blink

By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

Running a fast-growing, world-respected consulting firm requires extreme focus on people. As CEO of Blink UX, one of my top priorities is being personally involved in hiring and growing the best User Experience professionals in the country.

As a consulting firm, the company *is* the people—quite literally. Our company is made up of brilliant and creative minds that work in close partnership with our clients every day. The glue that bonds these amazing people together is our culture. Creating a constructive culture where people can grow and thrive takes deliberate care, focus, and nurturing.

Hiring is the first step in creating a great work environment. At Blink, we take great care in our search to find people who will naturally fit into our culture and who will be healthy contributors. We also need people who are natural consultants, love to collaborate with clients and colleagues, and are self-motivated and self-managed. With these as our basic requirements, nurturing and individual growth then take everyone to the next level. (Jim Collins talks about "*The commitment plus freedom model requires a heavy up-front investment in selecting the right people*" in his article *"[The walls came tumbling down](#)."*)

So what does "personally involved" actually mean? I interview everyone.

Of course, there is a lot of resistance to this idea. People love to tell me, "That's not scalable for a CEO." "You can't continue to do that as you grow; you'll be a bottleneck and slow down growth." I always reply with a smile, "It's a priority. I'll make it happen."

To make sure that what I was committing to really is physically possible, I did some math. Even if we were to double in size in 2014, roughly 45 additional people, that would be one full week of interviews over the course of the year, which still leaves 51 weeks to get a lot of other things accomplished. Generally, my portion of the interview (I am last in a series of two to four

interviews) lasts anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the position – so you can reduce that down to about 20 hours. However, knowing we don't hire everyone that makes it through to me, I took it back up to about 30 hours of my interview time for us to double in size. You get the point. It's not nearly as daunting as people automatically think.

To carry on, even if the following year we doubled *again*, that would be 80 some hours of interviewing people with whom **the success of our company completely depends**.

Seems like a pretty good use of time to me. And actually, there is nothing I'd rather be doing than talking to 80 people about Blink's mission, vision, and values, and seeing if there is a natural fit for both of us to make a difference in the world.