

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT INTERVIEWING?

Of the numerous vital, strategic and tactical decisions organizations face, which people to hire is among the most critical – and the most enduring. A good hire can have a decades-long effect on the culture of the company. Conversely, a poor hire, one that wasn't thoroughly considered or done hastily, can have quite the opposite effect. Even those without "director, manager, or chief" in their title can have a tremendous impact on a company's reputation and its bottom line.

If you can answer these questions, you're on the way to selecting Star employees:

1. Do you have an up-to-date, job specific, job profile of what it takes to be successful in the position for which you are hiring?

A job profile is more robust than any job description in that it defines the reason the job exists as well as the objectives and responsibilities of the job holder. If you don't have a job profile, it's like shopping without a list. When you shop without a list, you don't get everything you need; you get some things you didn't plan on; and then you have to go back to the store again.

2. Do you treat all applicants with the same respect you extend to your best customers?

Not only does what goes 'round, come 'round, but you never know who the person you give the bum's rush to today will be in five years and you don't know who he/she knows today either.

3. Do you use telephone pre-screens to save yourself and the applicant time and aggravation?

Just because the application looks good doesn't mean the person meets your basic hiring criteria. Before inviting them for pre-employment testing or an interview, call and find out if they are willing to work the hours, days, and shifts you need, have reliable transportation, and willing to work for the wage you offer, etc.

4. Do you use all the hiring tools available to make sure that what you see in the interview is what you will get on the job?

The more you know, the less you risk. The most effective hiring systems include the application form, telephone pre-screen, pre-employment testing (especially for behaviors, attitudes, competencies and emotional intelligence), drug testing, reference checks, and skills testing.

5. Do you only allow your best people to conduct interviews?

Like attracts like and A-players hire A-players, while C-players are reluctant to hire B's or A's who may easily surpass them on the job.

6. Do you have a structured set of questions to ask in an interview?

Introduce real structure to all interviews by asking specific questions relating to the job. Those questions should be the same for each position so that answers can be

compared between candidates. Additionally, a structure like this can reduce the risk of a lawsuit since you're treating each applicant the same.

7. Has everyone who conducts interviews in your organization been trained in interviewing best practices and procedures?

The reason so many regrettable hiring decisions are made is because hiring managers don't know how to prepare for an effective interview. Therefore, many just wing it and rely on first impressions and gut instinct.

8. Do you treat every step in the hiring process as a test?

Applicants, who don't fill out your job application form completely, are telling you they either cannot or will not follow instructions. They've failed the first test and there's no reason to spend any more time on them or with them. Each successive step in your hiring process is also a test that allows you to screen in only the best.

9. Are you mindful of the power of first impressions and personal biases and know how to prevent them from affecting your hiring decision?

Most hiring managers make the mistake of deciding whether they want to hire an applicant within the first 14 seconds of meeting the person. Then, that decision to either hire or not hire, determines which interview questions are asked and how the answers are interpreted. This inevitably leads to hiring the best applicants instead of the best employees. An effective way to deal with biases is to admit to yourself that you have the bias and make a note of your favorable or unfavorable assumption on a post it and set it aside to consider again after the interview.

Recognize the risk of bias in the interview process by having at least three people interview each job candidate. For minor positions, it may be two different people; for major positions, you may need to bring in as many as four or five interviewers. Once those interviews are complete, each interviewer should be able to compare notes with the others. Also, set up a weighting scale to make the decision quantifiable- for example: interviews 25%, benchmark 30%, experience 15%, accomplishments 15% and education/training 15%. This scale will assess your organization's risk with this hire.

10. Do you know how to take and keep control of the interview?

You tell the interviewee, up front, your purpose is to gather more information by asking questions and that you will answer their questions when you are finished. If the applicant does interrupt with a question, you remind the applicant you'll answer questions later. This will give you 100% control.

11. Do you always ask the hard questions?

You should always ask the tough questions about drugs, theft, values, past performance, dependability, and safety too.

12. Do you ask your interview questions before telling applicants about the job and the company?

The wrong way to start an interview is to explain all about the job and the company. That just sets the applicant up to spoon-feed you what you want to hear. Rather, describe the position and company briefly and then proceed with your agenda.

13. Do you start the interview by asking the easy questions first?

You realize relaxed people will tell you more, so you start with the easy questions to make the applicant as comfortable as possible.

14. Do you know the difference between talent and skills?

With the rapid rate of change today, far better to hire people with the talent to learn new systems and procedures than those with specific skills that may soon be outmoded. (Skill is the ability to do the job you are hiring for and talent is the ability to learn the skills necessary to do the job today and master the skills needed as the job changes.)

15. Do you realize the most important decision you'll ever make concerning the success of your organization is who gets hired?

The costs of poor hiring decisions and the subsequent employee turnover are both apparent and hidden. On the obvious side there's the cost of recruitment advertising, pre-employment testing, the manager's time in interviews and managing the whole process as well as the costs to train and support the new hire. Hidden, but often more damaging to the organization, are the losses in productivity, efficiency, morale, loss of the knowledge that comes only with experience, quality, and the cost of "damage control" if the person who was fired or quit really mucked things up.

How did you do answering these questions? If you got 13 or more correct, congratulations. You're a master at interviewing.

If you got 10 - 12 correct, you're better than most at interviewing and depending on which questions you answered, you may benefit from updating your process.

If you got 0 - 9 correct, **Employee Recruitment & Selection Training** is strongly recommended.

Ask The Vantage Group how we can help you choose the right candidate through benchmarking, key accountabilities and better interviewing.