Abramovich, Global Talent Acquisition Partner at groundcover



The Launch Collective
GTM talent community

Powered by **Strive**

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WEDNESDAY 20th MAY
5pm - 5.30pm EST

Product Demo: Juicebox



The Launch Collective
GTM talent community

Powered by **Strive**

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THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH 5.30pm - 7.30pm PST

San Fran

Sponsored by **Juicebox**

The Launch Collective
GTM talent community

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SECTION No: /02

Today's Guest Speaker

/02

Thank you to our Guest Speaker!



Niki Nguyen

Head of Talent
at
Conviction

Context: What Makes Early Hiring Different

- Companies often hiring before a brand exists
- Founders are first-time hiring managers
- Roles are undefined and evolving
- Every hire = company-defining

Biggest Early Challenge: Employer Branding

“No one knows who you are” at inception

Hiring is driven by:

- Founder storytelling
- Candidate experience
- Word-of-mouth

Every candidate interaction = your brand

Founders Must Learn to Recruit

Many Founders:

- Come from academia / labs
- Have never hired before

They need to learn:

- How to assess talent
- How to run processes
- How to sell candidates

Remember, hiring is a learned skill, not instinctive

Don't Define Roles in a Vacuum

Founders often start with rigid assumptions

Best approach:

- Talk to multiple candidate profiles
- Learn through live interactions

Role clarity emerges through conversations, not planning

First GTM Hire: What Actually Matters

What matters:

- Ability to operate in zero structure
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Strong ownership mindset

- Not logos or pedigree
- Not “perfect experience”

“Co-creator, not executor”

Hunter vs Farmer is Critical

Early hires must:

- Generate pipeline from scratch
- Create opportunities (not manage them)

Common mistake: Hiring “big company closers”

Early GTM = pure hunting

GTM Hiring ≠ Technical Hiring

Founders often apply engineering hiring logic

This fails for GTM roles. Why? GTM success depends on:

- Soft skills
- Adaptability
- Communication

You can't assess GTM like engineers

AI is Changing GTM Hiring

Traditional SaaS sales models are breaking

New requirement: GTM talent must be technically fluent

Not engineers, but:

- Understand product deeply
- Explain use cases
- Guide implementation

“Tech-curious” is now mandatory

Rise of Technical GTM Roles

Growth of:

- Forward Deployed Engineers (FDEs)
- Technical sales / hybrid roles

Why? Customers don't know how to use AI yet, so Sales must:

- Educate
- Implement
- Advise

Sales is becoming product + consulting

Teams Are Getting Leaner

AI companies:

- Hire fewer people
- Expect broader scope

GTM roles now include:

- Sales + CSM + Solutions + Strategy

One great hire replaces multiple roles

Compensation is Rising

Drivers:

- Higher expectations per hire
- Scarcity of talent
- Increased scope

Fewer people → more valuable individuals

Hiring Market Reality

Talent market is:

- Competitive
- Non-linear
- Hard to benchmark

Challenges:

- Experience doesn't map cleanly
- Profiles are harder to evaluate

Pattern matching is breaking

Core Hiring Philosophy

Optimize for:

- Learning ability
- Adaptability
- Curiosity

Not:

- Perfect background
- Traditional experience paths

Final Takeaways

- Hire for ambiguity, not structure
- First GTM hires = company builders
- AI is reshaping what “sales” means
- Small, high-talent teams win
- Founders must learn to hire effectively