

MSME OWNER'S PLAYBOOK · BONUS 01

6 Tips to Build a High-Performance Team

Hire on attitude, not just resume.

WORTH ₹499 — YOURS FREE

For every founder who's watched a "great resume" turn into six more months of doing the job yourself.



THE PROBLEM

You've Seen This Movie Before. So Has Every Friend You Have.

Ravi runs a 14-person packaging unit off Tumkur Road. Every evening before he leaves, he does one more round — checks if dispatch logged today's orders, if the accountant reconciled the cash, if the supervisor he hired three months ago has actually supervised anything.

He hired that supervisor for good reason: five years at a bigger company, spoke well in the interview, negotiated fairly on salary. Ninety days later, Ravi's still doing the round himself.

Sound familiar? You've watched this exact scene play out with people you know — the friend whose "experienced" sales head never picks up the phone after 6pm, the cousin whose "qualified" plant manager still calls him for every third decision.

We keep hiring the same way, and keep landing in the same ditch. Not because good people don't exist. Because we're testing for the wrong thing, in the same 40-minute conversation, every single time.

This booklet is not another lecture on "hiring right." It's the filter Ravi didn't have — and the one most MSME owners are missing.



WHY THIS HAPPENS — AND WHO'S REALLY RESPONSIBLE

It's Not Your Team's Fault. It's the Filter You Never Built.

Here's the uncomfortable part first: this isn't on your new hire. It's on the process that let them through — and that process has always had one owner. You.

Not as a guilt trip. As a fact you can actually act on. Three honest reasons this keeps happening in businesses like yours:

You're interviewing between fires. Thirty minutes, one conversation, no second read — because there's a client call right after.

You're reading credentials, not behaviour. A big-name previous employer tells you where someone worked. It tells you nothing about how they behave when nobody's watching.

You're deciding under pressure, not clarity. When a seat's been empty six weeks, you stop testing candidates and start settling for the first one who shows up on time.

None of this makes you a bad boss. It makes you a normal MSME owner who's never had the bandwidth to build a proper filter. That's the one thing about this problem you're actually in control of — starting today.



ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Let's Actually Get to the Root of It

Don't diagnose your team on a gut feeling. Run the "5 Whys" — the same simple drill-down a proper consultant would use — on your own hiring problem. Here's what it looks like on Ravi's exact situation:

THE SYMPTOM	"My new hire isn't performing the way I expected."
	! Why?
WHY #1	They wait to be told what to do instead of taking initiative.
	! Why?
WHY #2	Nothing in the interview tested how they behave without instructions.
	! Why?
WHY #3	We only scored technical skill and past experience during hiring.
	! Why?
THE ROOT	There's no structured way to filter for attitude before someone's on payroll — so we're hiring for capability, and only discovering character six months too late.

Try this on your own last disappointing hire. You'll almost never land on "bad luck" as the root. You'll land on a gap in the process — which, unlike luck, you can actually fix.



LIKELY SOLUTIONS — AND WHAT EACH ONE ACTUALLY GETS YOU

Four Ways Owners Try to Fix This

A

Poach Senior Talent

What you get: Someone already proven elsewhere, up to speed faster.

What it costs you: A premium salary, an ego to manage, and real risk they don't survive your informal, founder-led setup — expensive attrition is common.

B

Outsource or Use Freelancers

What you get: Speed, flexibility, no long-term headcount commitment.

What it costs you: No institutional memory, no one who'll fight for outcomes they don't own — fine for defined tasks, risky for judgment calls.

C

Promote From Within

What you get: Someone who already knows your business, cheaper, loyal.

What it costs you: Time to train them properly — and the classic trap of promoting your best doer into a management role they were never built for.

D

Hire for Attitude, Train the Skill

What you get: A wider talent pool, lower salary expectations, and people who stick because you invested in them early.

What it costs you: 60-90 days of patience while they climb the skill curve — and a real onboarding checklist, even a simple one.

