

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING

Before the Interview: Before the interview process starts, there is a need to determine what you want to learn about the candidate from the first interview. Areas to consider are stated below.

- What are the scenarios and situations this person must be prepared to confront?
- What knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies) will enable someone to drive that impact given the resources and challenges in your organization today?
- What support are you willing and able to offer someone in this role? Are there complementary competencies in the rest of the team or organization that will help support this person's success?
- What is it about your work environment that will enable this person to do their best work and challenge them?

Your interviews will be more productive when you think in terms of competencies instead of generic attributes. Candidates should be evaluated based on readiness to handle specific business situations.

You should also determine the evaluation process for each candidate. For example, will each question be assigned points and weighted or will each question be assigned the same number of points? The interview panel should also determine how the interview process will take place. For example, will one person ask the candidate questions or will the selection panel rotate and ask questions?

Cultural Fit: You should keep in mind, what you see on a resume rarely transfers to whom you see during the interview. It is impossible to determine cultural fit from a resume alone. Cultural fit must be done in conversation with the person during the interview and not guessed in advance.

To get to cultural fit, take an objective look at your work environment. Then while interviewing, in addition to considering candidates' credentials and experience, you will also look at how they achieved results in their last few jobs. Look at what they enjoyed and what was a struggle. Observe how your environment compares.

Who Should Be Involved? Before you decide which candidates you want to interview, you should decide who will be helping you to interview the candidates. Pre-planning results in a

more structured sequence, with input from all key people, and a predictable sequence for the candidates. Those that will make the hiring decision should be people who will work with the new employee regularly; has an understanding of the job and understand the competencies required to succeed.

The first Interview: The initial interview is not simply about the questions you plan to ask; it is also influenced by the environment and atmosphere in which you have the conversation. The area should be welcoming and as comfortable as possible. The interviewers should

- Be on time
- Be prepared for the candidate to arrive
- Be calm, relaxed, polite and pleasant
- Offer a beverage
- Start the conversation with a bit of warmth and small talk. This allows for an opportunity to introduce those who will be conducting the interview. Explain the process to the candidates as well as the time allocation for the interview.
- Ask each candidate the same question and allow for follow up questions from others as part of the process.
- Close each interview asking each candidate if they have questions or any closing remarks
- After completing the first round of interviews, evaluate each candidate, their skillsets, their potential for cultural fit, and determine which candidates have the highest upside potential and the lowest downside risk. As you evaluate each candidate, decide what else you want to know, what deserves a deeper dive, and what aspect of the cultural fit is still unclear. This may be the focus of your second interview, if it is necessary.

The Second Interview: The first interview is more constrained by time and more general questions. The second interview allows the interviewer to take a deeper dive into the key factors stated in your job requirements and issues associated with the organization. Often with second interviews, candidates are asked to perform some real-life, job-relevant work (work sampling). Work sampling is more predictive of success on the job than just the interview itself. How you design work sample testing will vary from position to position. The candidate is asked to do actual work, which can be used as an additional evaluation tool. The candidate should be given adequate time to complete the assignment before their second interview. The second interview can also be established to gain clarity regarding cultural fit within and outside of the organization.

Lastly, when seeking input from multiple people, beware of vague, imprecise language. For example, many hiring managers look for passion and are fooled by the instant-on enthusiasm and fast-on-their-feet charm of extroverts. However, that charm and enthusiasm can quickly fade. Passion may be better defined by grit-demonstrating resilience, persistence, and determination. The most passionate candidates might be a bit awkward during the interview. They may not invest much attention in their charm, but once you get them talking about projects and metrics and obstacles overcome, you will see them light up.

Note: Please keep in mind candidates are also conducting their research regarding your community, the position and city officials. They may be perusing your website and observing your meetings electronically. Please conduct your meetings professionally and maintain updated information on your website.