

## How to Hire the RIGHT People?

The preparation that you undertake for your interview and the structure and questioning techniques you utilise are of the utmost importance. Follow these steps to ensure that you are interviewing well. This will enable you to select the best candidate for the role but also to present yourself and your business in a professional manner to encourage the candidate to really want to work for your organisation.

### Preparation

- Ensure that you have booked an office or somewhere you are able to talk privately (Not at the local coffee shop)
- Confirm the name of the interviewee and the expected time with the receptionist so the individual can be welcomed appropriately
- Ensure that you have read their CV and application in detail and that you have prepared your Interview Question Template
- Make certain that there will be no interruptions and that your mobile is switched off. The candidate should have your undivided attention. (Ask the candidate to switch their phone off too)
- Remember that you will only talk for 20% of the time - the candidate should be speaking for the other 80% of the interview

### Introduction (5-10mins)

- Walk to the reception area and warmly greet the candidate with a firm handshake and a smile
- Conduct small talk as you walk to the interview room, such as 'did you find us OK? Isn't it hot today?' This will start to put the candidate at ease as, remember, they are likely to be somewhat nervous and you want them to be relaxed and willing to talk and share with you
- Make sure that they are comfortable; have them remove their coat and ask them if they would like some water. (Better still assume this and have it ready for them)
- Build rapport quickly but calmly
- Introduce yourself and explain the process 'Thank you for coming to speak with me today. My name is Jessica Brown and I am the Operations Manager. I would like to talk with you in detail about some of the experiences that you have had in the past and what you are looking for in your next role. Towards the end of the interview I will share with you some more detail about the role and what skills we are looking for and more information about our business. You will then have a chance to ask me some questions if you like. The interview usually takes about an hour - is this time OK with you?'

- With regard to the time allowed, remember some candidates may be interviewing in their lunch break
- Tell the candidate that you may interrupt them now and then to ensure that they stay on track and you can cover all the areas required
- Tell them that you will be taking detailed notes so that you can remember all the great things they say
- Ask them if they have any questions before you start

## Body of interview (40-50mins)

- Ask your prepared questions; a combination of technical and behavioural
- The body of the interview is all about asking questions and listening
- Remember to probe and take detailed notes. It is OK to pause and catch up on your note taking
- Below is an extensive list of questions - choose 6 to 10 that are relevant to the circumstances the candidate may experience if they were successful
- Remember to probe, don't allow a candidate to skim over answers; continue to dig until you have the information that you require or until you are satisfied that you understand the scenario that they were talking you through
- Don't be afraid to interrupt to keep the interview on track and to gather the information that you are seeking
- Summarise occasionally for the interviewee to show them that you are listening
- Look for emotions behind words and look at their body language (and your own) to ensure that it is appropriate; remember 65% of communication occurs through body language

## Question samples - Technical

- Ask the candidate to talk you through their CV talking about areas of responsibility, achievements, challenges, culture of their previous organisation, the management style and their reasons for leaving
- Ask them technical questions about their relevant field of work and qualifications
  - What can you offer us?
  - What are your strengths?
  - What are your limitations?
  - What are your ambitions for the future?
  - What motivates you in the workplace?
  - In what previous role did you feel the most motivated and why?
  - What do you know about our company?

- What is the most attractive aspect of the role we are discussing?
- What is the least attractive aspect of the role that we are discussing?
- What do you look for in a job?
- What hours have you been used to working?
- How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to the business?
- What is your management style?
- How do you like to be managed?
- Why do you feel that you have the potential to be a good manager?
- As a manager, what do you look for when you are recruiting your employees?
- If you were presented with this technical problem – xxx - what would you do?
- What important trends do you see coming in our industry?
- Describe an ideal working environment
- Looking back on your past employers, which was your favourite employer and why?
- How much financial responsibility have you had in the past?
- How many people have you supervised in the past?
- How do you think your direct reports perceive you?
- How do you think your peers would perceive you?
- In your most recent role, what were some of your most significant accomplishments?
- Why have you not found a position after these many months?
- What did you think of your previous boss?
- What do you like better: working with figures or with words?
- Describe a time when your work was criticised
- If I spoke with your boss, what would they say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you handle pressure?
- If we were to offer you this role, what salary would you be seeking?
- What other roles are you considering at this time?
- What sort of reading do you do?
- What do you like to do on the weekend?
- Are you a leader? Why do you think that?
- How long would you expect to stay with our company?
- Are you continuing with your education?

- What personal accomplishment are you most proud of to date?

## Behavioural

- As a manager, have you ever had to terminate someone? If so, what were the circumstances and how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you were technically challenged. What happened? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you were likely to miss your forecast. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had more work than you could handle. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you led a project. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you helped increase sales or profits. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about the most difficult customer that you have had to deal with in the past. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about the most satisfied customer that you have had in the past. What happened and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you were under excessive pressure. What happened and what did you do?

## Probing

- Then what happened?
- What was your role in?
- What did you do?
- What did you say?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?
- What happened next?
- If you had your time again, would you do anything differently?
- Summarise what you have heard to ensure that you understood the content and to show the candidate that you are listening

## Type of questioning technique to avoid

- Chain or multiple questions
- Leading questions

- Multiple choice
- Questions using excessive jargon
- Assumptive questions
- Closed questions unless you are controlling a candidate

## Questions to avoid

- What childcare arrangements do you have? Rather, pose it as 'It is sometimes necessary to stay late at short notice would you be able to do that?'
- Does your religion prevent you from working on certain days of the week? Rather, pose it as 'Ideally we are looking for someone to work Monday to Friday 9-5pm. Would you be able to work these hours?'
- What does your disability prevent you from doing? Instead ask 'Are there any adaptations to the work environment that would assist you?'

## Close (5-10mins)

- Explain the role in more detail, ensuring that you portray the role and the opportunities realistically
- Let the candidate know what this individual would need to achieve for the business and the relevant timeframes
- Do sell the benefits of working for your business and why it is a great place to work and what you like about it. Remember you need to win the war for talent
- Explain your background and role and highlight what you have done in your time with the business
- Ask them if they have any questions. They should do and it might be questions such as 'Why do you like to work here?', 'What date would the new hire be expected to start?', 'Your website says that one of your values is Integrity, can you please give me an example of when you have seen this value in action?', 'What are the goals for the business over the next 18months?', 'Where do you see the opportunities for this individual in 18months time?', 'Do you support related external study financially?'
- Explain what will happen next, along the lines of 'well thank you Jenny, it has been lovely to meet you today. We are interviewing a number of candidates this week and we expect to have a shortlist of individuals to interview for a second time, by Monday, with offers by the end of the week. Does this timing work for you?'
- Stand up and escort them to the door or lift, thank them again for their time and shake their hand and smile

## Assessment (15mins)

Ok, now it is time to return to the office and write your assessment of the candidate. Do not leave the room until this is completed; if you do, you will forget some details and not assess the candidate as effectively or fairly. Do not use any assessments or judgements based on race, colour, gender, religion, political opinions, national extraction, social origin, age, medical record, criminal record, marital status, physical disability, sexual preference, intellectual or psychiatric disability or trade union activity.