

Resourcing, Recruitment and Selection: Interview

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- Last week you learned how to:
- Advertise
- Prepare Application Forms
- Dealing with the Responses
- This week, is the interview...

Preparing for the Interview

- Now you have identified who you want to interview, the next step is how?
- The number of people involved in the interview process
- The number of people who you want to interview
- The size and culture of your organisation

Types of Interviews

- Telephone interviews
- Face to face interviews
- Panel interviews
- Serial interviews
- Self-selecting interviews
- Multi-group interviews

Telephone interviews

- Useful but never ever offer a job just by telephone interview. You should always meet face to face even if it is just for a short time
- Use discretion when telephoning their workplace, be prepared to call them at home and out of work hours
- The telephone offers a first insight to their politeness, confidence, communication skills, confirming basic facts
- At the end you can offer a face to face interview. If possible, talk about the salary to make expectations clear.

Face-to-face Interviews

- One interviewer and one interviewee
- Most traditional, most popular
- Easy to organise, fairly relaxed and informal
- You can build rapport more quickly with a candidate if it is just the two of you
- For experienced interviewers
- Disadvantage: you have no one to share your thoughts about the person
- Inevitably you will form a very personal and subjective view

Panel Interviews

- Two or more (maybe 20 or above) interviewers with each interviewee
- Each interviewer has a specific role from different departments
- Team approach
- Has advantages like broad range of strengths, more objective
- But has disadvantages like difficult to arrange, several diaries to be coordinated, lots of time is lost, key staff removed from positions, too many needless questions asked, candidate may feel daunted...
- Good preparation needed...

Serial Interviews

- Several one-to-one interviews in succession
- Someone with a specialist interest conducts each interview
- Can be in a single day or different days
- Good for shortlisting because candidates may drop out along the way
- You can include problem solving or role play stages
- Require a lot of planning
- If you sense a weakness, you can ask the next interviewer to probe this area

Self-selecting Interviews

- Unusual technique designed for demanding roles such as target driven sales positions.
- Invite the candidate to an open meeting and tell him/her about the role, dedication, long hours it requires
- Divide the meeting to 20 minute sessions with a different focus each
- Tell them they can leave any time they like if the job is not appropriate for them
- By the end, you have a manageable shortlist, invite those for a face to face interview and make your selection

Multi-group Interviews

- Two or more interviewers meet with two or more shortlisted candidates
- Rarely used but very effective particularly when gauging how candidates are likely to act as a part of a team.
- You should not ask personal or factual questions, you should address situational, hypothetical questions and note how they respond.
- Some will try to dominate, some may start arguing to make others look foolish, so observe carefully but you will need to interview them personally, as well.

Where to Interview?

- The right venue will put the candidate at ease and will ensure they perform their best.
- Office (formal)
- Meeting room (formal)
- Hotel room
- Hotel foyer (less formal)
- Restaurant (less formal)

Place

- What impression do you want to give?
- Discretion, confidentiality
- Make sure the sun is not shining in the candidate's eyes, fresh air in the room, warmth...
- Ensure you are not disturbed, interrupted by people or telephone
- Offer a drink, biscuits or sandwiches not a good idea as eating and talking is difficult
- Think about seating
- Make sure that both of you are sitting at the same height not to be intimidating

When to Interview

- Think about the candidate: Is he full time working? Sympathy needed
- Working parents: After they drop their children at school. Flexibility needed
- How many people are you interviewing in one day, with how many colleagues?
- Allow 45-90 minutes for each interview, you can have a brief discussion with colleagues in between
- Do not interview more than 4-5 people in one day

Who Should Interview?

- The nature of your organization
- For key positions, a team should interview
- Who will the new recruit report to?
- Which departments/teams will the recruit be working in?
- Are you an experienced interviewer? Should you ask for support?

Checklist

- Which type of interview do you plan to conduct?
- Do you need to conduct preliminary interviews over the telephone?
- Where will your interview take place?
- How will you arrange the room in which you interview the candidate?
- Have you made sure you will not be disturbed?
- Have you plenty of water and/or other refreshments available?

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- Will your interview location be formal or informal?
 - What time of day will you interview?
 - How many people will you interview?
 - Who will conduct the interviews? Just you? Your colleagues? Someone from other departments?

