

Guide to Effective Interviewing

Hiring the best person for the job is the most important thing that a manager does. When you have the right person in the right job, you have the best opportunity to be successful.

Key characteristics of an effective selection process:

1. Fair

- Free from bias
- Consistent
- Job related
- Similar questions to all candidates
- Objectively documented
- Notes retained
- Protected characteristics
 - sex
 - race
 - color
 - national origin
 - religion
 - age
 - disability
 - military status
 - ancestry
 - place of birth
 - ethnicity
 - sexual orientation
 - gender identity
 - marital status

2. Accessible

- All phases of the process must be accessible to qualified candidates with disabilities
 - A candidate could ask for an accommodation but you could also general describe where you are meeting and ask if they have any questions or needs.
 - If they have a need and you are not sure how to accommodate, please contact HR.

By the time the position is posted:

- Assemble a hiring committee
 - Please stress very strongly to the hiring committee **that every part of the process – before during and after must be kept confidential** and not discussed outside of the committee.
- You will first be considering internal applicants
- You may get requests for informational interviews
- Screen applications by comparing critical hiring competencies required against the person's skills and work experience
- Segment into categories
 - Yes – meets most or all standards
 - No – fails to meet
 - Maybe – meets some
- Consider meeting with all internal candidates as a courtesy – if this is too much you could contact by email and offer a follow up meeting if you are not going to consider them
- If dealing with external candidates, apply the same steps, but just contact the “no's via email or letter.
- Set up phone screening interview for the “yes” candidates (and maybe's as well if you choose)

Phone Screening

- Purpose is to disqualify candidates - *weed out the unqualified applicants so that you invest time with onsite interviewees who are your top candidates and most likely to get offers.*
- Ask enough questions to determine if the person is a viable candidate
- Should be short 15-20 minutes, no longer than 30

Set up & Etiquette:

- Schedule in advance just like a face to face interview
- Provide brief purpose and expected time frame before hand
 - E.g. *“The call will be 20-30 minutes with you and our hiring committee to get a sense of your interest and qualifications.”*
- Be clear on who calls who (usually employer calls, but not always)
- Have a quiet room reserved and make sure equipment is working
- For group interviews be sure to have each person introduce themselves and briefly say what they do.
- Keep small talk light, pleasant and brief
- Decide who will ask questions in advance of meeting
- It may be helpful to identify yourself if you are “jumping in” or asking a question for the first time (“Sally, this is Joe – I have a question...”)
- Give full attention (the person on the other end can hear keyboard typing and side talking!)

Prepare Questions:

- Familiarize yourself with the job description and core capabilities
- Decide what you're looking for in a successful candidate
- **Make a list of deal breakers** - Items that will immediately disqualify candidates who lack the basic requirements of the position.
- Develop a short list of questions that help determine the knowledge, skills and attitude you seek (more on that below).
- Prepare an interview worksheet with questions written in advance
- If desired, use a summary rating sheet for applicants (see example at end of this document)

Example of process:

1. Opening question "Please tell us why you applied for this position and what about your background makes you qualified...?"
2. If there are questions about resume gaps or need for clarification that are deal breakers – you could insert the questions here.
3. Ask 1-3 direct or behavioral question related to your deal breaker list (see questioning techniques below) "this position requires some weekends and nights, is that concern...?" or "this position requires a lot of creative problem solving; tell us about a time..."
4. What are your salary requirements? (optional – but can be a great weed out question –more below on how to handle)
5. What questions do you have for us?
 - If you decide not to ask salary requirements and compensation comes up – share the hiring minimum. There is a range associated with the band – and that is ok to share but note that this it is a broad banding used for many jobs. We price this based on external market analysis, and individual's qualifications and internal equity.
 - Ask "is that within your requirements?"
 - If they say "It's lower than I am making now – ask "How much of a difference is there"? If they don't offer a number try for general percentage.
 - It's best to find out early if there is a big gap – you don't want to waste their time or yours.
6. Thank the person, say what they can expect next, and end the call
7. Complete notes, summary rating sheet, and debrief with committee after call has ended (be sure the call is ended before discussing 😊)

Prior to the in Person Interview:

- Familiarize yourself with the job description and core capabilities
- Decide what you're looking for in a successful candidate
- Determine who should be involved in the interview
- Screen and familiarize yourself with the resumes and applications
 - Look at:
 - Work history
 - Length of previous employment
 - Reasons for leaving past positions
 - Contradictions
 - Time gaps in work history
 - Multiple, rapid job changes
- Prepare an interview worksheet with questions written in advance
- If desired, use a summary rating sheet for applicants
- Be clear with the candidate as to location, directions, time and who will be involved in the process – ask is there anything else that I can provide? (If someone need an accommodation they will likely say so, but this is a nice way to help the person address any additional needs)
- Provide appropriate surroundings that are private and will eliminate distractions and interruptions

