

Hire Right the First Time

By Ross Clennett

Effective interviewing skills ensure you dramatically increase your chances of identifying the most suitable person for the job - the first time.

A recent research report about interviewing revealed the following;

- 40% of respondents had declined an offer because of a poor interview experience
- 69% had experienced no response or feedback after a full interview
- 42% had experienced discrimination in an interview
- 30% had experienced rudeness in an interview, and
- 22% had been asked inappropriate questions, with respect to such things as their marital status, weight, dating habits and sexual preferences

The report further reveals that of those people who experienced a bad interview 81% of them told up to 10 people about that bad experience! Not an effective way of building your employer brand.

Interviewing is similar to coaching, in that what appears to be 'just a conversation' is in fact a structured, purposeful dialogue with a clear outcome in mind.

If you want to increase your interviewing skills here are my top 8 tips;

1. Before an interview commences understand what you need to know from the candidate to assess their appropriateness for the job and the questions you will ask to most effectively discover that information. Questions that address issues irrelevant to job performance (e.g.

age, marital status, etc.) are not only useless questions in terms of identifying work related performance capability, but they annoy and deter good candidates.

2. Build high rapport. High rapport gains you high quality information from the candidate. Low rapport gains you low quality information.

3. Ask open questions rather than closed or leading questions to ensure that the candidate is not, consciously or unconsciously, biasing their answers with what they think you want to hear.

4. All good candidates have choices, so never assume the candidate wants the job you have on offer. Have a couple of powerful selling points that clearly demonstrate the benefits of your opportunity.

5. Understanding the context (i.e. degree of difficulty) of a candidate's past job performance is critical in ranking competing candidates and making an effective job match.

6. Evidence based answers drawn from past performance are the only effective way to assess competencies. Theoretical knowledge or speculative answers ('would do', 'could do', 'should do') have a low correlation to actual competencies and performance.

7. Understand both the core competencies and the primary motivators of the candidate to ensure that they can both do the job and they want to do the job.

8. Technical skills become relatively less important the more senior the job compared to behavioural competencies and personal motivators, so don't fall into the trap of placing too much emphasis on technical expertise (e.g. years of experience and qualifications), especially in leadership roles.

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