



Rule No. 22 — Hire slow, fire fast.

Why this Rule is important: Because, bad hires destroy culture and speed.

Rule Summary:

The strength of your team determines the strength of your business.

Hiring slow means committing to a disciplined process—one that prioritizes fit, capability, and character over speed or convenience. It means refusing to lower the bar just to fill a seat.

Firing fast means addressing misalignment or underperformance decisively before it corrodes culture, morale, or momentum. Tolerating the wrong hire too long is more costly than taking the time to hire the right one.

Right people, right roles, right now—or nothing.



Recommended Reading

Who by Geoff Smart & Randy Street

“Nothing will accelerate your success more than getting the right team in place. And nothing will derail it faster than keeping the wrong people too long.” — Geoff Smart

Key Executive Takeaway:

Your biggest competitive advantage isn't your product, your market, or your strategy—it's your people. Stop gambling on hiring and start treating it like your most important process. The wrong “who” costs years. The right “who” multiplies results.

Ask Yourself:

Am I keeping someone on the team right now who I already know doesn't belong here—and if so, what's stopping me from making the call?

Every executive knows people are the difference—but too many forget that how you hire and when you fire is just as critical as who you hire. Rushed hires to “just fill the seat” lead to long-term dysfunction. And once someone proves they're the wrong fit, hesitation only makes things worse. This rule demands discipline on the front end and courage on the back end. Great teams don't happen by accident—they're built through high standards, tough calls, and a willingness to protect the culture at all costs.

Action Step:

Before your next hire, create a one-page Hiring Scorecard that defines exactly what success looks like in the role—skills, cultural fit, and measurable outcomes. Share it with your leadership team and commit to not making an offer until a candidate meets the majority of those standards. This forces clarity and slows down impulse hiring.

Ideas:



Actionable Strategies

Hiring Slow (5 strategies)

1. Write the Role Scorecard Before the Job Description

Before posting a job, define the 3-5 measurable outcomes the role must deliver in the first 12 months. If success isn't clear, hiring the right person is impossible.

2. Require Multiple Perspectives in Interviews

Never let one leader make the hiring decision alone. Involve at least two additional team members to evaluate culture fit, competence, and communication style.

3. Conduct a Chronological Career Interview

Walk candidates through their entire career—from their first job forward. Patterns appear quickly when you ask what they were hired to do, what they achieved, and why they left.

4. Check References Like an Investigator, Not a Formality

Ask former managers direct questions:

- Would you enthusiastically hire them again?
- What environment do they succeed in—and fail in?

5. Slow Down the Final Decision

Institute a 24-hour rule before extending an offer. Excitement fades quickly when a candidate isn't the right fit. Discipline prevents emotional hiring.

Firing Fast (5 strategies)

6. Define a 90-Day Reality Check

Every new hire should have clear expectations for the first 90 days. If the role is already drifting off course, address it immediately rather than “waiting to see.”

7. Address Performance Issues Within 48 Hours

When a problem appears, discuss it right away. Delayed conversations allow poor habits to harden.

8. Watch How the Team Reacts

If top performers avoid working with someone, trust the signal. Culture deterioration often shows up in subtle ways first.

9. Use the “Would I Rehire Them?” Test

Ask yourself a simple question: Knowing what I know now, would I hire this person again today? If the answer is no, the decision is already made.

10. Protect the Team, Not the Individual

When someone clearly doesn't fit the role or culture, delaying action punishes the entire team. Leaders are responsible for the standard, not the comfort.