

How to Interview New Employees

Before you spend energy and money to locate someone for a specific job, take the time to prepare.

Questions to ask yourself

- Do I have 15-20 hours to devote to hiring the right person?
- How much money can my company afford to spend to fill this position?
- What kind of track record do I have in locating, screening and hiring new people?
- Can I recruit from my competition?
- What are the costs involved in having this position go unfilled for 12-14 weeks?
- Do I have a full job description?
- Do I have “what if” job related questions?
- Do I have a list of interview questions other than “what if” questions?

How to find new employees

The most common sources are newspapers, trade journals, personal contacts, industry contacts, “Ol Boy” network, employee referrals, in-house posting, recruiting specialists, and online. There are advantages and disadvantages in all recruitment efforts. Each source will produce people to study. There are plenty of people available, but a shortage of qualified people.

Everyone doesn't have the skills and credentials you may require and unless you know how to interview correctly, you may miss that good one. Then the search continues, costing more and more as time goes on. Asking the right questions will reveal the information you want. You will know when that good one appears. This can be accomplished by writing in detail for yourself and your personnel department the complete job requirements. This job description will act as a guideline for you to follow and will give the personnel department exacting specification as to what you want.

The Resume

A piece of paper cannot possibly completely describe the applicant it represents. The resume is a one-dimensional sketch of a multi-dimensional individual. Yet, from this “paper person”, we often must make the key decision on whether or not to see this applicant. If we choose not to based on the resume, we may lose this prospect forever – perhaps the best possible candidate. Before discarding an applicant's resume, ask yourself these questions:

1. Is my reason for rejection based on the subject's lack of qualification or lack of information on the resume?
2. If rejection is based on the types of jobs

the applicant held, is it likely that the experience is there but not specified? (It may pay for you to call the applicant and obtain the missing information before making a decision.)

3. Is my reason for rejection due to a poorly written or presented resume? If the position calls for communicative skills, this is a valid reason for rejection. If not, this could be an unwise decision. (Eliminating the poorly written resume of a master mechanic may deprive the firm of a top potential employee.)

Rather than lose a person who may be highly qualified because of an unsatisfactory resume, call them and do a mini-telephone interview.

- Avoid interviewing using a resume; have them fill out an application.

The Interview

Using the job description, application, and what if questions that pertain to the job, start the interview. Strict job related questions are:

- Tell me something about yourself that I wouldn't know by reading your resume/application.
- What do you want out of your job?

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- What would you like to accomplish that you were not able to accomplish at your other jobs?
- Give me an example of your determination.
- Tell me about a time you didn't perform to expectations.
- What do you wish to achieve/develop?

Use these and others to probe for usable information. Do not talk about the job or the company first. Go directly to gathering information that will help you to determine if you want them. If so, then discuss the job and your company. (There are 100 or more questions you can ask, these are a sample.)

In probing for weaknesses consider the following questions:

- What disappointments did you have in your previous job?
- In what areas did you need help or guidance from your boss?
- For what have your superiors complimented you? Criticized you?
- Of all the aspects of your last job, what did you like most? Least?

After any insufficient answer you can probe by asking specific questions:

Applicant: I was responsible for a salary administrative program.

Interviewer: Describe the program?

Applicant: It was an informal one.

Interviewer: Was it based on a point or factor comparison system?

Applicant: We developed it ourselves.

Interviewer: How did you classify jobs?

Applicant: The department head and I assigned grades to them.

To Examine Attitudes and Motivation

Equally as important as knowing what is in the applicant's head is knowing what is in their heart. You will want some insight into motivation, drive, stability, resourcefulness, ability to work with others, take direction, supervise and take responsibility. The following questions are examples of the type of inquiry to help.

Motivation

1. Why did you select this career?
2. What is it you seek in a job?
3. What are your long-term goals?
4. How do you plan to reach goals?
5. What position would you like to hold in five years? Ten years?
6. What would you want in this job that you are not getting now?

Identify Stability

1. Your reasons for leaving jobs?
2. Why are you seeking a job now?
3. Have your career goals changed?
4. What was your greatest disappointment thus far in your life?

To Find Out If They Are Resourceful

1. How did you change the scope of your previous job?
2. What were some of the more difficult problems you encountered on the job? How did you solve them?
3. To whom did you go for counsel when you couldn't handle a problem on the job? What type of problems did you bring them?

To Check If They Have The Ability To Work Under Direction Or With Others

1. Describe your supervisor's supervisory methods. Evaluate them.
2. On what committees have you served?
3. In your previous jobs, how much of your work was done on your own? As part of a team?
4. Which aspect did you enjoy most and why?

Executive Questions

1. What was an innovative idea you introduced in your company? How did you persuade management to accept it?
2. Describe your technique of getting a job done.

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Evaluation

Your chief tools are the written job specification, your personal knowledge of the position and the written facts obtained from the candidate. Don't be RIGID. Rigid interpretation of these specs may keep you from ever filling the position. Quality people are snapped up quickly. Remember: evaluate the whole person.

The difference between an astute interviewer and a personnel clerk is the ability to understand the real requirements of a job and to look at a candidate as a whole person rather than a series of individual components.

Avoid loss of good candidates and extra work. Finalize your last interview thoughts with the following questions:

- Can/will this candidate do the work?
- Do they fit in?
- Are they decision makers?
- Will they accept responsibility?
- Are they problem solvers?

If anything in the article prompts a question, call me. I will be happy to share more details on how to hire and the over 100 questions that can be utilized to hire the right person.

Once satisfied, you can make a logical "go" or "no go" decision, close the interview. If there's a serious interest in the applicant and you can't make an offer or reject immediately, tell the

applicant that you're interested. Explain that there are tests, further interviews, or whatever else, so you can mentally take them off the market. Don't lose them and don't be afraid to discuss this important part of the interview process.

Job evaluation, resume screening and effective interviewing are fundamental techniques which, if used and perfected, will give you added power. Always strive to reach beyond your limits. Push your comfort zone, make yourself better today than yesterday. The search for that elusive employee can be an intriguing and highly worthwhile quest.

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