

Quick Guide: How To Conduct An Interview

Last month we looked at preparing to interview so that you maximise the time you have during the interview. This month builds on those tips and outlines the top ten tips to help you select the best candidate next time you interview:

- 1. Open the interview positively and courteously.** In the first few moments you will both be forming your initial impressions. Greet the candidate making eye contact, smiling and with a firm (but not bone-crunching) handshake. Welcome them by name and introduce yourself clearly. Offer them a seat and help them to relax by offering a drink and some general chit chat. Explain the structure of the interview.
- 2. Ask your prepared questions** to find out as much as you can about the candidate. Encourage them to open up by asking 'open' questions, which begin with 'what', 'when', 'why' and 'how'.
- 3. Use exploration type questions** to gain more information, to probe more deeply and to test what they are saying. Questions starting with 'tell me about ...' or 'explain ...' will be useful ways to start.
- 4. Build on their answers** by linking your questions to their answers. This is a good way of controlling how much information you get.
- 5. Listen attentively** to find out information and to encourage them to keep talking. Remember you have two ears and one mouth! Listen also for emotions behind the words. For example, if they respond enthusiastically it can tell you what motivates them.
- 6. Be aware of body language** – yours and theirs. For you, maintain eye contact, have open posture and sit in a relaxed position. Avoid yawning, fiddling and looking at your watch! For them, notice any changes in their body language as they are speaking, look for mis-matches between what they are saying and doing, recognise the difference between signs of nervousness and being evasive.
- 7. Continually evaluate the candidate** in terms of suitability for the job. Make sure you are assessing their abilities and skills to do the job as well as assessing their personality to fit in with your team and the company.
- 8. Control the interview carefully** so you maximise the amount of time you have. Direct the candidate gently towards another subject if required. Use silence tactically giving the candidate enough time to think of their answer. You should be speaking for 20% of the time and listening for 80% - you want to know about them.
- 9. Supply information** about the company and the job. Select what to say verbally and what to put in writing. You can shorten or lengthen this stage of the interview depending on how suitable the candidate is.
- 10. Part positively.** Inform the candidate of what will happen next and when. Thank them for coming to the interview. Write up your notes immediately - before moving onto the next candidate.

Related Courses: [Effective Interviewing Skills](#)

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