

Preparing to interview a candidate

When preparing to conduct an interview, whether face to face, virtually or via the telephone, use this checklist as a guide:

- Review fully the candidate's CV to establish any career issues, i.e. gaps in employment, number of roles they have had, what skills they have and what experience they have gained.
- Establish what training courses they have attended and qualifications they have that may be relevant.
- Introduce yourself and explain the process and what your expectations are and ask them for their expectations.
- Establish how many interviews they are going for currently.
- Prepare questions linked to their CV, i.e. why they left roles, what they are looking for in their career, what their salary aspirations are etc.
- Keep an open mind and do not be judgemental.
- Look at the candidate's LinkedIn profile and other professional social media.
- Determine what you need to learn from the interview to make a hiring decision.
- Establish criteria for evaluating candidates consistent
- Take notes or use a structured scorecard to document key points.
- Decide on the next steps post-interview (e.g., second-round interviews, decision timeline).
- Prepare to provide feedback to candidates, both successful and unsuccessful.

Questions you should and shouldn't be asking

Interviewers frequently fail to generate the information they need for effective selection of the right candidate for the role.

This is most often the case because many interviewers:

- Are under-prepared
- Talk too much
- Make premature decisions based on first impressions
- Do not take notes
- Have no structure behind their questions
- And without training, should not be interviewing in the first place

One in three HR Managers have serious concerns about the interviewing ability of their line managers.

- How effective are your managers at recruiting the best talent?
- Do they understand what they are looking for?
- Do they know what questions to ask and how best to ask them?
- Are they good ambassadors for your business?

These 4 questions are most popular with line managers with little interview training and serve little or no purpose:

- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Where do you want to be in five years' time?
- How would your colleagues or boss describe you?

Relentlessly Positive Recruitment

Research shows that such self-assessment is subject to strong leniency and self-serving bias.

Interviewers tend to ask one or two questions and then move on to another area of the candidate's experience.

Instead, they should focus on fewer areas but in much greater depth.

The follow-up interview technique involves probing the candidate's responses to uncover the essence of their experience:

- What do you find difficult about your current job?
- Please describe a specific incidence in which you were involved.
- What was your involvement?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?
- How did you feel about the outcome?
- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently in the future?