Starting the Interview

- So you have chosen an interview method, have invited shortlisted candidates, your colleagues are ready, the interview room is set up, candidates are arriving.
- First impressions count, so we need to start well...
- How to greet and relax candidates
- How to build rapport
- How to prepare for the interview

Greeting and Relaxing Candidates

- A candidate is likely to feel nervous on arrival
- Making people wait a long time is not pleasant, do not make them wait for a long time
- Have someone offer tea, water and some company literature handy
- Any forms, tests to be given? Travel expenses to be paid?
- When ready to interview, go meet the person yourself, invite to the room, introduce yourself, while walking to the room, fill the silence with some small talk

Building Rapport

- Start by outlining the structure of the interview
- You can refer to the number of applications you have received, number of candidates you will be interviewing
- You are giving the candidate an idea of how far they have come already and about what lies ahead.
- If the candidate is nervous, say something empathic
- The quicker the candidate relaxes, the more productive the interview will be

Being Prepared

- Beforehand remind yourself why you shortlisted this person
- Note your questions
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate
- Do not pore over her/his CV during the interview apart from towards the end to make sure you did not miss anything poor preparation will be obvious to the candidate and will make them think twice about working for you

Signs of Poor Preparation

- Asking questions already on the CV
- Reading through the CV to find questions to ask
- Long and embarrassing pauses between questions
- Asking unrelated questions, jumping from topic to topic
- Neglecting to ask important questions that might effect the candidates ability to do the job (such as disciplining students or staff if needed?)

Checklist

- Has the candidate been received politely?
- Do you know how to relax the candidate as you meet them for the first time?
- Could you engage the person in small talk while you walk to the Office?
- Are you any good at building rapport?
- Are you sufficiently prepared with appropriate questions?

Questioning Techniques

- So, the candidate is sitting in your office, you have his/her CV on your desk, you are about to start questioning...
- Do you know how to prepare questions?
- Do you know the different types of questions you might ask?
- How to keep questions up your sleeve?

Consider the Complete Application

- Looking at the CV, and the person specification, comparing, what information is missing?
- Gaps in career history? Overqualified?
- Skills and experiences you would like to know more about?
- Skills and experiences implied but not stated
- Skills and experiences required for the job but not stated on the CV
- Hobbies and interests – what does the person do outside of work?
- Education: why did he/she study this particular course?

Balancing Questions

- Listening is just as important as asking
- A good interview will flow logically, progressively
- Ensure that your questions are well balanced (i.e. Some short factual answers, some that will get the candidate to think and talk.)

Closed Questions

- These demand a one word answer or a very short response. Eg
- Can you speak Italian? No, I can't.
- In which month did you leave Morrison?
- How long is your notice period?
- Are you able to work evening and weekend shifts?
- You can use this sort of questioning for candidates who will not stop talking or who is giving vague answers.

Open Questions

- Strike a balance between closed and open questions
- Allow candidate to have their say
- Make sure you uncover the important facts
- Do not be afraid to ask questions
- Open questions are much broader, demand longer answers.
- Use these to invite a discussion and to get the candidate talking.
- Open questions reveal a lot more about a candidate than closed questions.

W words for Open Questions and Others

- What do you like about your current position?
- Why do you feel suited to this position?
- What do you hope to achieve by working here?
- Who do you go to for help and guidance?
- Tell me about some of the challenges you face in your present job.
- How do you handle stress?
- With open questions you will learn about the personality of the candidate...

Situational Questions

- When you outline a hypothetical situation and ask how the candidate would deal with it.
- Suppose you had two pieces of work to finish by midday, one for your immediate superior, and one for the Managing Director. It is clear you will not meet the deadline. Which would you do?
- You suspect that a colleague is stealing from the till. You know he/she has Money problems. How would you deal with this situation?
- Suppose the middle manager is manipulating for her own agenda and not for the good of the company. What would you do? Be cautious.

Leading Questions

- Ones that suggest or imply an answer. Not effective but can be used as a bait.
- If a member of your team were rude to a Customer, you would dismiss them on the spot?
- Yes, absolutely.
- You are not suggesting that qualifications are less important than experience. Are you sure?
- No, of course not.

Creating Stress

- Some interviewers like intimidating, being tough.
- Normally not recommended but there may be occasions when this is needed.
- Dealing with stress is a part of working life and is particularly important in some positions.
- How on earth do you manage to do your current job without spreadsheets skills?
- The aim is to see how the candidate reacts to being challenged, for example with customer complaints. Is he calm?

