

## How to Conduct an Effective Interview

Conducting an effective interview as an interviewer takes skill. Being able to create the right tone and setting may seem straightforward, but when you add to that the ability to ask the right questions, at the right time, and maintain consistency with candidates being interviewed for the same role, this is no small task. Taking the time to get this right can make the difference between a successful hire or a poor experience for the candidate and wasted time for you.

Whether you are a seasoned interviewer or just starting out, here are our tips to help you stay on track and secure the top talent for your business.



### Preparation

Planning and preparation is often the most critical part of the interview process, and requires time and thought, prior to the interview itself. Whilst reading the CV might be an obvious part of planning for the interview, taking a moment to consider the timing, structure and, if anyone else is involved in the interview process, ensure they are fully informed.

Taking time to review the process and the points you intend to cover will ensure the session has focus, and delivers the right outcomes for both parties.

#### Before the interview, consider the following:



Understand the skills, behaviours and competencies required for the role, and the questions you'll need to ask to gather this information. Ideally, the questions should be based on the skills, experience and competencies required for the role, often derived from the role description and person specification



Read the CV thoroughly. Are there experiences/skills you'd like to know more about, projects the interviewee has been involved with, or are there any gaps/career breaks you'd like to explore



Consider how you are going to describe and sell the benefits of your business and role. You may wish to gather information, data or visuals to share. This is an opportunity for you to create continued interest for the candidate to pursue the role



At the outset of the interview, note the expected duration, structure and when might be appropriate for the candidate to ask questions. This will help you keep good running time so that you are able to explore all the useful content needed to progress to the next stage


# Establishing a Connection

## Building Rapport

Whether you're conducting the interview face-to-face, or virtually, it's important to put the interviewee at ease. Candidates need time to adjust to the interview environment, and the interviewer to control any distractions (which includes being interrupted). Simple pleasantries can be a good way of making someone feel at ease and relaxing the conversation. It also makes it far easier to start to ask questions.



## During the interview, it's worth being aware of:

 **Priorities are important in an interview.** Allowing the candidate to speak freely and the conversation to flow is important, but the skill to manage someone who overexplains is vital. Phrases such as "tell me more about", "could you expand on" and "let's explore" will help to go back to valid points and dig deeper



**Share information** about the position and the business (which helps to contextualise your questions), but leave plenty of time to question the candidate



**Guide the conversation**, taking into account prepared questions, and remember that interviewing is also about steering the conversation along productive channels



**Rephrasing questions**, if the interviewee doesn't answer completely the first time. Rewording a question into a rhetorical one gives the individual to think about a definite response. Open questions can help structure more expansive and detailed answers



**Non-verbal cues** can be significant, and body language and eye contact can play a key part in building rapport with someone, especially if the interview is virtual

# Concluding the Session

The final 10% of the interview is perhaps where the greatest amount of information per unit of time is generally exchanged. Part of the conclusion of an interview is to agree a plan of action, so we'd suggest being clear you'll do this before the meeting begins.

## A good plan of action includes:



A summary of the process – what the next steps are, when this is likely to be and when the candidate can expect to hear from you



A brief explanation of what's expected at the next stage interview (if applicable)



Ensuring that the candidate has had chance to ask any questions they have remaining, or to reiterate any experience they feel is particularly relevant to the role

# Follow Up

One of the biggest concerns we hear from candidates, is the lack of feedback, or even the outcome, of interviews they have attended. Whilst it's time-consuming, making notes for providing feedback afterwards is an important aspect of the interview, and a key part of your recruitment reputation.

- Highlight the positives - "I liked it when" and "you conveyed this well"
- Try to make feedback developmental
- Ensure feedback is given in relation to facts where possible, rather than subjective opinion

But it's not all about the candidate. Making adequate notes also gives time for reflection. When interviews take place across a number of days, the ability to compare candidates fairly, rather than selecting candidates whom you met more recently, makes detailed memory joggers even more valuable.

## Key Points to Remember:

- When you are ready to make an offer, include salary and the details of any additional benefits
- Follow this up in writing with an offer letter and contract in a timely manner. Many candidates won't resign from their current role until they have received this
- Be prepared for a counter-offer. Remember the candidate's motivators for moving and the benefits of joining your business
- Keep in touch until the start date. Provide a welcome pack, meet the team opportunities and a thorough induction plan

## Bonus Tip:

### How to Approach a Second-Choice Candidate if your First-Choice Declines

This is a conundrum that's certainly plagued even the most experienced manager. Following up with candidates, regardless of outcome, will certainly position you ahead of the game. And if you were genuinely lucky enough to be in the position where you'd take either candidate, you'll certainly want to secure your second choice if your first declines.

What's key to presenting an attractive offer, is making the candidate feel as important as your first choice. Positioning the offer correctly, with positive feedback, can be effective so they don't feel as though they are second best.

And if you're working with a recruiter, they can play a critical part in this process, by maintaining contact with the candidate, advising on changes in circumstances and being able to test the water to see how an offer would land.

## Inclusivity in Interviewing

All candidates are entitled to ask for reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process. This may include providing an application form in a different format, providing wheelchair access for an interview, or taking more time for a test.

Applicants may ask for reasonable adjustments, or you can ask them if reasonable adjustments may be needed.



**If you'd like support with interviews, or advice on how to structure an effective interview process, contact WE Talent today**