

Interview & Selection Skills

How to carry out an effective interview

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1. Interviewing structure – best practices
2. Creating the right atmosphere – staging the interview
3. First impressions – both ways – Corporate branding
4. Building rapport – getting the candidate to relax
5. Reviewing the candidate against competencies/behaviours
6. Drilling down by structured questioning technique
7. Challenging when required / Listening when required
8. Body language & use of vocal range
9. Structuring questions and getting answers
10. Note taking and record keeping

Prior to Interview / Best Practices

- Consult the Job Description
- Make notes of key areas
- Re-read candidate C.V.'s
- Plan the day to avoid any interruptions
- Re-read internal guidelines
- Meet as an interviewing panel to discuss strategy
- Plan the interview as a panel
- Inform staff that interviews will take place
- Inform the candidates of the procedures

On the day of the interviews

- Check the room is as required
- Check copies of job description & C.V.'s are available
- Check all areas accessible to candidates are clean
- Ensure reception are alerted
- Have a nominated 'greeter' in place
- Keep to timings throughout the day, have contingency built in
- Ensure candidates are shown off premises and directed on their way

Staging the Interview

- Room – table & chair combinations
- Orientation – facing the sun?
- Telephone redirects / Mobiles
- Walls and desk surfaces
- Minimising interruptions
- Courtesies & handshakes
- Meeting the candidates basic needs
- The interview chair

First impressions – both ways – Corporate branding

- Introductions both ways
- Importance of scene setting in relation to the role and the company
- The short corporate 'sales pitch'
- All of this reinforced by the environment of the interview and its processes

Building rapport – getting the candidate to relax

- Settling in questions
- Travel, venue ... Even the weather!
- Drinks, seat, room temperature
- Gentle start before stronger build up
- A tense candidate will give poor or guarded responses

Reviewing the candidate against competencies/behaviours

- Request/Access current live version of Interview Guide (if this exists)
- Allocate sections per panel member
- Allocate 'scribe' role or rotate
- Describe competency based interview process to them again – briefly
- Check understanding and progress the interview

Reviewing the candidate against competencies/behaviours

- Step through the questioning structure
- Active not passive listening
- 'Score' each answer by listening for the indicators
- If unsure then it is up to you to 'drill down' with additional questions
- Use open and closed questions
- Record key responses

Drilling down by structured questioning technique

- **Can you give us an example of when you have had to take steps improve a team's output or performance?**
- Why were they not performing?
- What was the impact?
- What steps did you take?
- How was this received?
- What was the outcome?

Other key competencies often featuring in interviews

1. Adaptability
2. Analytical
3. Communications
4. Decision Making
5. Delegation
6. Flexibility
7. Influencing
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Leadership
10. Resilience
11. Risk Taking
12. Team Working

How would these questions be framed?

Challenging when required / Listening when required

- Examples given by candidate are of necessity compressed and abbreviated
- Allow the candidate maximum speaking time
- They are also selected by the candidate to present the candidate in the best possible light
- Your role is to audit these, query them and get to the heart of them – rapidly
- There is a balance between depth of questioning and timing of interview which will require your judgement and experience to be used

Body language & use of vocal range

- Expected types of body language exhibited by most candidates
- Causes of these 'accidental' movements
- Nervous body language and more
- Helping the candidate manage the stress
- Your body language to the candidate
- The importance of eye contact
- Vocal range – the interviewer's voice
- Accents and resolving the issues generated

Structuring questions and getting answers

- Making sure the candidate has had every opportunity to answer the question
- When to make the decision to 'move on'
- Candidates who cross reference questions and its impact on your 'score sheet'
- Receiving structured answers from the candidate – the STAR technique;
 - Situation
 - Tasks
 - Actions
 - Results

Note taking and record keeping

- Who takes notes and how detailed should they be?
- Collating notes into feedback
- Separating fact from opinion
- What candidates think about feedback
- Record keeping and legal implications of notes

Employment Law

Laws control the interview & selection process to ensure

- Equal opportunities
- Equality & fairness/transparency of process
- Resolution processes in case of dispute
- Restitution for unfair actions

For the employer

- Truthfulness in information supplied to them
- Honest references from referees

Specimen Questions

Associate Planner

1. Why do you want to be a planner?
2. What do you know about Project Services / Controls
3. Where does Planning fit into Project Services?
4. Give an example of “being extremely organised”
5. Prioritisation of work is important for a planner. Give an example of prioritising a workload. What caused the time constraint? What was the outcome?
6. What attributes do you believe a good planner should have? Which of these do you currently possess?
7. We intend the associate planner program to be a structure training & mentoring process which is likely to take between one & two years. Do you have experience of long term training programs? What potential pitfalls can you see with working through such a process? What personal strengths can you identify which will help you through this process?

Specimen Questions

Project Planner

1. What can you tell me about the company?
2. What is a WBS?
3. How would you calculate Earned Value?
4. What's the difference between free float & total float?
5. What do you believe is the difference between a Planner & a Scheduler? Which are you?
6. Take me through how you go about baselining
7. Give me an example of a mistake you made planning. What happened? How did you deal with it? What did you learn from it?
8. Planning is about balancing constrained resources. Give me an example of this balancing – how did you do it? Was the outcome positive for everyone?
9. Give me an example of dealing with conflict
10. What's your strongest area as a planner?
11. What's your weakest?
12. Why should we employ you as a planner?

Specimen Questions

Senior Planner

1. Give me an example of a mistake you made planning. What happened? How did you deal with it? What did you learn from it?
2. Briefly outline the benefits to a project of a well designed and maintained plan
3. What separates a senior planner from a project planner?
4. Our senior planners have to work on a number of projects. What experience do you have on multiple projects?
5. Do you currently, or have you, supervised the work of more junior planners? What issues has this created for you?
6. What do you see as the next step for a senior planner?
7. When updating a plan, what key people and/or systems would you expect to need information from? What, if any, anlysis of the updated programme would you perform? Who would you distribute your work to?
8. What is an open ended activity, and what issues does it create?
9. How would you calculate Earned Value?
10. What's your strongest area as a planner?
11. What's your weakest?
12. Why should we employ you as a senior planner?