

How to Hire & Manage a Pre-Vetted Land Operator

An 8-page playbook for land investors who want their first (or fifth) hire to actually move the business — without burning 3 placements first.

By: Nathaniel Brimlow, Founder & CEO, Vita Talent · Built from 120+ real placements inside land businesses.

1. Why "land operator" ≠ "virtual assistant"

Most VA agencies will sell you an admin who's never heard of a comp, a wholesale assignment, or a probate lead. They'll be polite. They'll be on time. They'll be useless inside your land business.

The difference between an admin and an operator is whether they can **replace you in the chair**. An admin handles tasks. An operator owns an outcome. For a land investor, that outcome is one of three things:

- **Lead intake** — picking up the phone, qualifying motivated sellers, booking the next call
- **Acquisition** — running live seller calls, negotiating, locking in contracts
- **Disposition** — moving signed contracts to cash buyers fast enough to actually close

Each of these is a real seat in your business. Each one fills a bottleneck that's currently you. The right hire is the one that takes the seat you're sitting in today.

2. The 5 roles every scaling land business needs — in order





Most founders hire in the wrong order. They get an admin first because it "feels safe," then six months later realize the admin can't generate revenue. Here's the order we recommend based on watching 120+ land businesses scale:

ORDER	ROLE	COST/MO	WHAT THEY FREE UP
1	Cold Caller / ISA	\$600–900	Your dialing chair. 80–150 dials/day, 5–10 qualified leads/week.
2	Lead Manager	\$800–1,200	Lead follow-up. Stops the leakage when warm leads die in your inbox.
3	Acquisitions Manager	\$1,200–1,800	Live seller calls + contract negotiation. The role that actually replaces you.
4	Dispositions Specialist	\$900–1,400	Moves contracts to cash buyers. Closes the loop.
5	Comping / Data Analyst	\$600–900	Pulls property data, builds offer comps, kills the math bottleneck.

Rule of thumb: Don't hire role 3 until role 1 is producing. Don't hire role 4 until role 3 is closing. The order matters more than the speed.

3. Where to hire from (and why country matters)

Country is the single biggest decision after role. Don't pick the cheapest country — pick the country that matches the role's demands.

REGION	BEST FOR	TIME ZONE	RATE
 Egypt	Acquisition managers, lead managers, marketing	6–9 hrs ahead of US	\$5–9/hr
 Latin America (Mexico, Colombia, Argentina)	Cold callers, ISAs, live US seller calls	US time zones	\$6–9/hr
 South Africa	Native-English sales pros, client-facing roles	6–7 hrs ahead of US	\$7–10/hr
 Philippines	Admin, operations, back office, bookkeeping	12–15 hrs ahead	\$4–7/hr

The #1 mistake: hiring a Filipino VA for live US cold calling. The Philippines is amazing for back office, awful for time-zone-aligned sales work. The right country for your role is more important than the cheapest country.

4. How to screen them (in 30 minutes or less)

Most people interview VAs the way they interview US hires — and miss the real signals. Here's the 3-part screen that actually predicts performance for land operators:

Test 1 — The Cold-Call Simulation (10 min)

Give them a role-play scenario:

"You're calling Mrs. Johnson. She inherited 5 acres in Madison County, TN from her late father in 2019. She lives in Atlanta. She's never visited the property. The property has \$3,200 in back taxes. Open the call and qualify her in 90 seconds."

What you're listening for: tone (warm but professional), structure (who-where-why, not interrogation), and recovery (do they freeze when you say "I'm not interested"?). The first 30 seconds tells you everything.

Test 2 — The Comping Exercise (10 min)

Give them an APN and ask them to come back with:

- 3 recent comparable sales within 5 miles
- Average \$/acre
- Suggested offer at 25–40% of value
- Three "red flag" questions to ask the seller before contracting

This separates the operators who think from the ones who Google.

Test 3 — The CRM Walk-Through (10 min)

Screen-share into their machine. Open REISift, Podio, or GoHighLevel. Ask them to walk you through how they'd:

- Filter a list of 5,000 leads down to today's call queue
- Log a call result and trigger the follow-up sequence
- Pull a "warm leads ready for AM" report

If they fumble the CRM in 10 minutes, they'll fumble it for the next 90 days.

5. First-30-Days onboarding checklist

The hire-to-fired window for an offshore operator is 30 days. If they're not producing by day 30, they're never going to. Here's the checklist that flips the odds:

Week 1: Foundation

- Day 1: Welcome video from you (5 min, on Loom — explain WHY the business exists)
- Day 1: Access to CRM, dialer, KPI dashboard
- Day 1: Daily standup time set (15 min, same time every day)
- Day 2: Read your top 3 SOPs (you have these written, right?)
- Day 3: Listen to 5 recordings of YOUR best calls
- Day 5: Make their first 10 dials with you shadowing
- Day 7: Solo dials with end-of-day review

Week 2: Pace

- Hit 80% of target dial count by day 10
- First call review (you grade 5 of their calls)
- Identify ONE skill gap to focus on for next 14 days

Week 3: Production

- Hit 100% of target dial count
- First qualified lead booked into your calendar
- Self-correcting on the most common objection

Week 4: Decision

- Are they consistently producing? Keep them.
- Are they 80% there? One more 30-day cycle.
- Below 80% with no upward trend? Use the replacement guarantee.

6. The 6 mistakes that kill VA hires

1. **Hiring without a written SOP.** Operators can't read your mind. If you can't write the process down, you can't delegate it.
2. **"Just figure it out" onboarding.** The first week is the highest-leverage time. Treat it like onboarding a key US hire, not a freelancer.

3. **Hiring an admin for an operator role.** An admin schedules. An operator closes. Different humans, different rates.
4. **No KPI tracking.** If you don't track dials/leads/contracts daily, you'll find out month 3 that they were never on pace.
5. **Replacing too late.** If they're not producing by day 21, replace. The cost of a bad hire compounds weekly.
6. **Country mismatch.** Cold calling US sellers from Manila at 3 AM their time — they'll quit in 60 days no matter how much you pay.

7. How to know it's working

The proof isn't "they're nice." The proof is one of three things, depending on the role:

- **Cold caller:** 5–10 qualified leads/week, consistently, by week 4
- **Acquisition manager:** 1+ signed contract by day 30, 2–3/month by day 60
- **Dispositions specialist:** Contracts moving to buyers in <7 days, no stuck inventory

Anything else — "they're learning," "they're improving" — is a polite way of saying you're paying for someone who isn't producing.

Want a shortcut?

If this playbook saved you 3 months of trial-and-error, imagine what a 20-minute call with Mo — our COO who's personally screened every operator at Vita Talent — could save you.

[Book My 20-Min Call →](#)

30-day replacement guaranteed · Pay only when you hire · No pitch, just a plan.