

# The Right Way to Grow

10 Proven Steps for  
Growing Your Team.



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# Introduction:

## People are the heart of your business

If you're struggling to grow your business, chances are it's not just a marketing or sales problem—it's a people problem. Growth depends on having the right team in place, but finding and keeping great employees is one of the biggest challenges business owners face. Constant turnover drains your time, energy, and profits. And without a strong team, it's nearly impossible to scale.

That's why we created The Right Way to Grow, a proven process to help you hire and retain, so you can focus on growing your business, not just running it. This process is built into our software and can help you bring in the right people, keep them around, and take your business to new heights.

The steps of the proven process are: **Culture, Hire, Retain, and Grow**. We think of this as a journey, where every step is interconnected, and you can't accomplish one without the other. To help you follow this proven process, we've compiled 10 of our best strategies for building culture, running a great hiring process, and retaining your employees. The result? You're no longer focused on running your business, you're experiencing new levels of **growth**.





# Culture:

## Culture is not a sign hanging on the wall

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When people look for a job, they're not just chasing a paycheck. In fact, **77% of job seekers** check out a company's culture before they even apply by visiting the company's website, social media pages, and careers page. And **research shows** that employees who feel connected to their organization's culture are nearly **six times more likely to recommend their workplace to others**.

Before you can attract and retain the right people, you have to build the kind of workplace they want to be part of. That starts with a strong foundation: your mission, vision, and values.

These aren't just buzzwords—they're the compass that guides how your team operates, makes decisions, and treats each other. When your culture is clear and consistently lived out, it becomes a powerful tool for alignment, motivation, and engagement. In short, culture sets the tone for everything else.





# 01

## Culture starts with core values.

To build your culture, start with your core values. These should be what you really value. It's not aspirational; it's who you are every day when you come to work. It's what you do and say. And it's how you treat others—externally and (especially) internally.

Core values should be incorporated into everything you do, not posted on your website and forgotten about. You can include core values in job descriptions and on your [careers page](#), to attract like-minded job seekers. From there, core values can help guide the interview and evaluation process, setting the framework for scorecards and down the line, performance reviews and employee recognition. For example, at CareerPlug, we have a dedicated meeting on Fridays for employee shout-outs, where team members recognize each other's great work and tie it back to one of our core values.



**Check out the CareerPlug blog** to learn more about defining your core values and how they can guide not just your hiring process—but the way you run your business.

# 02

## Answer the question: "Why would I want to work for you?"

Job seekers are asking themselves, *"What's it really like to work here?"* And if you don't clearly answer that question, they'll fill in the blanks or move on to an employer who does. That's where your **mission** and **vision** come in.

Your **mission** is your "why"—the reason your business exists beyond just making a profit. Your **vision** is where you're headed. Together, they create a powerful narrative that helps potential employees decide if they can see themselves as part of your journey.

Use this to craft your internal [employer brand](#) elevator pitch. What makes your workplace different? Why do people love working for you? Come up with 3-4 specific reasons that tie back to your mission, vision, and values. Maybe it's your team-first culture, growth opportunities, or your impact on the community. Whatever it is, say it proudly and consistently.



**Pro Tip:** Highlight your mission and values everywhere you talk to candidates like on your career page, in job postings, and during interviews. When you communicate what you stand for, you'll attract people who genuinely want to be part of your team and your long-term mission.



# Hire:

## Finding and selecting the right candidates

Hiring isn't just about filling a role—it's about setting your business up for long-term success. To do that, you need a process that consistently attracts quality candidates, evaluates them effectively, and moves quickly to make the right hire before someone else does. That's why we break it down into key steps: **Attract, Schedule, Evaluate.**

Each step helps you focus on what matters most: finding people who not only have the skills, but the drive and culture fit to thrive on your team. Here's how to make each part of your hiring process more strategic and impactful.





# 03

## Know who you need.

Hiring the right person starts with knowing who you're looking for. That's where an [Ideal Candidate Profile](#) comes in. It helps you go beyond a basic list of skills and define the kind of person who will thrive in the role.

Think about *why* you're hiring for this position in the first place. What's the key function of the job? What are the most important responsibilities? What qualifications actually matter? And if you could only pick **one superpower** this person has, what would it be?

