Interviewing

Tips on questioning style

* Help the candidate to show themselves in their best light
* Listen carefully to what the candidate says and allow them thinking time to respond to questions
* Try to ensure that your tone is consistent for all candidates i.e. that you are not more familiar with some candidates
* Avoid leading questions or ones which call for ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers
* Use open questions to encourage the candidate to talk e.g. “Tell me about a time when ….” Most of the questions should be ‘open’ questions, starting with the words **who, where, when, why, what and how,** or **tell me about.**
* Use probing questions to gain detail, especially if the candidate is being evasive e.g. “can you explain exactly what you role in the project was …”, “Tell me more about how you approached that”
* Closed questions - Those inviting a YES or NO answer, e.g. “Do you need further training?”. Use only to summarise, confirm your understanding or control a talkative candidate.

Example questions

You would not need all these questions. Many of the answers you get will lead nicely onto another point so you need to listen carefully to make the questions flow smoothly.

But, have a checklist to ensure you:

 cover all your key criteria

 are consistent with each candidate

Don’t be afraid to consult your checklist during the interview to check you have covered everything.

Current Job

 Take me through a typical day in your current role.

 Looking back on the job, what are the things which you most enjoy?

o What is it about that which makes it enjoyable?

 Equally, what aspects of the job don't you enjoy or frustrate you in any way?

o Why do you think that is?

o How do you motivate yourself to do these tasks?

 What do you feel you’ve achieved in this role?

 If you could change one thing about your existing job, what would it be?

 How do you think you’ll be remembered?

Teamwork

 How many other people do you work with?

o How do you get on with them?

 Are there any members of the team who you don't get on with?

o Why do you think that is?

o How do you handle it?

 How often are you able to get on with things on your own?

o How do they feel about that?

 What happens if anybody is off sick/on holiday or you are short staffed at any time?

o How well do you feel that system works?

o What would happen when you were on holiday or off sick?

o How well does your job get covered?

o How much time, if any, have you had to take off over and above your holiday allowance?

 Which do you prefer - on your own or part of a team?

o Why is that?

 What do you see as your biggest contribution to the team?

o Give me an example of when you’ve done that?

o How does that benefit the team / business?

Organisation and working under pressure

 How do you get yourself organised on a daily basis

 How do you prioritise your work?

 If you had a really heavy workload/busy day and you had a couple of very mundane tasks which you knew would take a long time, how would you go about organising this?

o What if the mundane tasks were urgent?

 Give me an example from your last job

Dealing with awkward situations

 How much of your time is spent with customers?

o What sort of issues have you had to deal with customers?

o How did you deal with that?

o What did you learn from the situation?

 Do you ever get complaints or problems which may not be your fault?

o How do you deal with such situations?

o If it was a situation where you knew one of your colleagues was at fault, how would you deal with it?

 Relationship with your boss - what would you do if your boss made a decision which affected you and which you don't agree with?

o Give me an example of when this has happened

o How did you approach it? What was the outcome?

Strengths and Weaknesses

 What do you consider to be your strengths?

o Give me an example of when you have put that to good use/practice?

 On the other side of the coin, what do you consider to be your areas of weakness?

o Why is this skill/attribute important?

o What have you done towards your personal development in the last 12 months?

Personal Details \*

 What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

 If the occasion arose, is there anything which would prevent you from being able to stay on a little bit later or come in earlier if it was really necessary?

o How much notice would you require?

 Where do you see yourself in two years' time?

o What development do you feel you would need in order to attain this?

\* It is important to be consistent with all aspects of the interview. But particularly so with what you ask in relation to personal circumstances so there is no potential for a perception of inequality.

**WHY USE AN INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT FORM?**

During an interview, it is a good idea to make notes of the applicant's responses to key questions; this may be simply jotting down one or two key words.

When the interview is completed, filling in an Interview Assessment form means that you can write down your impressions of the applicant's suitability for the job while the thoughts are still fresh in your mind.

An Interview Assessment Form is a good tool for the selection of the right person for the job because:

 It means you have to think clearly about the applicant's suitability to be able to write down your impressions.

 It means you are standardising your approach to the selection by considering the same aspects of all the candidates. This is a fair approach and reduces the chance of any biased opinion being made.

 You will have a comprehensive outline of the applicants and this is useful to remind you of 'who is who' when a decision needs to be made between several candidates or at a later date.

 By recording the attributes of the applicants, you will be able to identify potential weak points which may be strengthened and improved in the successful applicant.

 It is a good record of statements made during the interview (which may be contradicted at a later date).

 You can recognise where your interview 'technique' is weak if you are unable to fill in any sections of the Interview Assessment Form.

**Example of Record of Interview**

Name of candidate:

Interviewer:

Date of interview:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Question/essential criteria | Notes | Weighting | Score\* |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL |  |  |  |  |
| TEST  SCORE |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL |  |  |  |  |

\*1 = poor 5 = excellent