

Member's Quarterly

Fall 2021 Edition

Perspective

Honing Your Interviewing Skills

Go back to the basics

You've got ten positions to fill and no time to do it. You are tired, overworked and feel underappreciated. You run from one interview to the next without a break and all you have time to do is scan the job description and the candidate's resume and you're on again. It's a wonder you remember to breathe.

What kind of hiring decisions are you making under this kind of pressure? Can you do better? Do you want to do better? Naturally you do. You may not be able to slow down the frenetic staffing process, but you do control one aspect — the interview and how you carry that out. Take a few minutes and review some tips from interviewing experts.

What does it take to be a good interviewer? The basics are always the same: preparation, good listening skills and consistency.

Preparation is the Key

Some believe that preparing for the interview is just as important as the interview itself, and not just for the candidate. Go through the file, review the job description and the key competencies you are looking for. Doublecheck to ensure that the questions you are asking match the job. Use a mix of questions to ensure you can get a full 360-degree view of the candidate including how they react to certain real-life scenarios.

Review every job candidate's information before the interview begins. Get a sense of who they are and their background including their previous work experience. Make note of any details you want clarified before stepping into the interview.

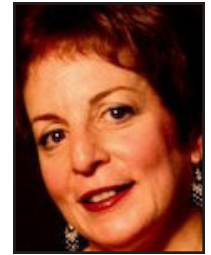
The Art of Listening

Perhaps the most important thing you can do during the interview is to listen. The best way to do that is by active listening. The candidate will reveal a lot of themselves during this process and if you are paying attention, you can gather a lot of information about them and their personality. You can improve your active listening skills by receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering and responding during the interview.

This would include paraphrasing or summarizing an initial response to show you understand and to allow for follow-up information to be provided by the candidate. You could also utilize a combination of open-ended questions and specific probing questions to get them to open up and use short verbal affirmations to encourage them to keep talking. Another important aspect of active listening is to show empathy and maybe even smile from time to time to make them feel comfortable.

Keep it Simple and Consistent

Consistency is the final leg of interviewing basics. Make sure you ask all the candidates the same core questions so you can score and compare later. Implement a standard rating system so that all candidates are judged by the same criteria. This not only ensures an elimination of bias or favouritism, but it also gives you a means to objectively judge each candidate using the same criteria. Whatever you do, don't make it up as you go along. That's a recipe for serious disaster.



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Instead, design and implement a simple interview system with good quality questions that help you first qualify and then grade candidates. Stick with the plan you set out from the beginning until the last interview is completed. Keep in mind that candidates are assessing you as much as you are assessing them. Treat them with respect, pay attention to what they have to say and answer their questions honestly. Just as you are choosing a person to come join your organization, they have to choose you too. Good luck with your interviewing and remember to breathe.

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