



Top interview tips for employers

We all understand the importance of having great people working for us. With a talented and motivated team on board, your business is far more likely to succeed. Good candidates know their worth - and they know when they are on the receiving end of poor treatment. To improve your chances of attracting the finest employees, we recommend that you consider your approach to interviews carefully and bear in mind the following:

Preparation is key

Before each candidate is due to arrive, take the time to read through their CV/application thoroughly, making relevant notes and preparing a number of well thought-out questions. Post interview, the candidate will be reassured that you were genuinely interested in them and consider any job offer more favourably.

The interview itself can take many forms, but regardless of who the candidate is going to meet within your organisation, it is worth remembering that their first port of call is your reception/ist who should already have a comprehensive list of the attendees and their appointment times, keeping them informed of any subsequent changes. Upon arrival, we recommend that any interviewee should be greeted by a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with the offer of a drink if

facilities allow. Furthermore, you should ensure that all colleagues are aware that interviews are taking place, the office is tidy, and that other staff are presentable and approachable. They should not, for example, be openly discussing sensitive business matters, other candidates, or HR issues within earshot of the interviewee.

For the meeting, it is important that you allow sufficient time in your diary to conduct this in full and, again, let colleagues know that you will be unavailable for the duration. If other associates are joining you, they should also observe all of the above. Ringing phones and other interruptions can be disrupting for everyone concerned and certainly do not allow the candidate the platform they deserve to present themselves in the best light.

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Every effort should be made to keep appointments for interviews as it is highly likely that the candidate will have booked themselves annual leave in order to attend. Cancelled meetings can be an emotional roller coaster for prospective candidates and, as this may well be their first experience of your company, it is important that you make it a positive one. If cancellation is unavoidable, we strongly recommend that you speak to the candidate personally and explain the reasons for this; emails and/or text messages are too impersonal and can be misinterpreted.

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Some key pointers to consider:

- **Show a genuine interest in the candidate** – not just in their career, but in their personal interests too. Read their CV prior to the interview and note down some business and non-business discussion points. A light conversation about a candidate's hobbies and interests at the beginning of an interview can really relax the candidate and help to reveal their true personality.
- **Be open and honest about any concerns** you may have. More often than not, candidates will appreciate your honesty and even welcome the platform to address the situation. Potentially, there are mitigating circumstances that could not be summarised adequately in writing, but the candidate may be able to verbalise them well enough to allay your fears.
- **Don't rely too heavily on generic Competency Based questions.** Whilst this is, without doubt, a useful tool, it is best used in conjunction with other, shall we say, more creative forms of questioning.
- Whilst notes are important (especially when interviewing a number of candidates), try to **avoid writing a full biography** as the candidate sits there in front of you. You can risk making them feel uncomfortable and possibly guarded with future responses. If detailed notes are essential, you could either draft in a colleague to assist, or make more comprehensive records, directly after the meeting has concluded.
- **Take the time to make sure that the applicant understands the interview process;** in particular when and how you will next be in touch. We recommend that the process itself is not too lengthy as you may also run the risk of candidates losing interest. More importantly, you may risk losing the best applicants, as they may well have other options/offers to consider.
- **Make contact with the candidate as soon as you can,** post interview, with your decision. If the applicant has been unsuccessful, make every effort to relay constructive feedback as to why and/or where they failed. This will reflect well on you as a company and help the candidate to address any issues where possible, going forward. Be wary of citing issues that were clearly identified in the applicant's CV, thereby leaving them to feel the whole process was a waste of their time.
- If you know a candidate's salary expectations, **be wary if you're considering making a low offer to begin with.** Even if you are prepared to increase your offer eventually, to something more in line with the candidate's original expectations, initial low offers can often result in a candidate losing confidence and trust in a prospective employer, and ultimately withdrawing their application.

These recommendations are by no means exhaustive, but we hope that they will serve you well. Like most things in life, 'you get what you put into it', and the interviewing/recruitment process is no exception. If you feel you would like our assistance in any part of your interview process, or any wider recruitment advice, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

All that is left to say is Happy Recruiting!

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