During the Interview:

- Give expectations and provide general information
- Use open-ended questions and the funneling technique (Start broadly and gradually get more focused with your questions)
- Give the candidate time to respond
- Make all questions job-related
- Similar questions should be asked of all candidates
- Take notes focusing on the candidate's reported behavior; what he said, thought, felt, wanted to do and did. Do not document theories, conclusions or identifying information that could be interpreted as discriminatory.
- Do not acknowledge or encourage conversation that reveals personal conversation. Redirect the discussion to the interview questions.
 - This may be extra tricky with internal candidates since you may know them or their families – be courteous and friendly but don't engage personal information

Closing the Interview

- Summarize what has been covered
- Emphasize the candidate's most important qualifications for the position
- Ask the candidate if she would like to offer anything else concerning the qualifications.
- What questions do they have?
- If compensation comes up – share the hiring minimum. There is a range associated with the band – and that is ok to share but note that this it is a broad banding used for many jobs. We price this based on external market analysis, the individual's experience and skills and internal equity.
 - This is your opening to test the waters: (watch body language carefully here)
 - Ask – does this meet your salary requirements?
 - Or – what are your salary requirements?
 - If they say “It's lower than I am making now – ask “How much of a difference is there”? If they don't offer a number try for general percentage.
 - It's best to find out early if there is a big gap – you don't want to waste their time or yours.
- State generally when a hiring decision will be made
- If appropriate check by asking the candidate what she thinks about the position and his/her interest in the position

Questioning Techniques

Open Ended Questions

- Provide more information about the candidate
- Give examples of how well the candidate thinks through a question, organizes a response and uses verbal communication
- Gives you time to listen, to analyze the response and to prepare follow-up
- Examples: How? Why? Tell me about. What?

Behavior based Interviewing approach:

- Designed to have people tell you about their real experiences. It is difficult for people to make up situations they have not experienced.
- This gets beyond the “best self” that people bring to an interview
- Can be parsed into Situation Stories and Success Stories
- The key is to set the expectation that you are looking for answers beyond a self description. For example if someone says “I am a good problem solver” a behavioral question would be “please tell me about a specific time when you had a problem to solve at work – what was it and how did you do about solving it?” (follow up, follow up, follow up)
- Give them time to think (it’s okay to say “take your time...”) If they don’t answer it keep at it – rephrase the question.
- If they draw a blank, consider saying that’s okay – I’ll let you think about that and we will come back to it. (This is especially important if is a question that is really critical to the job).

Situation Stories

- This can be an account of any experience in which the candidate might have demonstrated what you are looking for. Shows problem-solving/decision-making skills
- Example: Tell me about one of the most difficult decisions you made and what happened as a result.
 - Look for what the candidate did and the process the candidate used.
 - Look at how successful the candidate was.
 - Look at the skills the candidate demonstrated in dealing with the situation.
- It also can be situation the might encounter here or even a role play:
- Example: A customer calls to complain about some wrong information she received and she is very upset. What would you do? (You could also role-play this)

Success Stories

- A success story is a situation story with a positive ending. It is the candidate's opportunity to tell you something that he did well.
- Examples: Give me an example of some recent work you did that was of very high quality. Tell me about a particularly difficult situation that you were successful in addressing.
 - Look for skills, personal characteristics, and motivation.

Some Examples of general experience based questions: (you can encourage more detail by saying things like "what happened", "tell me more", and "what was your reaction?")

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.

- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- How do you deal with conflict? Give me an example of a situation when you had to do so.
- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.

Test for contrary evidence:

- If you are getting a definite sense about someone – positive or negative, ask a question that give the person a chance to show otherwise
 - If a person seems to be indicating via her answers that she tends to work around procedures (and working within procedures is important) ask *“tell me about a time when you resolved a problem within the guidelines of established procedures – even when perhaps it might have been tempting to bypass...”*

Additional Questioning Approaches:

Ask for Outside Perspectives

- Ask the candidate how she thinks other people might view her.
- Examples: What might your current director tell me about the quality of your work? How would your best friend describe you?
 - Look for how the candidate describes himself/herself.

