

A Recruiters Guide to Conducting Interviews, Insights and Techniques

What should a job interview consist of?

There is no right and wrong way to conduct interviews and every role will require a different technique. However, there are useful stages and techniques that every interview could apply to ensure an effective evaluation of candidates.

Types of interviews

Selecting the right interviewing style is highly important when trying to conduct an efficient interview process. In order to judge each candidate on an even playing field, make sure you choose one type of interview for all candidates.

The following interview types below can be used exclusively or combined depending on the needs of your business: |

- **Telephone Interviews:** Generally undertaken by a recruitment manager or a member of the HR team. The intention is usually to answer any *questions that were raised after reading an applicant's CV and it's a good way of covering many interviews over the course of a few hours*. For positions where a good phone manner is required, this is a key screening method.
- **Competency Interviews:** Conducted face-to-face, competency interviews are designed to discover whether the candidate has the ability and experience to do the job. You should look to ask candidates about situations when they have completed similar tasks. What were the big obstacles they overcame? What aspects of their past experience are they most proud of?
- **Behavioural Interviews:** For roles where candidates are unlikely to have previous experience, behavioural interviews are designed to predict if a candidate is suitable for the role. Hypothetical situations are used to put candidates on the spot so you can *judge their lateral thinking and how they may perform under pressure. This may be combined with psychometric tests to help with evaluation.*
- **Technical Interviews:** Sometimes the only way to find out if someone is going to be capable of doing the job is to let them actually do it. This could be anything from giving them a short test through to a trial work period. If you are testing multiple candidates, *ensure they all receive the same task so you can evaluate their comparative ability effectively.*
- **Panel Interview:** This is a method that is on its way out, although it's still favoured by companies who find it difficult to synchronize everyone involved in the hiring decision. Generally run over the course of a day, candidates are put in front of 4-5 people, often having to perform a presentation. *This can be highly intimidating for candidates and it's important to have one main facilitator of the interview so they can keep the process running smoothly.*
- **Group Interviews:** Another method that is becoming less common, but is still used in some circumstances to evaluate a lot of candidates at once. A group of candidates are set a task that will allow you to assess their different personalities, working styles, ability to lead and how they react to pressure. *This should be used as an additional evaluation method, rather than one that replaces a face-to-face interview.*

Who takes part in the interview again depends on the type of role that candidates are going for. A representative from the HR team should be there as well as the manager of the department that is hiring. You may also wish to bring in a

current employee who is doing a similar job as they will be in a very good position to work out if the candidate is capable of doing the job.

Conducting the interview

- Whatever type of interview you choose, you need to prepare effectively.
- Sort out a schedule with everyone who needs to be involved and stick to it as closely as possible.
 - If you're setting up a series of interviews across one day, look to allow at least half an hour between each so you can cope with any that overrun
- Summarise after each interview and make notes (it will be difficult to remember afterwards)
- Try and be as flexible as you can with candidates.
 - They will have other commitments as well and will often be trying to hide the fact that they're going for interviews from their current employer.
 - Try to give them at least three options to choose from.
- Make sure you book and have a quiet room in which to conduct your interview. Choose a room that best represents your company.

When your candidate arrives, try and get them to relax as an interview can be a nerve-racking experience and if they are nervous they may not perform to the best of their ability:

- Welcome the candidate, offer them something to drink and put them at ease with some general conversation.
- Introduce yourself and briefly explain what the interview will involve (and if appropriate time scales allotted to each area).
- Talk through an overview of your business and the role, why it has come about and what it will involve.
- A good starting point is to ask them to take you through their CV as it helps them feel comfortable talking about a familiar subject.
- Try to cover questions relating to the more important aspects of the role at the beginning. You don't want to near the end of the allocated time with lots of areas still unanswered.
- Make sure your questions are clear and well-phrased (and as jargon free as possible).
- Ask open-ended questions so that the candidate has the opportunity to express themselves.
- Help them to shine so that they are able to demonstrate their best knowledge and expertise.
- Ask them to sum up themselves ("The Elevator Speech") and why they want the job as this will then enable you to round off the interview with key points about them and their fit for your role.
- At the end of the interview, ask the candidate if they have any questions.
- Inform them of the next stage in the process e.g. second interviews and estimated timescales.
- Walk the candidate to the exit, thanking them for their time.
- Write up any notes you have taken as soon as possible. It's easy to forget who said what.

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From The Experts - Advice for the Interviewer

Fame Recruitment consultants want to share their top interview tips for the interviewer. As an interviewer, your role is to represent your company as well as to assess the candidate's suitability for the job.

It's A Two-Way Interview

It's important to remember that you're being interviewed too and the best people are always in short supply. The interview is a two-way process; you have to be the right company with the right position for the candidate as much as they have to be right for you. The candidate wants to understand the company culture, where they would fit in, how their role would contribute to the company vision/plan and how the job will help them to develop. *Overall they need to want to work for you.*

Ask For Detailed Examples

Interviewers should always ask for real life, detailed examples when questioning candidates about their experience and backgrounds. *All too often candidates will tell the interviewer what they want to hear.*

Secondary Questioning

A common trap interviewers fall into is asking the candidate good initial questions on a subject or area but failing to follow up with a secondary question. Most interviewees have prepared and anticipated a question so can give a solid answer. The follow-up "why" after the initial question enables you to get better insight into the candidate's thought process, how they communicate and how they are likely to behave in your organisation. *What is important is to understand the substance behind the answer.*

Eye Contact

It's important to maintain good eye contact throughout the interview. It gives the candidate the impression that *you are engaged* and confident and suggests that you may be better at managing relationships and people.

