



3 tips for better interviews

...the employment interview can tell you more about an employee than any of the other employee selection tools

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And given that interviewing and hiring is one of the biggest risks a company faces, it's a good idea to get it right the first time!

Hiring the right people has never been easy; however, the process can be made simpler by building an effective interviewing process.

Your interview process reflects the value your company places on each candidate and, by extension, each employee. Therefore, making a good hire depends, in part, on having positive interview experiences with your preferred candidate/s.

Steps to a successful interview

Evidence suggests that the recruitment tool most likely to result in a successful placement outcome is conducting an effective interview. But, effective interviewing involves more than just asking the right questions.

1. Be prepared

Other than asking the right questions, you, as the interviewer need to be prepared in order to make a successful decision.

Know your organisation's goals

Firstly, know what your organisation wants. Effective interviewers don't simply show up and conduct an interview. They have a strategy that is aligned with their organisation's goals. From the strategic approach they can then employ tactics that meet those goals.

Know the candidate

Before the interview, decide what you need to find out about the candidate. This may include specific skills and experience, or perhaps there are personal qualities that will help them to fit in and achieve results in your organisation and/or role.

You should have a basic level of understanding about the candidate's experience and work history and consider what information you need to give the candidate to enable them decide if this is the right job.

Design your questions

Design 4 to 5 questions that target the experience or aptitudes that interest you most. Use open ended questions, rather than questions that can be answered with a 'no' or a 'yes' If you are not familiar with behavioural interview questioning, Dixon Appointments can provide guidance and training.

The interview is your best chance to find employees that will stick around!

2. Structure your interview

Structured interviews are generally more objective than the unstructured approach. Questions can be planned to ensure that the most important competencies are covered and it allows a more direct comparison of each candidate against the targeted competencies. Whereas unstructured interviews may rely on information gathered by intuition, personal preferences and stylistic differences among individual interviewers.

But structuring your interview is not only ensuring you ask every candidate the same set of interview questions, you need to consider the whole process. How will you ensure all interviewers are rating every interview consistently? What are the rules for how follow-up and probing questions can be used? What information will be provided to each candidate? And what are the common interviewing traps that interviewers need to be aware of (for example, beliefs about background types and their relationship to competencies can cause lack of objectivity).

A structured interview does not have to mean a dry interview; there is still plenty of room within a structured process for an interviewer to let their individual character shine through, as well as promote the character of your organisation.

3. Don't just ask questions

Pay attention to the candidate's tone, word choice and delivery. They can often tell you more of the message than the words. Watch body language too. See what the candidate is communicating at the non-verbal level. Process the words. Figure out what is being said. Also, figure out what is not being said.

Be a good listener

Let the candidate do the talking. During the interview it is important that you learn about the candidate and actively listen. As a guide, the candidate should do 75% of the talking.

Encourage the candidate to expand on their answers and give them time to think about their response. Keep the candidate focused on the question you have asked. Do not allow them to avoid the difficult ones, make sure your questions are answered fully before you move on.

Take notes! No one objects if you take notes and most people feel flattered that you are interested enough to record their comments. Always summarise the interview in writing so you can review your impressions later.

Keep control of the interview

An experienced interviewer controls and directs the interview. They don't get sidetracked by the candidate, they stick to their interview question plan.

Sell your organisation

Candidates come to an interview, in essence, to pitch their skills and their willingness to work with your organisation. As the employer, you have a similar mandate. You want to sell promising candidates on your company. They should walk away feeling intrigued by your challenges and encouraged by your past achievements.

But think carefully before making an offer 'on the spot'. You should take the time to reflect on the interview.

Consider how to communicate with the candidate

You must be able to communicate in a way the candidate can understand. Using internal or industry jargon may not be effective and/or effectively convey what you are trying to say.

By conducting a professional interview, communicating honestly, and basing hiring decisions on an honest evaluation of each candidate's capabilities, not only will you make great hires, but you'll enhance the status of your organisation.



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