Probing Questions

- Used to obtain additional detail by delving deeper into a topic.
- They follow from open questions.
- Q (Open) Why do you want to work in the public system?
- Q (Probing) Don't you feel that your commercial skills are better suited to the private sector?
- A probing Q is sometimes tough but always fair.
- Should sound conversational and follow seamlessly from the prior Q.

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- If you take this care, you may get a more emotive response form the candidate, revealing more and the way they approach a given situation.
 - If you are not careful, probing Q's can sound intrusive and make people uncomfortable.

Q's to keep up your Sleeve

- If the interview dries up because you have misinterpreted the person from the CV or they misunderstood the nature of the vacancy, you may find yourself with a list of questions now irrelevant.
- Hence, have a reserve list that you can ask anybody.
- How would your current colleagues describe you?
- Where would you like to be in three years' time?
- describe your perfect working day

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- Describe a situation at work where you demonstrated your team skills.
 - What is your greatest weakness?
 - What would you most like to change in your current role?
 - How do you keep yourself motivated?
 - What give you most job satisfaction in your current role?

Talking too much

- Some interviewers (not interviewees) talk too much such as begin to tell about the organisation, the job itself...
- Your job is to learn about the interviewee.
- You can quickly summarise the details.
- Let the applicant convince you of their suitability for the role.
- There should always be a sensible balance.
- Allow applicant to talk but keep him or her on course by asking sensible Q's.

Checklist

- Are you fully prepared for the interview?
- Do you know what type of Q's you can ask?
- Have you thought about specific Q's to ask?
- Have you got spare Q's up your sleeve?
- Can you find Q's to get a quiet person to talk?
- Do you know how to create stress intentionally?
- Would you feel confident stopping a candidate from talking too much?

Interview Style

- Informal? Formal? Somber? Friendly? Stressful?
- So what is appropriate?

- How to structure your interviews
- About the different styles
- About the roles you and your colleagues can play during the interview

Informal or Unstructured Interviews

- In smaller organisations
- If you are interviewing alone
- Let the interview «Flow»
- You may be accustomed to think on your feet but be careful, there are pitfalls.
- They are hard to control and to keep a specific time limit
- You are likely to miss out something important
- You may come away from the interview not able to choose somebody

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- You may feel instinctively drawn to a particular candidate without having the factual evidence to Support your choice.
 - You are more likely to have long periods of silence in your interviews while you consider what to ask next.
 - But it can also work well in certain circumstances.
 - For example for a nervous candidate.
 - Is he always nervous or nervous just now?

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- If you can relax him, he may be worth considering.
 - You may refuse him in a formal interview.
 - Also useful for shortlisting.
 - If you have 20 or more candidates, giving them a 30 minute informal interview to reduce to 6 or 8.
 - Then having a second, formal interview..

Formal or Structured Interviews

- You treat all the interviewees in the same way
- You ask roughly the same questions, in the same order.

A Typical Interview Structure

- **Welcome:** Introduce the interviewers to the candidate. Break the ice with small talk.
- **Interview Outline:** Explain briefly the structure of the interview. How long? Any tests? Can the candidate ask questions at the end?
- **Question Exchange:** Start with a few open questions to get the person talking, also ask a few challenging questions
- **Information:** give a chance to the candidate to ask questions. During this, you understand how much the person knows about the organisation.

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- **Close:** explain the next stage. If invited for a second interview, when would this be? When do you plan to make a decision about the appointment?
 - Have pre-planned Q's.
 - There is less spontaneity and creativity here but you treat everyone equally.
 - This gives you an opportunity for objectivity in comparing.

Interview Roles

- If you interview with a colleague you may take different roles.
- **Good cop:** This is the nice guy. Greeting the candidate, putting them at their ease, small talk and during the interview will pick up the positive aspects of the application.
- **Bad cop:** To act in contrast with the good guy. Not a nasty person, just doing the job. Identifying the gaps, asking more difficult, challenging Q's, creating pressure and stress. If the candidate struggles, the good cop comes to help. The candidate will not be aware of this situation. In cultures where there is a lot of gossip and social pressure, not many people want to take this role.

Checklist

- Which is better for your organisation – formal or informal interviews?
- Have you considered and shared out the various roles for the interview?
- Which role will you be playing?

