



UNTAPPED TALENT

B2B GUIDE TO INNOVATIVE HIRING AND RETENTION

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Step #1 Create Interview Guidelines

Interview guidelines should contain the following elements:

- **Introduction:** This is often scripted and explains how the interview will unfold
 - Introduction of the interviewer(s)
 - Explanation of the format and the amount of time that the interview will take
 - Let the candidate know that there will be time at the end of the interview for them to ask questions
- **Interview Questions:**
 - Behavioural based questions are frequently used. An example of a behavioural based question is, “Please tell me about a time when you experienced conflict at work. What was the conflict and how did you handle it?”
 - Questions should be written in advance and asked equally of all candidates.
 - Refer to the job description when writing your interview questions.
 - Be sure to include two key questions, often overlooked: “How can I bring out your best at work?” and “What adjustments, if any, would be required for you to succeed in this position?”. This shows the candidate you care, gives you a sense of what they need to succeed on the job and be able to decide whether it’s a match to what you offer. The question around adjustments allows for the applicant to disclose any accommodation needs in relation to the position.

Candidates who have been out of the workforce for a period of time or those with diverse cognitive abilities, including people with autism may have difficulty answering behavioural based questions. That’s because of the lengthy and abstract nature of how most behaviour-based questions are asked - for example, “Can you tell me about a time when you went out of your way to provide exceptional customer service?”. Some people can get lost in the sequencing of the question.

When you know about these barriers in advance, it’s best to either do a working interview or restructure questions to be asked in a more straight-forward manner – for example, “Do you like working with customers? What things do you do to provide good customer service?” You will get a clearer picture of whether that individual can provide good customer service to meet your business needs and whether their style is a match for your customers.

Other Examples of Straight-Forward and Non-Behaviour Based Interview Questions

- What interests you the most about this job? Or, why would you like to work here?
- What are your strengths? How would these make you a good candidate for this job?
- What can a manager do to help you feel your best at work?
- When you are learning how to do a new job, what helps you to learn it quickly and well?
- Do you like working as part of a team? Are you good at teamwork? What do you do to be a good team member?
- Are you good at multitasking or are you better at doing one task at a time?
- Are you interested in working Part-Time or Full-Time? When can you start?
- If you were hired, what accommodations or adjustments could we make for you to do your best in this job?
- Finally, what questions do you have for me?

Step #2: If Appropriate in Your Organization - Establish an Interview Panel

An interview panel that consists of two to three interviewers can be an effective way to mitigate unconscious bias in the hiring process. When selecting panel members, consider diversity. For example, if you are hiring for a line cook position in the kitchen, also include a server. The additional perspective of someone in a related role will help you to assess overall fit in addition to skills and abilities.

Step #3: Setting Up the Interview

When you contact the applicant to arrange an interview, it's an opportunity to make a positive first impression with a potential new employee. It's also a chance to set that person at ease by preparing them for what to expect during the interview. Here are some tips:

- Be welcoming, polite and professional in keeping with your employer brand.
- Provide the applicant with two or three options for dates and times for the interview.
- Tell them how long the interview will be, the type of interview (telephone, in person, working interview, informal discussion) and who they will be interviewing with
- Give them information about the interview location (the closest transit stops, parking).
- Provide clear directions for when they arrive (who to ask for, which elevator to take)
- Let them know what they should bring (a copy of certifications or references, what to wear if it's casual or business style).
- Ask the applicant if they have any questions.

When you invite the applicant to an interview, whether in person, email or via telephone, ask if they require any adjustments or accommodations to bring out their best in the interview, especially if this is not known in advance through the referral process.

Step #4: Preparation Before the Interview

Here are some tips to help you to organize yourself and any participating panel members in order to make the most of your time with candidates.

A few days before:

- Create an interview package for yourself and each panel member. This package will contain:
 - each applicant's cover letter, resume and any additional items that they may have been asked to submit (ie: copies of certificates, etc.);
 - a blank interview guide for each applicant; and
 - a copy of the job description and job advertisement
- Meet with the interview panel members (in person or over the phone) to tell them about the job requirements, the existing team, the work environment, and what you are looking for in a successful applicant.

On the day of the interview(s):

- Review the applicant's cover letter and resume and identify any areas needing clarification, such as quirky job titles.
- Read through the job description once again and consider what areas you may need to probe during the interview (ie: is there a perceived gap between a job requirement and the experience listed on an applicant's resume?).

Step #5: Conducting the Interview

- Set the tone of the interview by welcoming the applicant, introduce yourself and any panel members, provide them with a glass of water and ensure they are comfortable.
- Explain how the interview will unfold: you will ask questions and take notes to ensure that their responses are accurately captured; and you will provide time at the end for questions from the applicant.
- Ask the interview questions and probe deeper if you are curious about an answer or would like the person to explain further. "Tell me more about that" or "When you say _____, what do you mean?" are good examples of probing questions that will allow you to gain additional information.

Step #6: Closing the Interview

- Once interview questions have been asked or the working interview completed, provide an opportunity for the applicant to ask some questions.
- Advise the applicant of next steps and when they can expect to hear from you or someone in the organization.
- Thank them for their time and go with them as they leave.

Step #7: Debrief

- If using a panel interview format, allow for time after each interview to discuss the applicant's skills and abilities

- Review your interview notes and compare them to the job description and required skills and abilities; focus on the bona fide occupational requirements of the job
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant individually

Step #8: Follow Up with the Applicant(s)

The most important thing to keep in mind when following up with an applicant is to do it in a timely manner. Interviewing for a job, especially one that you are excited about, can be nerve-racking. Do what you can to make the experience a positive one for the applicant. Throughout the interview process consider what the applicant needs to know, when they need to know it and how you should convey it. Ensure that your communications and interactions with applicants are professional, respectful and courteous at each stage of the process.