

THE RIGHTS, WRONGS AND TRIBULATIONS OF INTERVIEWING

The job interview remains one of the more bizarrely formal and old-fashioned methods for sourcing new recruits for your organisation. Interviewing is a tough process no matter where you sit. Recent research published by the Institute of Managers found that up to 90% of managers have had no formal training in selection techniques. Managers are busy with constant meetings, the daily grind of running departments and are often unprepared before interviews.

Candidates are sometimes selected on the basis of gut instinct or the strength of a handshake. We tend to warm towards individuals whom we feel will fit in. The right fit is obviously essential but a more subjective interview approach is needed to ensure the right candidate joins the organisation.

Suggested Do's and Don'ts for interviewers:

- Prepare a list of questions from reading the candidate's CV. Look for gaps, short stays within organisations, reasons for promotions.
- Set a time limit to the meeting and stick to it. Inform the candidate when you anticipate the interview will finish.
- Have a list of competencies and criteria needed and work through them with the candidate. Ask for examples and expect the interviewee to demonstrate evidence.
- Think of the interview as an interactive conversation but don't talk for more than 50% of the time. Ask open-ended questions such as: "How much did you reduce costs by? What happened to your role after the merger? Why did you only stay in your last role for one year?"
- Due to recent legislation, unsuccessful candidates can now ask for interview feedback notes. Be careful not to scribble in the margin notes like "odd looking chap", "what is she wearing?" comments.
- If the applicant is giving evasive answers, interrupt them with: "Can I stop you there? What I asked was". Keep probing areas where candidates seem vague.
- Put on a good show - there's nothing worse than finding the right candidate, then learning that they didn't like the company. Don't keep them waiting, or allow interruptions during the meeting. Make sure you use a pleasant meeting room. Offer them a drink and let the candidate ask some questions too!
- Don't make judgements on the results of psychometric tests alone. Psychometric tests are a useful tool to be used as a probe on the weaknesses and strengths of candidate's behaviour within the work place.
- Have a question that will enable you to get a sense of their grip on figures within a bigger picture. Can they also handle the concepts, not just do the numbers and arithmetic?
- Use case studies. "This is the sort of challenge we face in our every day work here How would you deal with that?" Then test the answer further.
- Don't meet someone once. Take them for lunch with the team and other managers. See how they interact with the people. Ask their opinion on non-work related issues to build up a complete profile of the candidate.