



MOMENTUM
SEARCH AND SELECTION®

**DIGITAL, TECHNOLOGY & BUSINESS
TRANSFORMATION**

HIRING RISK IN AUSTRALIA

AN INDUSTRY INSIGHT WEBINAR

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INTRODUCTION



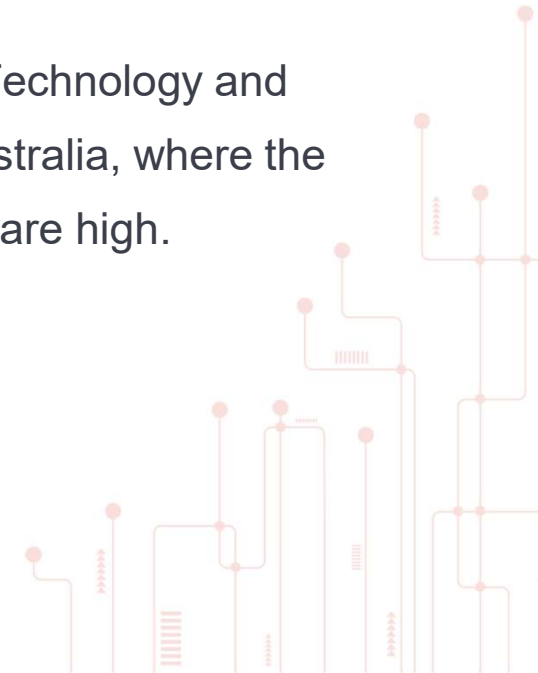
Alan Herrity

Director, Momentum Search & Selection

We work exclusively on senior Digital, Technology and Business Transformation roles across Australia, where the consequences of getting it wrong are high.

THIS SESSION IS:

- Recognising when a role presents an inherent hiring risk
- Why a small number of roles consume most of the pain
- Clearer judgement on what to resolve before going to market



THE PATTERN

Until recently, strong brands and competitive salaries were enough. What we're seeing now is different.

Even with urgency, funding and executive support, some roles fail to progress or appoint successfully

Approximately **10% of roles** generate the **majority of hiring friction**.

This reflects **structural complexity** rather than insufficient effort.



ARE YOU DEALING WITH A HEADACHE HIRE?

You're in a high-risk search when:



Executives define success differently



Requirements keep expanding



Role runs 12+ weeks without a finalist



Previous incumbent exited within 18 months



Mandate = "transformation" / "fix something"



Multiple recruiters giving same scarcity feedback

None of these alone is fatal. But when 2-3 show up together, the role behaves differently.

ARE YOU DEALING WITH A HEADACHE HIRE?

The roles that cause the most difficulties share the following structural characteristics:

Senior, confidential, niche or strategically critical

Ambiguous mandates by design

Enterprise accountability without clear authority

Scarcity of genuine ready-now experience

High personal and reputational risk for candidates



THE ROLES THAT CONSISTENTLY COMPROMISE HIRING PLANS



CIO, CDO, CTO, CISO Successor Roles

Board expectations have increased significantly, but internal succession pipelines haven't kept pace. Many candidates hold senior titles, but far fewer have genuine enterprise-wide accountability and board exposure to be successful.

Cyber Security Leadership (including Operational Technology / Industrial Control System)

On paper, the market looks healthy. Under scrutiny, the pool contracts quickly to those who have actually led comparable initiatives with C-suite and board reporting.

THE ROLES THAT CONSISTENTLY COMPROMISE HIRING PLANS



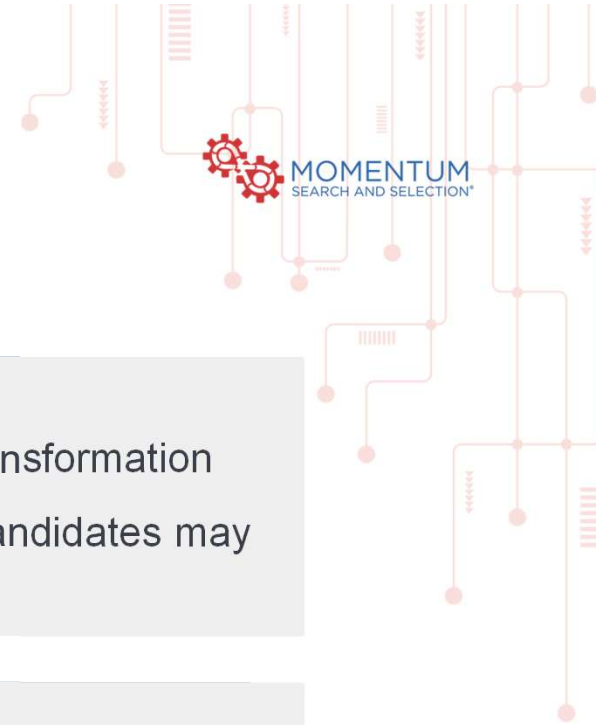
Program & PMO Directors (\$100M+ portfolios + Niche Programs of Work)

Some candidates have managed scale. Far fewer have managed complexity, sustained delivery pressure and political risk across the enterprise. Early role alignment is critical.