This will make it easier to [write a job description](#) that **attracts** high-quality candidates, plus it will help you in the evaluation process since you'll know what matters most. Effective job descriptions also serve as gatekeepers to keep the wrong types of candidates from applying to your jobs too.



**Pro Tip:** Once you've nailed down your ideal candidate, let CareerPlug's **AI-powered job descriptions** do the heavy lifting—turning your must-haves into engaging, optimized job postings that attract who you're looking for.

# 04

## First network, then job boards.

Before you go all-in on job boards, start with what's already in front of you: **your network**. Employee referrals are some of the best ways to connect with great candidates. In fact, referrals are **11x more likely** to become hires than applicants from job boards. And depending on your industry, your next hire might even be one of your customers.

Here are a few ways to tap into your network for quality candidates:

- **[Employee referral programs](#):** Incentivize your team to recommend great people. Offer bonuses, gift cards, or extra PTO for successful hires.
- **Your customers:** If you run a service-based business like a restaurant, gym, or salon, your best new hire might already love your brand. Post job flyers, mention open roles in your email newsletters, or add a hiring link to receipts.
- **Industry connections:** Reach out to vendors, suppliers, or other business owners in your community. They may know someone looking for the right opportunity.

Social media: Leverage your business's social media pages and local Facebook or LinkedIn groups to spread the word. A simple post from a happy employee can go a long.



**Pro Tip:** Make it easy for your network to share your jobs! With CareerPlug, you can generate **QR codes** to post on flyers or business cards, so potential candidates can apply on the spot. You can also share jobs with a single click to social media, making it effortless to reach a wider audience.

# 05

## It's better to be first than best.

Speed matters. It takes most employers about 5 days to contact candidates for the first time. By then, a lot of the best candidates have already moved on. If you want to land top talent, aim to **make the hire within five days**. This means contacting candidates quickly and **scheduling** interviews right away.



**Pro Tip:** With CareerPlug, you can automate the process to **connect with candidates within 24 hours**. Set your key hiring criteria, and **Autopilot Fast Track** will instantly invite top applicants to **schedule their first interview** without any back-and-forth emails. Automated interview scheduling can **reduce your time to schedule by up to 91%**!

CareerPlug client and Culligan franchisee, William Bocast uses pre-screen questions to quickly identify who he wants to interview. He shares that prior to using CareerPlug, he would have to sort through stacks of resumes:



*Sorting through applicants is incredibly time-consuming and you put it off because it's overwhelming to start. CareerPlug sorts it for you, so you know who to prioritize right off the bat. Narrowing it down in the beginning makes it less daunting.*

**William Bocast**  
CareerPlug client and Culligan franchisee





06

Evaluate for the Big 3:  
Ability, Motivation, Culture Fit.

