

HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW (from an employer's point of view)

Using the right interview techniques can help employers (and consultants) to identify a candidate who is not only technically competent, but just as importantly 'a good fit for the company culture'.

By asking the right questions throughout the interview process you will be able to assess each candidate and make a decision on the best person to put forward to a client, or for your organisation.

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR:

Before you interview candidates, undertake a skills set audit (from the Job Description) so you know exactly what qualifications a candidate needs.

You can then match these skill sets against the candidate's CV and filter applications accordingly.

UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS:

Thoroughly prepare and formulate specific questions relevant to each candidate in order to:

- Find out as much as possible about each candidate
- Find out if they are the best match for the job

START THE INTERVIEW ON THE RIGHT FOOT:

Start with an introduction (even if you have spoken to the candidate on the phone previously), and state your position in the company (if applicable) and, exchange your business card.

DECIDE WHICH QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES TO USE:

Competency-based questions are ideal to find out if the candidate has the necessary expertise. They involve asking questions to reveal a candidate's behaviour and go beyond their technical skills. Include questions such as:

- How did you approach this task?
- How did you overcome this difficulty?

You can also utilise the 'funneling' technique of asking questions. Start with a broad question, and then follow up with more specific questions. Remember to 'listen to the answers given' then ask a question to 'drill down' to reveal the candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

Ask 'open questions' that do not have a Yes or No answer.

The questions you should ask are about:

- Their skills and experience
- Their strength and weaknesses
- What they have been successful at in the past
- What they have enjoyed (or not) about previous roles
- What their salary expectations are
- When they are available to start

ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO OPEN UP:

Build rapport by asking easier questions first based on the CV. Confirm easy details such as contact numbers and qualifications or work history. Then, drill down to confirm competencies, strengths and weaknesses.

Remember that what you perceive as small talk will probably be interpreted by the candidate as part of the formal interview. You don't want them to think that they missed out on the job because they didn't give the right answer about something like, "Are you planning to have a baby this year?"

Why is this an issue? Because the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on a large number of grounds:

- Gender
- Religious belief
- Ethical belief
- Colour
- Race
- Disability
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Employment status
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Illness
- Pregnancy

If you ask a question about one of these topics, and the candidate does not get the job, you are vulnerable if they decide to challenge your decision.

GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT:

Sometimes you may feel that a candidate is 'over stating' their level of experience or competency. You may wish to ask questions to 'drill down' and to find the 'truth' such as 'what was the main objective of this project and how did you achieve this?'

DEMONSTRATE THE COMPANY CULTURE TO CANDIDATES:

Be aware that candidates are judging 'us' as much as we are judging them, therefore knowing your company benefits and being able to articulate them is crucial.

- Does your company have health benefits, duvet leave, and child care?
- Be honest about your experiences and introduce them to other members of the team.

DON'T HESITATE TO DISCUSS SALARY:

By discussing the topic of salary you may be able to better manage candidate's expectations, and reassure them that you can reach a mutual agreement.

- Remember that it is vital that you not commit to exact figures or extend any offers during these discussions.

MAKE THE MOST OF REFERENCE CHECKS:

If you are interested in a candidate after the first interview, begin reference checking before the next interview. This allows:

- Address specific concerns and tailor questions for the next interview.

Remember to ask referees open questions that require a bit of information.

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW PROPERLY:

Don't leave the candidate's wondering what is next. Outline the next steps and when they can expect to hear from you again.

HELIUM HR SERVICES SUPPORT TEAM CAN HELP:

Our Helium HR Support Team can help by:

- Conducting in-house interview training for line-managers

Using your Company's vision, values and core competencies we can also develop:

- Your company's Application of Employment
- Your company's Interview Forms
- Your company's Reference Checklist

Note: these forms will directly focus on those important values and core competencies, and can improve the chances of appointing productive and high performing staff.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE FOLLOWING HELIUM BROCHURES?

- HR SERVICES
- PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING
- PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING CAN ADD VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS