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**CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW
(SOME GUIDELINES)**

Begin by outlining the process. Explain the sequence of events that will happen in the interview. Refrain from defining the amount of time you will spend. If things are not going well after 15 minutes of a 45 minute interview, it may be difficult to end.

1. Keep an open mind
2. Let the candidate do the talking
3. Remain attentive
4. Observe body language
5. Maintain control
6. Probe incomplete answers
7. Close on a positive note
8. Write an interview summary
9. Consider alternative interview strategies
10. Complete Interviewer's Self Rating Assessment
11. **Keep an open mind.**

Your first impression of a candidate is usually lasting, but don’t let it overshadow everything else in the interview. Some very good candidates may be nervous and give a less that positive impression until they relax.

1. **Let the candidate do the talking.**

Refrain from talking so much about the job or company that the candidate does not get an opportunity to talk. The more people talk, the more insight you will gain into their personalities.

Be careful not to explain questions as you are asking them You may give away the answer without knowing it. Stick to short, open-ended questions such as, “How would you describe your leadership style?”

1. **Remain attentive.**

When you are conducting a series of interviews, it is easy to get distracted by other concerns on the job or perhaps by fatigue. Do not let boredom overtake you.

Take notes while the candidate is talking. While you do not want to become preoccupied, what you write down will help you recall events later.

If you feel like you’re losing attentiveness, try paraphrasing what the candidate says. The candidate might say, “My last boss left a lot of things up to me.” In response to that you might say, “So you had a lot of responsibility, am I correct in saying? Would you describe the type of responsibility your boss delegated to you?.”

By paraphrasing, the candidate knows you are paying attention and you are becoming more involved in the conversation without dominating it. In addition, this technique usually encourages the candidate to expound on whatever you paraphrased, giving you even more information.

1. **Observe body language.**

Besides listening to what is being said, watch how it is being said. Is there a level of enthusiasm? Does the person ask a lot of questions? Is there good eye contact? Does this individual sound invested in the job? Since non-verbal actions represent the majority of communication, attune yourself to these factors.

1. **Maintain control.**

Be careful not to allow the candidate to take over the interview. Some enthusiastic individuals may attempt to get the better of you by asking lots of questions or making editorial comments rather than answering the questions.

In other situations, you may let time get away from you. Stick to the schedule unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

1. **Probe incomplete answers.**

Sometimes the answer offered does not address the question. You may feel the candidate is hiding something. Ask more questions to ferret out the information. You may find this process uncomfortable, especially if you catch the candidate in a lie; this in better however, than hiring the wrong person into the job.

1. **Close on a positive note.**

End the interview on a positive note without announcing a decision. Keep your reaction to yourself and simply assure the candidate that you will be in touch within a short period of time.

1. **Write an interview summary.**

Immediately after completing the interview. Record your general impressions along any questions or concerns you may have about the candidate. Waiting even one hour will greatly reduce your recall of the events. See the interviewers rating sheet.

1. **Consider alternative interview strategies.**

In addition to the traditional interview, a number of companies are using alternative strategies to gather information. Some companies are now asking top management candidates projects that will demonstrate the ability for self-expression and organisation skills.

Others ask individuals to make presentations, especially it the position requires this type of work. Still others provide typical situations the candidate might be faced with and ask the candidate to solve the problem.

For clerical and administrative staff positions some companies are beginning to ask for a two day trial period where the top candidates spend two days on the job interacting with other employees (and being paid for it, of course). Are candidates willing to take a couple of vacation days if currently employed? Their reactions might indicate what they would be like as employees.

Other companies give candidates situations to solve or short tasks to accomplish. These strategies provide insight into candidates’ skills and dispositions.

Finally, organisations are returning to testing clerical skills, since these skills are becoming more complex. Too many organisations have been burned by individuals who said they could do something and really couldn’t. Don’t ask. Test!

Targeted selection system questions, are also gaining popularity. Instead of asking questions like, “Tell me about yourself,” the targeted questions asks candidates to explain how they resolved a particular type of situation. Even if you do not agree with how the situation was handled, you gain insight into the candidates’ problem solving skills.

**10. Interviewer’s Self Rating**

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Candidate interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Position : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation

5 Handled smoothly

4 Handled well but needs refining

3 Has a grasp but needs improvement

2 Needs significant work

1 Found this difficult

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Rapport with candidate

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Opened the interview and made the candidate feel at ease

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Avoided direct criticism of candidate

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Listened sympathetically

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Put the candidate at ease in awkward situations

**Control of the interview:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Developed questions in advance of the interview

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Maintained the focus of the interview

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made smooth transition from one topic to another

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Allocated time appropriately

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Returned to the original question when answer evasive

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Paced interview well

**Persuaded candidate to elaborate on responded by using:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up questions

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Silence

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Paraphrases of applicants initial response

**Note taking:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Took notes discreetly during interview

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Did not allow note-taking to interfere with interview

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Noted dress and appearance if relevant

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed and summarised notes for follow-up