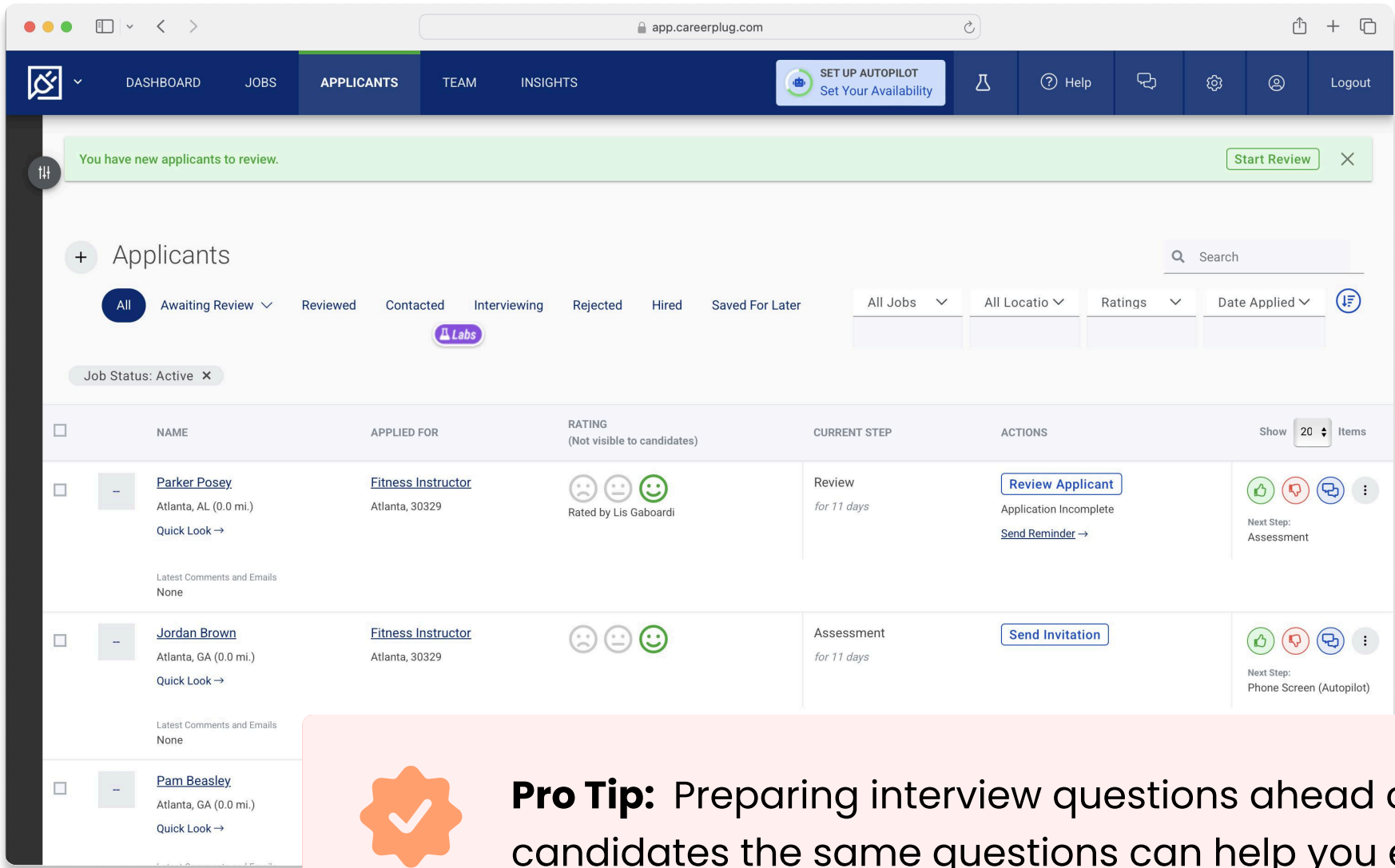
Three things matter most when evaluating candidates:

1. Can they do it? (Ability)
2. Will they do it? (Motivation)
3. Will others do it with them? (Culture fit)

For ability, don't just look at past experience. Someone might not have done the job before, but that doesn't mean they can't do it. And sometimes soft skills matter just as much as hard skills. Use tools like personality and cognitive assessments, role-specific interview questions, and even job simulations.

For motivation, it can be helpful to walk through a candidate's past experiences and future goals. You can learn a lot about someone by listening to their story.

Culture fit is the trickiest. Your team will work with this person every day, so get them involved in the interview process. Tie your interview questions to your company's core values. For example, if collaboration is a key value, ask: "Can you share a time when you worked with a team to solve a challenge? How did you contribute?"



**Pro Tip:** Preparing interview questions ahead of time and asking all candidates the same questions can help you evaluate more fairly and effectively. Interview scorecards available in CareerPlug **standardize your evaluation methods**, to help you consistently compare strengths and weaknesses for candidates.

# Retain:

## Strategies for keeping your team around

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When your team members feel supported, challenged, and heard, they're more likely to stick around and contribute at a higher level. The 3 big components of retention are: **Onboard, Engage, and Thrive.**

A strong first impression during **onboarding**, meaningful **engagement** through feedback, and real opportunities for growth all work together to help employees feel valued—and stay longer. The ultimate retention strategy isn't just about keeping people; it's about helping them **thrive**.