Be Honest

It is difficult to know what the short-term future holds let alone the long-term future. However, by being as open and honest with a candidate you will substantially reduce the risk of losing a "star candidate" to the classic "I was mis-sold the role" five or six months into the job. *A positive candidate experience will attract more "star candidates" and make your organisation a desirable place to work.*

Managing Expectations

It is essential a candidate knows when you will make a decision and what the next steps in the process will be so they can plan accordingly. If there is any deviation you need to keep them informed or you run the risk of missing out either because a candidate loses interest, faith in you or gets another offer.

For further guidance and information please visit www.famerecruitment.com Employers section for our guides on Competency Interview Questions and Assessing Skills and Qualities Worksheet

To discuss your hiring needs and how we can help you, please call us on **020 8209 1858**, email us at info@famerecruitment.com or Brief Us via www.famerecruitment.com

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Insightful Interview Questions

What can you tell about a candidate *from how they answer the questions?*

Any candidate familiar with the interview process will no doubt be well versed in answering the generic questions a hiring manager might ask them.

While a potential employee may appear perfect on paper and tick all the right skills boxes, employers need to make sure they're getting the full story before they commit to hiring.

The best way to gain an insight into what a candidate actually thinks and how they're likely to operate within a work environment is to ask them a couple of imaginative, behavioural interview questions.

It's Good To Talk

These aren't your typical, "how do you deal with stress, work as part of a team, or lead in a managerial role?" type questions, where the answers will come back at you as quickly as you ask them.

To get a proper insight into a candidate's character and work ethic and draw out the real person sitting across the table, it's often necessary to get rid of the formalities and pose your questions in a more conversational tone.

Why not ask a candidate to "tell me about the last time you were wrong in the workplace" or "what was the last piece of constructive criticism you received?" And, you'll learn even more by keeping them talking with supplementary questions such as "what happened next? How did the other person feel? What was the outcome? And so on.

Get The Right Insight

Here are three sample behavioural interview questions we've put together, which will provide you with insight into what makes your candidates tick:

- Describe a time when you knew you were right but were obliged to back-track due to guidelines or protocol.
- What was the most difficult work-based decision you had to make in the last year?
- Tell me about a time when you annoyed a customer or work colleague.

While such questions will no doubt prove challenging for even the most seasoned interviewee, they will, if asked sensitively, open an invaluable dialogue and provide you with an insight into a candidate's previous experiences and their attitudes towards work in general.

What can you tell about a candidate *from the questions they ask?*

Interview Insights and Techniques

It's usual to consider a job candidate's worth from the answers he or she gives you in response to your questions. But, here's a thought. What can you tell about their suitability from the questions they ask you?

An interview should be a two-way street, how much thought do you currently give to the questions coming back at you?

A candidate with no questions could really influence your estimation of their interest and ability to engage. Or, perhaps worse still would be a candidate who asks the wrong questions for example:

- "Questions? No, you've answered them already."
- "What does your company do?"
- "What's your company's website address?"
- "What's the holiday allowance?"
- "How often do you give salary increases?"
- "How much overtime would I have to work?"

When you next ask for the candidate's questions and queries, listen carefully.

The questions you hear can give you an in-depth knowledge of the true calibre of the candidate, if they have done research and if they are genuinely interested in becoming part of your team:

- "Knowing my qualifications and experience, do you have questions or concerns about my ability to perform the job?"
- "If I were to be the successful applicant, what are the top 3 priorities you would like to see me accomplish and how quickly?"
- "What does your company value most highly? How do you think my work could help further these values?"
- "Your company released a new product last month that hasn't received great press. What has the internal reaction been to this?"
- "How would you describe your corporate culture?"
- "Would you say from what you've seen so far that we would be a good fit for each other?"
- "How important is the function of this position to upper management?"
- "What is your company's plan for the next five years and how does my position fit?"
- "What provisions are there for ongoing training and further skills acquisition?"
- "What career progression within the organisation would you say this job entails?"
- "How will my performance be measured and by whom?"
- "When top performers leave, what are the main reasons given?"

Questions such as these emphasise that the candidate is taking as active a role as you in the job selection process. They demonstrate resourcefulness, motivation, intelligence, knowledge, qualifications and engagement. Above all, they show that they know how to make informed decisions, a sought-after skill for any job.

And as a final thought, do you actually know the answers to all these questions? Exploring the answers will give you a deeper understanding of your company and help you ensure the job candidates you choose from now on are an even better fit. *Why not reverse these questions and ask them of the candidate?*

For further guidance and information please visit www.famerecruitment.com Employers section for our guides on Competency Interview Questions and Assessing Skills and Qualities Worksheet

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