Transformation Directors (Benefits Realisation)

Boards want measurable outcomes. Many transformation leaders lack expertise in converting change into sustained operational performance and business benefits.

THE ROLES THAT CONSISTENTLY COMPROMISE HIRING PLANS



Enterprise Data Leadership

Initial market scans can return 80+ profiles. Once enterprise influence, transformation experience and accountability for outcomes are applied, fewer than ten candidates may be genuinely viable.

AI Leadership (High Level)

Roles are emerging faster than the market can produce leaders with proven, end-to-end experience. Driving business transformation with commercial acumen and deep AI expertise is rare.

The common threads: **enterprise accountability + complexity + scarcity**

WHY THE MARKET FEELS "TIGHT" IN SOME DOMAINS

Data is Key: This helps understand a tight market.

Outcome: You can use data to predict the difficulty of a search from the outset.

Job advertisement and LinkedIn searches return hundreds of profiles.

**When sector context, scale, risk exposure,
and stakeholder complexity are applied,
viable pools contract sharply.**



BELIEVING THAT “CLOSE ENOUGH” EXPERIENCE IS THE SAME AS BEING READY TO DELIVER



"Being close to the work is not the same as being accountable for the outcome." — Alan Herryty

- Proximity to complex work \neq ownership of outcomes
- Technical specialists promoted into enterprise accountability
- Program experience \neq readiness for scale + ambiguity + politics

That distinction usually only becomes visible **under pressure.**

SHORTENING TENURE & STRUCTURAL DEMAND



When senior leaders or executives leave within 12-18 months, it's often not instability, it's a mandate failure.

- The organization selected the wrong person for their senior leader/executive hire
- The mandate of the role was not fully understood
- The selected candidate was not given the ownership and accountability which they expected
- Regulatory initiatives driving sustained demand for delivery capability

SHORTENING TENURE & STRUCTURAL DEMAND

- Privacy Act reform increasing competition for data leadership
- High-profile cyber breaches elevating board expectations
- AI adoption creating entirely new leadership categories

Australia's small executive talent pool + geographic concentration + global competition

This is now baseline market reality.



SALARY: WHY IT'S OVERWEIGHTED

Salary attracts attention
but doesn't resolve ambiguity

In hard-to-hire roles, strong candidates assess:

- How clear is the role?
- Who really has authority?
- Is the organisation aligned?
- Can I succeed here?

Salary draws candidates in. **Clarity determines success.**

MIS-HIRES COST MOMENTUM, NOT JUST MONEY

The true cost of a mis-hire isn't the salary. It's:

- 12–18 months of lost organisational momentum
- Delayed delivery of critical transformation programs
- Erosion of Executive confidence in the role and function
- Additional recruitment cost
- Reputational risk for the organisation
- A more sceptical candidate market in subsequent recruitment campaigns

"Compensation attracts candidates. Conditions determine whether the hire succeeds." — Alan Herry



WHY SOME HIRING MODELS STRUGGLE

Some hiring models are built for volume, not scarcity. They assume roles are well-defined, comparable and repeatable.

In these roles, the mandate isn't fully agreed. Decision-making authority is blurred. Different stakeholders are hiring for slightly different outcomes.

- When friction shows up, the instinct is to push harder
- More recruiters. More candidates. Tighter timelines.
- Activity increases, but clarity doesn't

The difference isn't effort or intent. It's recognising when speed would compound the problem, and when a reset would create a better outcome



WHAT STRONG LEADERS DO DIFFERENTLY



Define success before going to market

Align Executives early

Accept market reality quickly

Protect the role from internal compromise

This is about a better process and alignment.

Ensure judgement is applied early, while there's still leverage to clarify mandate, authority, stakeholder alignment and what "good" actually looks like.



Q & A

QUESTIONS + DISCUSSION



We've pulled this thinking into a short report covering Digital, Technology and Business Transformation leadership. If that would be useful, I'm happy to share it.



THANK YOU

Replay will be shared after the session

"When a role feels harder than it should, it usually is. And there's often a reason for that which is visible earlier than we expect."

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