# 07

## Retain from Day 1.

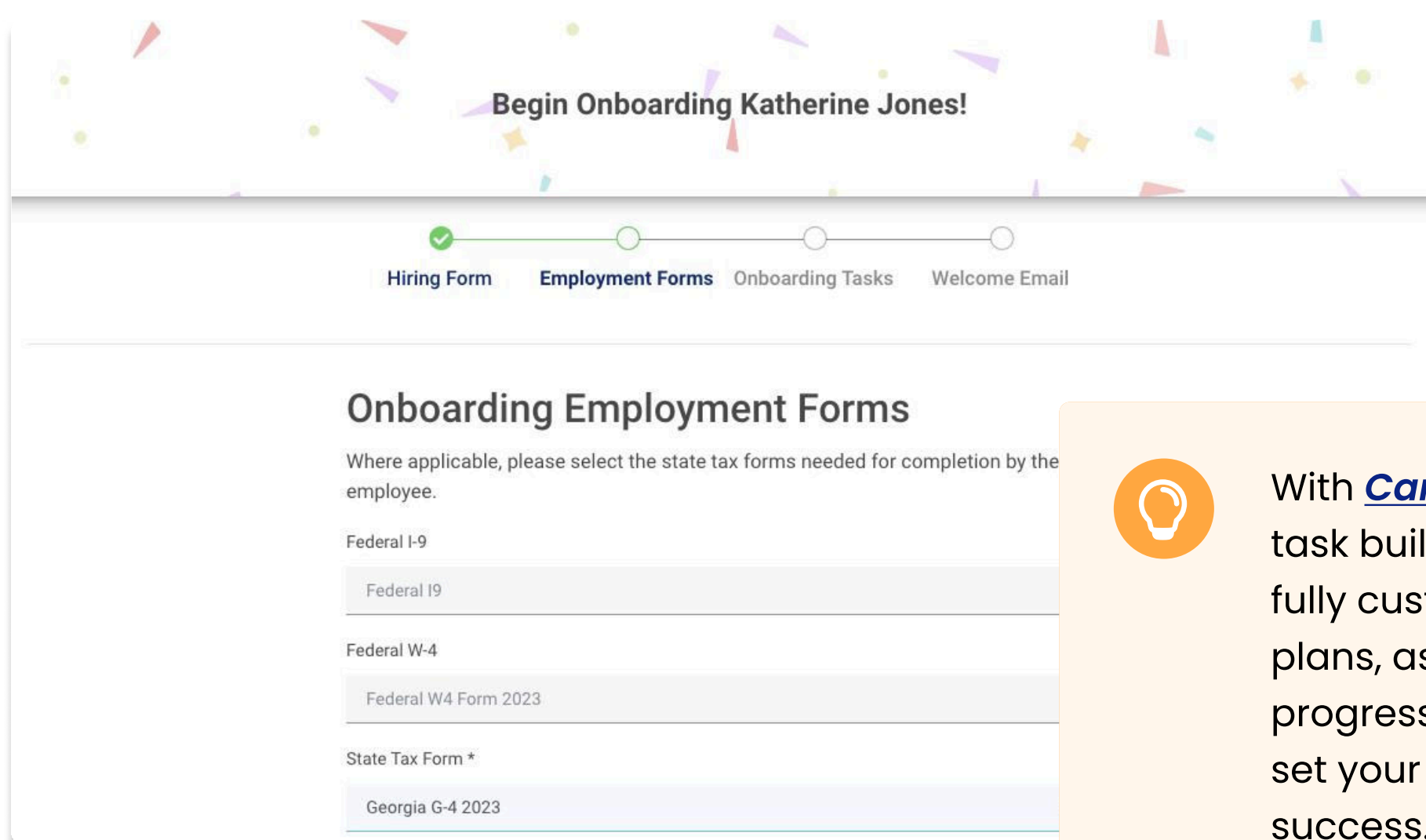
Retention starts with **onboarding**.

That first week? It's make-or-break. A great start can leave your new hire excited about joining your team, while a disorganized, underwhelming experience can send them right back to the job boards. Nearly **30% of new hires** quit within their first 90 days.

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Want to make a great first impression? Here's how:

- **Handle the paperwork digitally.** Let employees complete everything online so their first day isn't buried in forms. Ensure compliance by completing **new hire forms** like standard federal forms, state forms, direct deposit, and any company specific agreements.
- **Be ready before they walk in.** Have a checklist to ensure they have everything they need on day one.
- **Map out their first 90 days.** Set clear expectations so they know exactly what success looks like. Build values into every step that you can. Focus on connecting your new hire to your culture and mission and set learning goals as milestones.



Begin Onboarding Katherine Jones!

Hiring Form Employment Forms Onboarding Tasks Welcome Email

### Onboarding Employment Forms

Where applicable, please select the state tax forms needed for completion by the employee.

