



Conducting a successful interview

Hiring suitable staff is essential to the success of our business, so it is vital to get the interview process right.

Here are some of the factors to consider if you want to avoid losing a great candidate, or employing an unsuitable one.

1- Consider the post carefully.

Draw up a job description the responsibilities involved. This will help you to clarify the type of skills and experience that you're looking for in the employee. Make a list of these characteristics and compare it with your impressions of the candidate.

2- Set the right questions.

Everybody knows the classic interview questions. But standard questions can elicit standard responses, so you need to focus on what it is you are really trying to discover about the candidate. The old favourite "Where do you see yourself in five years time" won't necessarily tell you how the applicant will actually perform in the specified role.

Interviewers are increasingly using open-ended 'behavioural' questions which allow the candidate to demonstrate how he or she has acted in relevant situations in the past. For example, you could ask the applicant: "can you describe a time when you were hard-pressed to meet a difficult project deadline with limited resources? How did you handle the situation?"

3- Prepare yourself.

You want the candidate to be relaxed, not overly wary, so explain the form the interview will take beforehand. Be prepared to answer the candidate's questions about the company's size, mission, culture and future. The interview is a two way process, and in a competitive job market you may want to create as good an impression for applicants as they do for you. Why not put together a one-page factsheet with details about the business?

*performance
through
partnership*

4- Take notes and be consistent.

Keep notes of your impressions as the interview progresses. These will act as a memory aid when interviewing a large number of candidates, and will also help you to be consistent and use the same criteria for each interviewee.

5- Check references.

Be sure to follow up references from candidates' previous employers. Remember that what is not said can be as important as what is said.

6- Avoid discrimination.

It is essential to ensure that you do not discriminate against any candidates on the grounds of race, age, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

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