How Many Brilliant Engineers Did You Lose to a 6-Week Interview Process?

"Sorry, I've Already Accepted Another Offer"

You finally get the green light to hire a senior backend engineer. You source, screen, and interview—only to lose your top pick with an email that says:
"Really enjoyed meeting the team, but I've decided to go in another direction."

Translation: They were tired of waiting.

Welcome to the six-week interview funnel. It's thorough. It's thoughtful. It's safe.

 And it's scaring away your best candidates.
If you're wondering why your hiring pipeline is leaking top-tier talent, look no further than your calendar.

Let's talk about how bloated processes quietly sabotage your engineering org —and how to move fast without hiring recklessly.

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The Modern Engineering Candidate Is Not Waiting Around

Top engineers aren't applying to one job—they're entertaining 3–5 processes simultaneously. The best ones don't stay on the market longer than 2–3 weeks.

If your process looks like this:
- Week 1: Resume screen
- Week 2: Recruiter call
- Week 3: Hiring manager call
- Week 4: Technical screen
- Week 5: Virtual on-site (3+ hours)
- Week 6: Decision + offer + approval cycle

You're not hiring the best engineer. You're hiring the best available engineer who made it through your obstacle course.

The Hidden Cost of Slow Hiring

1. Top Candidates Drop Out Quietly

Most won't tell you why they're ghosting you. They'll say:
"Timing didn't work out."
"I went in a different direction."

The best ones don't stay on the market longer than 2–3 weeks.

"It just wasn't the right fit."
Translation: "Your process took too long, and someone else moved faster."

2. Your Team Loses Momentum

While the role remains open:
- Delivery teams stretch thin
- Tech debt grows
- Morale dips from overwork

The cost of not hiring is rarely factored into hiring decisions. It should be.

3. Slowness Signals Disorganization

A laggy hiring process says:
- "We don't know how to prioritize."
- "We're bureaucratic."
- "You'll wait forever for decisions here, too."

Your hiring speed reflects your company culture—whether you like it or not.

Why Interview Processes Become 6-Week Monsters

🚧 **"We want to be thorough."**
Understandable. But you're not launching a rocket—you're hiring a teammate.
More loops ≠ more insight. Often it's just duplicated effort.

🚧 **"We need alignment from all stakeholders."**
Translation: "We don't trust our own interviewers to make a decision."

🚧 **"Let's wait to finish interviewing the whole slate."**
If someone is an A+ candidate, stop interviewing the alphabet. Make the hire.

🚧 **"Our technical screen needs to be rigorous."**
So you built a 4-hour take-home test, a system design round, a live coding round, and a cross-functional panel.

You're not assessing engineering strength.
You're testing their patience.

What Fast, Effective Hiring Actually Looks Like

Let's be clear: moving fast isn't about being sloppy. It's about designing a process that's efficient, respectful, and still rigorous.

Here's how high-performing orgs do it:

✅ **1. Decide the Role, Not the Resume**

If you know what this person will build in Month 1, 3, and 12, you can design an interview loop that tests only what matters.

✅ **2. Condense the Funnel**

Move from six weeks to six days by:
- Booking all interviews back-to-back (1–2 day window)
- Giving immediate feedback and decisions
- Pre-scheduling offer approval with Finance/HR

Great candidates should get an offer within 5 business days of first contact.

✅ **3. Design Signal-Rich Interviews**

You don't need six rounds—you need three that actually tell you something:
- Technical depth (Can they build the systems you need?)
- Collaboration & communication (Will they thrive on this team?)
- Product intuition or domain interest (Do they care about what we're solving?)

That's it. Anything else is noise.

✅ **4. Eliminate Redundancy**

Audit your interview loop:
- Are two people asking the same questions?
- Are any rounds perfunctory or "because we've always done it"?
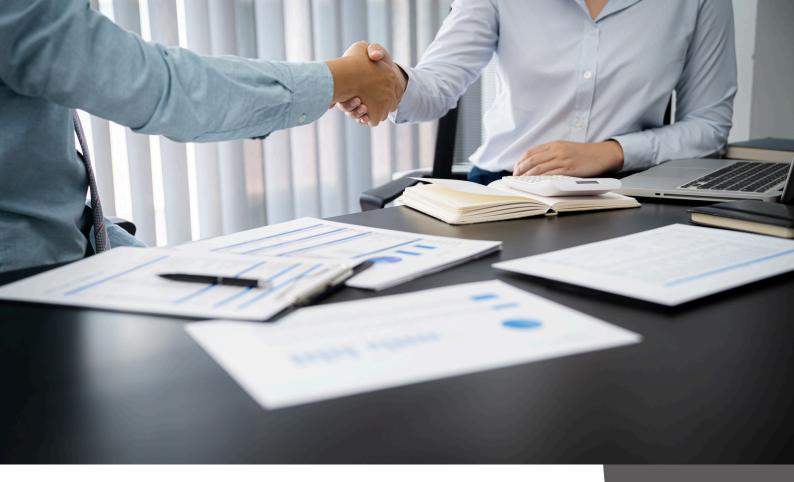- Can some evaluations be async or pre-read?

