

Hiring in Challenging Situations

May 1st, 2025



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SECTION No: /01

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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.

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SECTION No: /02

Upcoming Events

/02

RN LUNCH & LEARN LUNCH & LEARN LUNCH & LEARN LUNCH & LEARN

WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY 12pm - 12.45pm EST

Lunch & Learn:
Hiring in APAC

Hosted by Rajalakshmi Venkatesh, People & Talent at HockeyStack

The Launch Collective

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THURSDAY 5TH JUNE 12pm - 1pm EST

An “Ask me Anything!” Session

With Michael Brown, VP Global Talent Acquisition at Snyk

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WEDNESDAY 18TH JUNE 12pm - 12.45pm EST

Lunch & Learn:
RecOps & GTM Talent Partnerships

Hosted by Jeremy Lyons, Co-Founder at RecOps Collective

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SECTION No: /03

Today's Guest Speaker

/03

Thank you to our Guest Speaker!



Christiana Molina Hart

GTM Talent Leader
at Hebbia

Connect with Christiana [here](#)!

Why did you want to make the move to an AI company? Is it as you expected?

- Initially didn't want to recruit in the AI space as felt it was too unpredictable and felt wouldn't allow her to offer the positive impact she prided herself on, to a candidate's career.
- Over time she realized that all the talent she was trying to recruit were all going to AI companies – and so had to accept that to have access to that talent, she needed to be in the same space.
- Hebbia had just raised Series B when a colleague reached out – Christiana has always centered her career around Series B companies so was a 'perfect storm' and couldn't say no!

Why did you want to make the move to an AI company? Is it as you expected?

- Has been the best thing she could have done for her career.
- Quickly realized its not the standard recruiting scenario – a lot more complexity due to being in a fast-paced changing space, with a lack of history.
- Feels like her brain has been on fire since joining! But truly feels it's been the best thing for her career and offering her growth and new experiences.

How different is it operating in an early-stage AI company?

- Recruiting in AI is a lot about speed, which contradicts the fundamentals of hiring at a Series B, where you need to be mindful as every hire is filling a gap. So have to be very careful about balancing this speed and planning / considerations.
- Its very hard to play a long game and wait for the right person in AI – always a push pull of speed versus quality. You have to review candidates and make the call re hiring people with gaps or leaving that position open which could put the company behind.
- This leads to constant evaluation – always gut check self. How do you make the right hire in a super competitive fast paced environment.

How do you manage a lack of process with being early-stage and the speed required in hiring?

- Align with the HM on the importance of process – ensure every candidate is having the same process and being assessed against the same criteria.
- With C-Suite, have flexibility. Get your Founder / CEO excited about hires.
- Christiana has a lot of process and accountability with her HMs but has this flexibility with the Founder. If she puts too much process in place with the Founder, it doesn't work. She puts herself in front of them as much as she can, whilst accommodating all the things he is trying to do and build.

How do you identify what top talent looks like in a new and competitive market?

- **Diversify your talent pool** – if only focus on one type of talent, you won't be able to hire at the speed required.
- Look for certain competencies and characteristics, rather than the actual work they did at a company during a growth period, as its different to how they would need to work in this new space (different tech, different buyers etc.)
- With her hiring teams, she has dissected three categories to go after and **assigned a percentage of pipeline to each profile type** to ensure the team is well split and not missing revenue opportunities.

How do you identify what top talent looks like and how do you attract them in a busy and competitive market?

- **Profile 1: Playbook candidates** – the seasoned, tenured GTM reps. Risk being they might be a bit more ‘set in their ways’.
- **Profile 2: Domain expertise** – for Christiana this is Financial Services and AI. Even if the only value a candidate is bringing is that they know everything about the customer, there is value in this immediate impact. Risk being they are experts in one area, not across the board.
- **Profile 3: Up and Coming** – ICCE criteria (Intelligence, Character, Coachability, Experience) – these will have the superpower to be successful once they are experienced and tenured. These should be the people to build your foundation for later.

How do you attract and close your candidates given its such a competitive space?

- Really lay on the table, the good, bad and ugly about the company – make sure the candidate knows everything from the outset.
- Eat The Frog – build trust with candidates. Ask the candidate what they want to evaluate to make sure they get full value from the call. Don't leave things to chance. Address their concerns.
- Keep your benchmark high – be honest, don't 'blag' to get a hire as it won't work out and only wastes time and money.
- Sit with your recruits 6 weeks into role and understand if there was a gap in their knowledge about the company. Was anything missed / misunderstood? Change your process to ensure this is included going forward.

How do you attract and close your candidates given its such a competitive space?

- Use the process to build trust and openness so by the time you get to offer stage, it should be a slam-dunk rather than not knowing if they'll accept.
- Almost anti-sell the role in terms of honesty. Transparency is key. Create a situation where candidates know everything – these become the best people you hire as they've made the decision for themselves rather than just take everything at face value.
- Only the paranoid survive!

How do you actually get a candidate to speak to you?

- How **differentiate yourself** when you are cold outbounding?
- Has a range of shorter messages versus longer messages that show proof of earnings for reps etc.
- **Constantly iterate** and balance what is working and keep improving.
- Use referrals.
- **To increase top of funnel, work with an agency** – they have access to different candidates in the market. When you need a high-volume top of funnel, do not shut off a channel to market. “It takes an army”.

Why are Playbook Reps from eg Datadog and Mongo not always the right fit for AI?

- AI is being purchased in a different way to how technology has been purchased before.
- Larger companies like Datadog, Mongo etc have built a playbook around how their market – but these are not the exact personas who buy AI.
- There is value in bringing these people on as they know how to build champions, how to qualify and how to close. However typically they will have worked alongside personas like an SE – where these personas don't typically exist in an AI company as less technical.