Observation

- Apart from the answers the candidate is telling you, there will be other nonverbal messages.
- **Observation of both spoken and silent language is vital...**
- Body Language and what it says about the candidate
- How to listen to what the candidate is saying to you
- How to control an interview
- How to bring an interview to a close

Nonverbal Communication

- Nonverbal communication refers to messages sent through human actions and behaviours rather than words.
- Facial expression, posture, voice, mannerism and dress are very important.
- The relative impact of each have been found to be:
- Verbal impact: 7%
- Vocal impact : 38 %
- Facial impact : 55 %

Signals You Subconsciously Give to the Candidate

- **Arms folded:** You come across as «closed». It implies that you are not really listening or interested.
- **Head tilted:** Implies distrust. If you do not look the candidate in the eye, the distrust is even more pronounced.
- **Crossed legs:** Implies defensiveness.
- **Clock watching and yawning:** not good at all. Avoid looking at your watch, do it discreetly
- **Reflection:** you might give the impression you are not focusing, thinking something else

Ideal Posture

- Sit up straight
- Lean forward to show attentiveness
- Make eye contact
- You may use hand gestures positively to illustrate what you are saying
- Keep arms and legs unfolded during the interview
- You should appear to be listening and attentive

Same Rules Apply for the Interviewee

- Watch what signals he/she is giving?
- Relaxed? Stressed? Fidgeting in the chair? Nail biting? This is nervous disposition. Can he handle pressure?
- Leaning right back in the chair? Relaxed. Confident? Is it appropriate for the interview?
- Arrogant?
- Looking away? Fiddling with their hands?

Listening Skills

- **Poor listening skills:**
- You talk too much
- Your mind wanders away
- You interrupt the interviewee
- You repeat the question in different words because you cannot remember the answer given

Good Listener

- Asks questions, paraphrases what is said
- Fights or avoids distractions, knows how to concentrate
- Challenges, anticipates, summarises, weighs the evidence, listens between the lines to tone of voice
- Nods, shows interest, give and take, positive feedback
- Does not judge until comprehension is complete
- Listens to central themes, works hard, exhibits body state, eye contact

Controlling an Interview

- No matter how well you prepare, you may come across candidates that throw you off course.
- **Know – all:** The candidate appears to know everything. There is nothing they really need to know. They may have suggestions for you.
- **Leaving the tracks:** This is the person who is unable to stay on course, drifting somewhere else. You must take recontrol.
- «We appear to be drifting off course. Can we return to your Customer service experience?» you can interrupt if need be. Ask closed Q's.

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- **Aggressor:** Doesn't happen often but there may be times you may get someone to argue with you or challenge you, accuse you of bias or discrimination. Don't rise to the bait. Remain cool and composed. Close the interview as soon as you can. Thank him and send a polite rejection letter.
 - **The interview psychologist:** He tries to find a hidden meaning in every Q. Gives a sly, understanding grin suggesting that he has spotted the hidden depth of what you are saying. They answer Q's in an unnecessary complicated way. If it is too much, bring the interview to an end.

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- **Who is interviewing who:** He answers your Q with another Q.
 - «Tell me about your experience managing a team»
 - «Why? Surely you aren't looking for a team leader for this role?»
 - Can be very hard to handle but they are rare.
 - Politely remind them you are controlling the interview.
 - If he continues this way, end the interview.

Recording the Details of the Interview

- Vital. Do not rely on your memory.
- If you don't have time to take notes during the interview, spend a few minutes after the interview.
- If you are a team of interviewers, one person can be responsible to take notes.
- Tape-recording is another way, with consent, permission.
- Once you reject the candidate, destroy the tape recording.

Closing an Interview

- Be polite and unhurried even if you are going to reject the person
- Remember they went through a considerable effort to submit a CV, so they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Allow time for them to ask you questions.
- If they are not asking questions and seem uninterested in the vacancy, ask them if they are still interested in the position.

Conclusion

- At the end of the interview:
- Tell the candidate how many people you intend to interview and how many you have interviewed so far.
- When you plan to conduct second interviews
- What notice period must the candidate give their current employer.
- Thank the candidate, shake their hand and escort them from the room or the building.

Spontaneous Offers

- It may be tempting to make an offer to an excellent interviewee.
- You may feel you need to «snap» them.
- In most cases, try to hold back. You need time to review.
- Sometimes however, you should follow your instinct.
- You should not risk losing an excellent candidate.
- You can make a provisional offer which can be retracted.

Checklist

- Is your posture appropriate? Are you listening attentively?
- What is the interviewee's body language telling you?
- How would you cope with a candidate «who knows it all»?
- How would you keep a digresser on track? An aggressor?
- How have you planned to record?
- Have you left time for the candidate to ask questions?
- How do you end an interview? Should you make a spontaneous offer?

Thank you

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