THE RIGHT DEFAULT FOR MOST MSME ROLES



THE RECOMMENDED PATH — STEP BY STEP

Six Things to Do, Starting With Your Next Interview

01 Ask for three stories, not three achievements

A mistake and what they did next. A time they acted outside their job description. A time they disagreed with a manager. The words they use — "I decided" versus "it wasn't really my call" — tell you more than any resume line.

02 Write the outcome before you write the job post

One sentence: what this role must deliver in 90 days. "Cut dispatch time to under 48 hours" beats "manage warehouse operations" every time.

03 Trade the annual review for a 15-minute Friday habit

What moved, what's stuck, what do you need from me. Feedback that arrives once a year isn't feedback — it's an autopsy.

04 Delegate the authority, not just the task

Task + authority to decide how + a fixed check-in date. Miss any one of the three and you'll be back doing it yourself within a month.

05 Put one number where everyone can see it

If three people on your team can't tell you what winning looks like this quarter, that's the actual problem — not their attitude.

06 Build a backup for every role that would hurt if it walked out

One other person who could run 60% of it starting tomorrow. Non-negotiable for anything business-critical.



HOW TO AVOID THIS GOING FORWARD

Make It a Habit, Not a Hope

A fixed filter beats a good memory. Build these four rules into how you hire from now on — not just for the next role, for every role after it.

- **Never hire off one conversation.** Even a second 20-minute call, on a different day, in a different mood, catches what the first one missed.
- **Call two references yourself.** Not HR, not a form email — you, asking "what's one thing I should know before this person joins?"
- **Run a 90-day fit check, not a performance review.** The question isn't "are they good at the job" — it's "were we right about who they are."
- **Put one attitude question in every job post.** "Tell us about a time you decided something on your own and it backfired." If they can't answer it, that's your answer.

None of this needs a bigger budget or an HR team. It needs you to run the same four checks, every single time — long after this booklet is back on the shelf.



THE SIMPLEWORKS FRAMEWORK

The T.E.A.M. Filter

A one-page tool to build — and keep — a high-performance team.

T

Target the Outcome

Before you hire, train, or delegate, name the one measurable outcome the role or task must deliver. No outcome, no clarity.

E

Evidence Over Pedigree

Score every hiring and promotion decision on demonstrated attitude — using real stories, not resumes or titles.

A

Authority With Accountability

Every delegation transfers decision-making authority alongside the task, plus a fixed check-in date. Never one without the other.

M

Measurement Made Visible

Put the one number that matters where the whole team can see it, and revisit it on a fixed weekly rhythm — not once a year.

Run this filter on every hiring decision, every delegation, and every performance conversation this quarter. It won't make hiring risk-free. It will make it a lot less random.



ABOUT SIMPLEWORKS

One Consultant. Four Connected Disciplines.

Simpleworks Consulting is a boutique advisory practice built for Indian MSME owners — founded by **Prem Menon**, drawing on 39 years across Consumer Durables, Tyres, Telecom, and IT/SaaS. The philosophy is simple: strip away complexity, and give founders tools sophisticated enough to work — and simple enough to run without a large team.

Every Simpleworks engagement draws on four connected practice areas, because strategy, go-to-market, execution, and measurement are rarely separate problems in a real business.

01 Business Strategy

The smallest set of choices that makes every later decision easier — where to play, and how to win.

02 Go-to-Market

Turning the strategic choice into revenue — the right segment, message, channel, and price, working as one coherent system.

03 Execution Enablement

The operating rhythm — meetings, decisions, ownership — that converts intent into outcome.

04 OKRs

The feedback loop that tells you honestly whether the strategy is working, and holds the system accountable.

Four lenses on the same question: how does your business get from where it is, to where you've decided it should be?



LET'S TALK

You've Seen the Problem. Let's Fix It Before It Costs You Another Quarter.

If this booklet described your Tuesday, that's usually the first sign it's worth a real conversation — not another framework to read alone at 11pm.

Reach out. No pitch, no jargon — just a straight conversation about your team, your growth, or whatever's keeping you up tonight.

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