Simplify ruthlessly.

✅ **5. Create an Internal SLA for Decisions**

No more "we'll get back to you." Make it a rule:
- Interview completed = decision within 48 hours
- Offer extended = response deadline of 3–5 days

Deadlines force clarity. Clarity speeds hiring.

Real-World Wins from Faster Hiring

Startup A trimmed their interview process from 5 rounds over 3 weeks to 3 rounds in 5 business days.

Result? Acceptance rate jumped from 42% to 71%.

Scale-up B was losing senior engineers to FAANG offers. They started pre-selling the role and team during recruiter screens.

Result? They closed a senior backend hire in 9 days—and beat out a more well-known competitor.

Speed and excellence are not mutually exclusive.

Objection Handling for Hiring Teams

- **"But what if we make a bad hire?"**
Most hiring failures happen from lack of clarity, not lack of rounds. Better-designed interviews > more interviews.

- **"We want to be inclusive."**
Great. But respect candidates' time. Inclusion means accessibility and transparency—not bureaucracy.

- **"Our process needs to meet bar-raising standards."**
Rigor is great. Slow is not. Speed and excellence are not mutually exclusive.

The Best Engineers Are Saying No Before You Ever Say Yes

If your hiring process still takes 4–6 weeks to complete, here's the truth:

- You're not evaluating more effectively—you're just being outcompeted.
- You're burning time, trust, and market credibility.
- You're telling great engineers exactly what it's like to work with you: slow, indecisive, and overengineered.

Fix your process—and you'll fix your pipeline.

Ready to Build a High-Performing Engineering Team?

At Carson Harris Associates, we specialize in connecting companies with top-tier software engineering talent—fast. From backend architects and DevOps pros to product-focused full-stack engineers, we understand what it takes to deliver real business value, not just code.

If you're stuck chasing unicorns while your roadmap burns, it's time to change tack. I help teams hire real engineers—fast, skilled, and actually available. Let's talk before your competitors ship what you're still interviewing for.

Don't let perfectionism stall your progress. Partner with a firm that knows how to deliver.

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About Us

Carson Harris Associates was founded by Simon Carson in 2004 as an executive search firm specialising in UX/UI, software engineering and app development.

Simon has over 30 years of experience in the industry, having served previously as the Sales Director of US based, Management Search International. As Managing Director of Carson Harris, Simon oversees our business development and client relationship management, and is on hand to provide one to one guidance on all aspects of the hiring process.

Our delivery teams are based in London, Dublin, and Nairobi, and our consultants have hands-on experience in their specialist fields.

With collaboration always at the heart of what we do, our partner companies now range from startups to globally recognised brands.

At Carson Harris, we've got a proven track record of consistently securing desired outcomes for the companies we work with.

Generating CVs and portfolios is the easy part of recruitment. Understanding the talent behind them is where Carson Harris excels. We give our partners solutions rather than options.

Carson Harris Associates Ltd,
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Testimonials

“We've been using Carson Harris for over five years now, since our early startup days, and they've been an integral part of our journey. From the outset, they became our first choice for product and UX roles—two areas that are absolutely crucial to the success of our company. Their deep understanding of our needs and ability to deliver top-tier talent has been key to our team's growth”
Hemal Vaghela

“Carson Harris have been on our PSL for many years and always one of our first go to's for software devs and UX designers. They build proper relationships and the calibre of candidate they provide is always top notch. I've dealt with dozens of agencies over the years and Carson Harris will always be one of my favourites for the professionalism they provide as well as the relationships I've built with them. Could not recommend them more highly!”
Sarah Lamontagne

“ I have used Carson Harris for both perm and contract placements and wholeheartedly recommend them. I always feel incredibly well taken care of and like I am their number one priority. The quality and speed of the short-listing is unmatched and the way they understand how to pitch my company and to manage the candidate flow is great. No-nonsense, refreshingly honest recruiters.”
Adina Kuse