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## Step by step guide to conducting a recruitment interview

1. Prepare carefully for the interview. Check the waiting area, the interview room, the seating arrangements and lighting. Arrange for there to be no interruptions while you are interviewing.
2. Begin punctually and time the interview carefully.
3. Plan the type of question to be asked before the interview. The job specification will indicate the appropriate areas.
4. Make sure that you have the application form and any other papers you need. Never try to muddle through an impromptu interview when vital information is missing.
5. Have a clear plan in mind of how the interview is to be structured. This will give the interview a sense of direction and keep you in control. Although you may deviate from your plan when the interview is under way, you will do so knowingly and be able to put the interview back on course when the time is right. In this way discussions will not become bogged down, go off at a tangent or fail to cover important issues.
6. Introduce yourself to the candidate by name and job title. Confirm the purpose of the interview. Put the candidate at ease by making some ice-breaking comments.
7. Start with easy or non-controversial questions about the applicant's present or last job. Build up to more difficult areas later. Most of the factual information will be on the application form. Be familiar with it. Get the applicant to repeat his/her work history and concentrate his/her attention on any areas which need elaboration. Probe any gaps in the employment record. Be alert for evidence of personality conflict in the applicant's past history. Ensure that you get all the facts that you need – you will not have another chance when the candidate has left the room.
8. Control the discussion by guiding it. This means asking questions with a clearly defined purpose. Get the applicant to do the talking (providing what he/she says is relevant) and listen carefully to the answers.



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9. Try not to ask closed questions i.e. those which can be answered “yes” or “no”. The applicant will be encouraged to talk by open questions such as:-

- What do you find interesting in.....?
- Would you tell me more about.....?
- What is your opinion on.....?
- How do you feel about.....?

10. Do not frame questions in such a way as to suggest the type of answer required. These are known as leading questions. Examples are:-

- Of course you don't want to.....?
- Naturally you must think.....?

11. Explore how much the applicant knows about subjects of which he/she claims knowledge. Do not enter into arguments with the applicant or correct any apparent inaccuracies. Probe a little or rephrase questions. Do not appear to criticise anything candidates say or have done. It will appear that you are trying to demonstrate superior knowledge.

12. Once an applicant's job history has been discussed, move on to other areas. Find out about their strengths, weaknesses and preferences. What are their career aspirations? Can your company meet them? Judge how quickly they respond. Do they catch on fast? Do not reveal any personal opinions or they will simply follow the lead provided.

13. Do not ask questions about marriage plans, plans to start a family, family commitments or child care arrangements, which might be interpreted as discriminatory. If the applicant tells you that she is pregnant, make it clear that this will not affect the selection decision.

14. The interview is a two way activity. After you have finished your questions, the applicant will want to know more about the job and the company. Tell the applicant what you think they ought to know and answer any questions but keep control of the interview. Do not let the applicant take over the interview. Make sure the applicant knows the salary range, conditions of employment and promotion prospects.

15. When the applicant is fully informed about the job, find out if he/she is still interested. It can save a great deal of time, effort and administration by sorting out those who do not wish to pursue their application any further at this stage.

16. Ask for and answer any other questions.



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17. Once the suitability of an applicant has been established, attract them to the job and the company. Remember, the more desirable the applicant the easier it will be for them to get a job elsewhere.

The impression they get of the company will influence their decision to join as well as their future attitude towards it if an offer is made. Applicants may pass on their impressions to other potential recruits. Beware, however, of over selling the job. Do not make it seem more attractive than it is. Tell the truth “warts and all”.

18. When the interview has reached its conclusion, confirm the next stage. This could be a second interview, an offer subject to references, a rejection or the promise of a decision within a specified time. If you promise to write within a week, do so. To do otherwise is discourteous and creates a poor impression of the company.

19. Complete your interview notes and make sure that they are accurate, relevant and objective

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