Ask Self-Evaluation Questions

- Ask a candidate to describe/evaluate/rate him/herself.
- Examples: How skilled are you in performing _? How would you rate your skills?
 - Look for supporting statements and relevant experiences.

Ask Preference Questions

- Likes and dislikes about previous jobs and experiences
 - Example: What do you like/dislike most about your current work responsibilities? Look for how well the candidate will “fit” with the job, team, college.
- Look for how well the candidate’s likes and dislikes match the requirements of the position.

INTERVIEW NOTES – RATING SHEET

Position _____ Name of Candidate _____

Name of Interviewer _____ Date _____

Please rate on the following factors as follows (1 = Low through 5 = High)

Rating Factor	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Skills and Knowledge						
• Technical skills						
• Communication skills						
• General knowledge						
Competencies						
• Teamwork						
• Problem solving						
• Communication						
• Real vs. Ideal expectations						
Experience						
Overall Evaluation						

Strong Candidate

Potential Call Back

Comments _____

Equal Employment Opportunity Interview Guidelines

Subject	Lawful *	Unlawful
Address	Applicant's place of residence.	Inquiry as to whether candidate owns home, rents rooms, or lives with relatives. Inquiry into duration of current or previous addresses.
Age	Are you over 18 years of age?	Inquiry about age or date of birth.
Arrest Record	Inquiry as to whether candidate was ever convicted of a crime.	Asking an interviewed candidate if he has ever been arrested.
Birth Date	None	Requirement that candidate submit birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record. Requirement that applicant produce proof of age in the form of a birth certificate or baptismal record.
Citizenship	Asking whether the candidate is a citizen of the U.S. If not a citizen of the U.S., does candidate intend to become one? If not a citizen of the U.S., has the candidate the legal right to remain permanently in the U.S.? Does the candidate intend to remain in the U.S.? Requirement that candidate state whether (s)he was ever interned or arrested as an enemy alien.	Asking candidate of what country (s)he is a citizen. Inquiry as to whether candidate is a naturalized or a native-born citizen; the date when candidate acquired citizenship. Requirement that candidate produce naturalization papers. Inquiry as to whether candidate's parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born citizens of the U.S., the date when parents or spouse acquired citizenship.
Children		Ages of children, plans to have children in the future, child care arrangements, capacity to reproduce, advocacy of any form of birth control or family planning.
Disability		Inquiry as to whether the individual is disabled. Inquiry about certain diseases for which candidate may have been treated.
Education	Inquiry into candidate's academic, vocational, or professional education and the public/private schools attended.	Inquiry about year of graduation from high school. Inquiry about the nationality, racial or religious affiliation of schools attended.
Experience	Inquiry into work experience.	
Gender, Sex	None	Inquiry as to sex. Inquiry as to how candidate wishes to be addressed; Mr./Mrs./Miss?/Ms.?

Equal Employment Opportunity Interview Guidelines

Subject	Lawful *	Unlawful
Language	Inquiry into languages candidate speaks and can't speak and write fluently.	Inquiry as to native languages. Inquiry into how candidate acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language.
Marital Status	None	Inquiry as to marital status, name or occupation of spouse.
Military Experience	Inquiry into candidate's military experience in the U.S. or in a State Militia or service in particular branch of U.S. service.	Inquiry into candidate's general military experience.
Name	Have you ever worked for the college under a different name? Is there any additional information relative to change of name, use of an assumed name or nickname necessary to enable a check on your work record?	Original name of applicant whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise, maiden name of a married person, or requiring prefix (i.e. Mrs.) to applicant's name. Spouse's name.
National Origin, Birthplace	None	Inquiry into candidate's lineage, ancestry, national origin, birthplace, descent, parentage, nationality, or native language. Inquiry regarding nationality or birthplace of candidate's parents or spouse.
Organizations	Inquiry into candidate's membership in organizations that (s)he considers relevant to ability to perform job.	Requesting candidate to list all clubs, societies, and lodges to which (s)he belongs.
Race or Color	None	Considering the complexion or color of the skin, hair or eyes; or any other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color.
Relatives	Names of candidate's relatives, other than a spouse already employed by college.	Names, addresses, ages, number or other information about candidate's spouse, children, or other relatives not employed by college.
Religion or Creed	None	Inquiry into candidate's religious denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor or religious holiday observed.

* Inquiries which would otherwise be deemed lawful, may, in certain circumstances, be deemed as evidence of unlawful discrimination when the inquiry seeks to elicit information about a selection criterion which is not job-related and which has a disproportionate burdensome effect upon the members of a minority group and cannot be justified by business necessity.