

Break the Barrier, Build the Benchmark

How the Bannister Effect Can Transform Your Hiring Strategy and Team Performance

In a world where teams aim for consistency, it's easy to settle into complacency. But what if your next hire could raise the bar – not just meet it?

At Kingston Human Capital, we help Government and business leaders use evidence-based hiring strategies to shift the performance curve. One of our most effective tools? *The Bannister Effect*.



What Is the Bannister Effect?

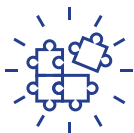
The Bannister Effect refers to the psychological phenomenon where once one person breaks a seemingly impossible barrier, others follow. Named after Roger Bannister, who broke the 4-minute mile in 1954, this effect has powerful implications for hiring and team performance.

From Athletics to the Office

Just weeks after Bannister's run, another athlete beat his time. The breakthrough wasn't just physical – it was mental. The belief barrier was shattered.

In teams, the same applies: when one person exceeds expectations, others begin to see higher performance as achievable – and follow suit.

How This Applies to Hiring



THE PROBLEM

Many hiring strategies aim for "fit" – but end up hiring for average. This maintains the status quo.



THE OPPORTUNITY

By setting clear, evidence-based performance benchmarks and hiring people who exceed them, you redefine what's possible for your whole team.



THE OUTCOME

- » Performance lift across the board
- » Stronger, more capable teams
- » Embedded culture of excellence.

How to Harness the Bannister Effect

Step 1: Map Your High Performers

- » Who is already exceeding expectations?
- » What skills, behaviours, and outputs define them?
- » What values and mindset do they bring?

Step 2: Define Meaningful Metrics

- » Identify 2-3 key performance indicators tied to role success
- » Focus on outcomes, not just activity (e.g. "invoices processed per day")

Step 3: Embed Metrics in Your Hiring Process

- » Use assessments or role previews to test for these capabilities
- » Involve top performers in interviews – they'll spot true potential!

Step 4: Attract the Right Talent

- » Write job ads that are outcome-focused
- » Highlight performance expectations and career growth
- » Speak directly to candidates who want to make an impact

Step 5: Ask the Right Questions

- » Use behavioural interview questions that probe for evidence of past performance.

~ See our companion resource:
"44 Strategic Interview Questions to Identify Game-Changing Talent"



Real Results: The Bannister Effect in Action

We partnered with a Government department to lift productivity in their accounts payable team. At baseline, only 17% of team members met the daily benchmark of processed invoices. Using the Bannister Effect strategy:

- » We benchmarked high performers on speed, accuracy, and interruption rates.
- » We only hired candidates who met or exceeded these benchmarks.
- » Over two years, as natural attrition occurred, the team transformed.

The Outcomes



74% of staff exceeded productivity targets

36% increase in overall output

19% lift in team engagement

 Reduced headcount with improved performance

This wasn't just better hiring – it was culture transformation.



Final Thought

The biggest limits your team faces might be the ones no one's challenged yet. By applying the Bannister Effect, you can reset what success looks like – and inspire your team to reach it.



Let's Raise the Bar, Together

Want to explore how Kingston Human Capital can help you use the Bannister Effect to drive performance?

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