

The Interview Process

Selecting People Who Will Make A Difference

Talent Acquisition is one of the most important responsibilities of a leader. Once we establish a vision and communicate it and create a culture inclusive of our values and standards, the key to success is attracting and retaining talent that forms a collaborative, high performing team.

On the surface, evaluating talent by conducting an interview can seem like a simple enough task, yet it is one that few are formally trained to do or do effectively. Sure we know to shake hands, establish eye contact, smile, make the prospect feel welcome, and then ask questions, but the challenge is to make sure your **questions are purposeful, well formulated, and help you really get to know the candidate** so that you select the best possible individual for your role, as opposed to simply the one who presents the best in an interview.

The biggest mistake interviewers make is to talk too much, listen too little, and not really find out who the candidate is.

Tips:

- **Know what and who you are looking for.** Who has been successful in this or a similar position at your company and

why? What skills and qualities have determined success in the past?

- **Create a list of “soft skills” that your best people have.** Curiosity, initiative, attentiveness, innovation, communication skills, compassion, drive, high standards, interest in continuous learning, managing pressure, providing feedback, and the ability to influence others to name a few.
- Remember that **skills and emotional intelligence** together will determine success and that one without the other will not provide you with the “star” that you are seeking.
- Ask **open ended, purposeful questions that increase in difficulty throughout the sequence** (samples below).
- If more than one person will be interviewing the candidate, **coordinate the questions so as not to be redundant.** Have each interviewer ask their questions from their perspective: supervisor, peer, teammate, support staff, etc.
- Think of the interview as having **six components**: make the candidate comfortable so that you obtain a true assessment of them; learn about them (ask open ended questions); inform them about your company and the position; if you are interested in the candidate, “sell them on your company”; assess their interest; and finally, close the deal. In the current market, if you believe that this is the right person for your company, don’t let them leave without making an offer and trying to get a commitment and a starting date conditioned upon references.

Examples of Purposeful and Open-Ended Questions:

An open-ended question cannot be answered yes or no. A close ended question can be answered yes or no. Close: Are you happy at your job? Are you hard working? Do you get along well with people? Every candidate will tell you what they think you want to hear.

Open-ended Purposeful Questions:

-What do you know about our company? Goal: Did they take the time to learn about your company. This will tell us if they prepared and are truly interested.

-What has attracted you to our company? Goal: Have they synthesized the information that they gathered.

-Share a challenge you had with a manager and how you resolved it. Goal: Judgement, how they deal with conflict, how quickly they think on their feet.

-Where do you see yourself in 3 years? Goal: Are they someone who is interested in growing and staying with your company? Is this a job or career move for them?

-Describe a situation where you were overwhelmed and how you managed it? Goal: How do they deal with pressure?

-How do you spend your free time? Goal: learn about them as a person without asking illegal questions.

-What do you do to stay current with your area of expertise and technology?

-Who do you most admire and why?

-Who is the best leader you have worked for and why?

-What have you learned from this interview? What question didn't I ask that you'd like to answer?

-On a scale of 1-10, how interested are you in this job?

-What will make you want to pursue this opportunity?

Remember how important this is to the success of your company.
People make companies. Take the time to prepare the way you
would if you were pitching your company to a potential client.