Federal I-9

Federal I9

Federal W-4

Federal W4 Form 2023

State Tax Form \*

Georgia G-4 2023



With **CareerPlug's Onboard** task builder, you can create fully customized onboarding plans, assign tasks, and track progress, making it easy to set your new hires up for success. Reminders and alerts ensure that nothing slips through the cracks.

# 08

## Make connections for your new hire—to your team and company.

Getting a new hire up to speed is about knowing the job, of course. But it's also important to help them get to know your company and team. If they don't feel connected to their manager or your company's mission, they'll struggle to settle in and inevitably check out. It's up to you to help make those connections for your new hire.

A strong manager-employee relationship is key. Make sure their manager isn't just meeting them on day one but actively welcoming them. A simple one-on-one lunch, a casual coffee chat, or even a check-in can go a long way in making a new hire feel supported. And don't forget the rest of the team! Facilitate introductions, set up team lunches, pair them with a buddy, anything to help them feel like part of the group. Dedicate time to share more about your company's history and culture. This sets a strong foundation for your employee to be **engaged** with your company and their team from day one.

Setting clear expectations in the first 90 days can set your new hire up for success and longterm engagement. One way to do this is through a "**Working With Me**" document or an **expectations interview**.

- A "**Working With Me**" document is a simple template employees fill out to share their work style, communication preferences, and how they like to receive feedback. This helps both managers and teammates understand how to collaborate effectively.
- An **expectations interview** is a quick, structured conversation where you discuss work habits, performance goals, and team dynamics. This allows both you and the new hire to align on expectations early and avoid misunderstandings.



**Pro Tip:** [Pro tip: Download our free "Working with Me" template](#) for new hires. Give them the opportunity to tell you about their workplace preferences and working style, so you know how to keep them **engaged** and motivated.



## 09

## Retain from Day 1.

In his popular book, [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#), Stephen Covey introduces the idea of an emotional bank account. By doing things that build trust, you “make deposits” into someone’s account and build a stronger relationship.

Deposits and withdrawals happen on both an individual and company level. You cannot expect to have healthy individual balances unless your company culture is in a healthy place. Company changes like laying off or firing employees can be significant withdrawals, even for employees who are not directly affected.

[Recognizing employees](#) for their hard work with shout-outs, bonuses, thank you notes or other rewards can be a great way to make positive relationship deposits. Another way you can build trust with your employees is to ask them for feedback—and act on it.

Regular check-ins are great for this, but tools like engagement surveys or [pulse surveys](#) can help you gather ongoing feedback and spot issues before they turn into bigger problems. When employees feel heard (and see real changes based on what they say), you’re making deposits that build long-term trust.

When you make your employees feel valued and heard, you’re not just giving them a place to work, you’re supporting their long term growth so that they can **thrive**.

## 10

## Learn from experience and let employees leave on a good note.

Even with a [strong retention strategy](#), you will inevitably have employees move on. Each time an employee leaves, it’s an opportunity to learn.

A **structured offboarding** can help you wrap things up the right way. During this time, you can assign any logistical tasks to employees and managers, and ask your employee for feedback around their tenure. This can help you identify improvement areas and help the employee leave on a positive note. This is good for your employer brand and even keeps the door open for boomerang hiring if the employee should want to return some day.



**Pro Tip:** Offboarding checklists available in CareerPlug have customizable tasks and an offboarding survey for departing employees to complete. This information can be used company-wide to prevent future turnover.

# Grow:

## Grow Your Team, Grow Your Business

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**Growth** is the final phase and the ultimate goal of the whole proven process. It's the result of building a culture-driven team that's aligned, engaged, and empowered to do great work. When all of these elements work together, they free you from getting bogged down in day-to-day tasks—so you can focus on big-picture strategies that actually drive growth.

Here's the truth: when you build a strong culture and retain great employees, hiring becomes a whole lot easier. You're not constantly backfilling roles due to turnover—you're hiring because your business is growing. And when your team is engaged and thriving, they naturally become your best recruiters. Referrals go up. The right candidates come to you.

That's the compounding power of a proven hiring and retention process. It builds stability, boosts productivity, and frees you up to focus on the big picture. At CareerPlug, we help you create that foundation—so your team can thrive and your business can scale.

This is the power of a proven hiring and retention process. At CareerPlug, we help you build that foundation, so your team can thrive and your **business can grow**.

**Sign up for a demo to learn more.**

