

## How to Interview and Hire Effectively

Interviewing is used to determine if a candidate has the skill set to perform the essential duties to complete tasks that are related to your open position. Conducting a job interview must be a comprehensive exercise, clarifying both the technical abilities of a candidate as well as the harder to assess "soft skills", such as attitude, potential, flexibility and motivation. As an employer, you must remember that candidates come to an interview with the goal of giving you the answers they think you want to hear. As the interviewer, framing questions that do not reveal your preferred answers is more difficult than most people realize. With practice, you will begin to develop an effective interview style which can be carried over from interview to interview.

Take some time and really consider whether you want someone that is completely trained or someone who is completely trainable. Also, carefully consider what positions and candidates you need before you start conducting job interviews. While it is important to make quick hiring decisions, it is equally important to evaluate every candidate in a similar fashion to make the best possible choice for your company. Writing an accurate job description is essential, and accurately portraying the position to candidates is also legally important. Some important interviewing tips to remember include: be realistic, determine what skills are essential to the position before beginning the hiring process and be specific regarding the outcome.

Interviewing is not the only way to properly assess a candidate's personality, educational abilities and work habits. Use their resume to determine if the candidate is a good fit. As most know, resumes are generally written by a team of people. Individuals frequently solicit feedback from friends and family regarding their resume. While the resume is an assessment tool, also remember to look to the employment application and background check to confirm the information found on the resume.

The ideal interview process includes several interviews with the candidate, so that the candidate is thoroughly considered from all

perspectives. Each interview should encompass the following guidelines:

When conducting the interview, remember the setting and conditions for the interview are important. While the interviewer is appraising the candidate, the candidate is also appraising the company. Make sure to eliminate as many distractions as possible by using an office or conference room that is private.

- When scheduling the interview, allow sufficient time to complete the interview without having to cut it short. Informing the candidate of how the interview will be conducted ensures ease and a natural progression throughout the process.
- It is important that the interviewer be as prepared as the candidate. With the knowledge of the candidate's background, you will lead a more successful interview. Make sure you have reviewed general information before the interview so that interview time can be spent on more in-depth previous work topics that are relevant to the position.
- The interviewer should know ahead of time what topics need to be probed during the interview. Using pre-determined discussion topics can keep the interview on track and provides a level playing field on which to compare candidates.
- Also, sequencing topics will help the interview move smoothly. Questions should move from easy to difficult and from neutral to sensitive. This flow will allow the candidate to feel comfortable and allow them to speak candidly about previous experience, expectations and questions regarding the position.
- When interviewing, strive to observe all non-verbal behavior in addition to spoken answers. You might hear some negative information or responses to questions asked, it is best to downplay the negative points. Make a mental note and try not to show concern verbally or facially.

There are three fundamental interview styles. Each interview style can be an effective technique for gaining insight into an individual's qualifications and chances for success in a particular role. The first is a structured or directive style. This is effective when more than one person is interviewing a candidate. The interviewer refers to a prepared list of areas, subjects or even specific questions to be covered. The interviewer asks a specific set of job-related questions in a particular order while recording responses. The next interviewer will ask the same set of questions with a variation to then compare the answers to the other interviews responses. This technique is used to check consistency between the candidates' answers.

A patterned interview is led more with a free form approach. This interview style uses a series of general areas/topics within which the candidate is encouraged to talk freely and spontaneously. There should still be some structure to this style of interviewing. The interviewer should know ahead of time those areas they would like to cover in the interview.

The last is the unstructured or discussion style. There is no prepared set of questions and the conversation is lead haphazardly. This allows the candidate to lead the interview and speak on a number of different topics randomly. This style does not necessarily reveal the kind of information the interviewer needs to assess potential job performance.

During the interview process, there are many questioning techniques that can be used. The most common is the open ended question. This allows the candidate to expand on experience and past employment. Another popular question is the echo technique. After listening to a candidate's response, the interviewer will fire back with a follow-up question on the same topic. Some other common techniques are the twist, flip and closed question approach. Questioning techniques are used differently in each interview, or in accordance with an interviewer's style.

Besides personal interviews, a telephone interview can be a great way to start the interview process quickly. This technique can save time and money in the hiring process by screening numerous job candidates before a formal, personal interview. If the candidate is not

qualified on the telephone interview, a personal interview may not be necessary. A phone interview can show if the person is friendly, professional and on time. This gives the interviewer insight into the candidate before the personal interview. It is also a way to make the personal interview a more comfortable situation since there has already been a conversation between the interviewer and candidate before meeting.