

FRICTION

SYSTEMIC The Slow-Yes Rule

The Experiment: The Slow-Yes Hiring Protocol

Duration: One uninterrupted hour plus a two-week experiment

Time required: 60 minutes upfront, 10 minutes per hiring decision during the experiment

Goal: Build the practice of hiring on evidence rather than instinct or urgency.

Step One: Identify the Load-Bearing Judgments (10 Minutes)

Choose one role you're hiring for now (or one you hire often). Write your answers plainly:

- What decisions will this person make when no one is watching?

- What mistakes would be expensive here—not embarrassing, but expensive?

- Under pressure, what behaviors do I need to see repeatedly?

Now write three judgment signals you want to hire for (e.g., “names trade-offs clearly,” “repairs quickly,” “makes decisions with incomplete information without becoming reckless”), and three failure signals you cannot afford (e.g., “blames and deflects,” “escalates conflict,” “needs constant reassurance”).

Step Two: Convert Judgment into a Structured Interview (20 Minutes)

Draft six questions tied directly to the signals you wrote:

- Three behavioral questions (“Tell me about a time when . . .”) that require specific examples

- Two scenario questions (“What would you do if . . .”) that mirror real constraints of your role

- One values question that reveals what they refuse to do, even when tempted

Create a simple 1–5 scorecard for each question, with one sentence describing what a “5” sounds like. Add a rule at the top: no 5s without a concrete example. (This step is the friction. Don’t skip it.)

Step Three: Add One Work Sample (15 Minutes)

Design a work sample that resembles real work in your environment, not idealized work.

- Give a messy inbox scenario and ask for prioritization
- Provide a short dataset and ask for a recommendation with trade-offs
- Offer a conflict scenario and ask for an action plan
- Ask them to critique a process and propose an improvement

Score it using only two criteria: *quality of thinking* and *clarity under constraint*.

Step Four: Install a Cooling-Off Rule (5 Minutes)

Choose one policy for your future self:

- No same-day offers
- A 24-hour pause after the final interview
- A required written debrief where someone must argue the “no” case

This is not bureaucracy. It’s a protection against urgency and relief.

Step Five: Run the Alternate-Universe Test (10 Minutes)

After you’ve scored the evidence, ask the question again:

- Would I work for them in an alternate universe?
- Would I trust their judgment with decisions that affect people?
- Would I want my team learning their habits?

If your answer changes when you look at the evidence, trust the evidence. If your answer stays uncertain, treat uncertainty as a design prompt: What evidence are you missing, and how will you get it?

Reflection prompt:

Where is your current hiring process optimized for speed, and where does that speed show up later as hidden labor? Name one friction you will add this week, and one habit you will stop rewarding.