

7. How to Conduct a Face to Face Interview

1 OVERVIEW

Since hiring a new employee can be a time consuming and expensive process, it's important to do your best to pick the right person for the job. Having a structured recruitment and interview process in place can increase the likelihood of hiring your next star employee.

2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The main piece of legislation which covers the recruitment process is the Equality Act 2010 which makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of one or more protected characteristics. Job seekers are covered by this legislation.

The protected characteristics are: Age, Race, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation.

To minimise the risk of receiving a claim for unfairness or discrimination, have a structured strategy underpinning your recruitment process.

3 PLAN YOUR INTERVIEW PROCESS

- Decide whether there will be a one or two stage interview process.
- Determine who will be involved in the interviews.
- Decide whether candidates will be required to give a presentation or take a test as part of the interview.
- Schedule some dates and plan in times for the interviews.

4 DEVELOPING QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

Questions should be developed jointly by the interviewers in advance of the interviews. These should be typed up and a set of interview questions provided to each interviewer for each candidate.

When developing interview questions, you should ensure that you are not asking anything which could be considered discriminatory in any way. Managers should have a clear understanding of equality and the potential for discrimination practice at the interview stage.

You should develop two types of questions:

- Questions relating to the individual candidate's application and CV. Review each candidate's CV to look for gaps or areas which are unclear and which you need to explore at interview.
- Questions specific to the role and the person specification

Standard questions for each candidate should be developed based on the person specification for the role. The aim is to determine the best candidate for the role against the criteria outlined in your person specification.

5 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You can use many different types of questions in interviews.

Open questions - An open question is one which allows the candidate to give the information they want to give and to develop their answer. E.g. *"What experience have you had of...?"*. These are preferable to closed questions that lead to yes or no answers.

Probing questions - A probing or follow up question is one to use to find out more or check what the candidate has said. Probing questions are useful for finding out the part an individual actually played in an example they have given.

Questions which ask for examples - Ask candidates to give examples to demonstrate their skill, knowledge or experience or to illustrate their point.

Hypothetical questions - These are good for finding out what an individual would do in a particular situation. Use hypothetical questions with caution. Try to stick to questions which lead to real examples of what candidates have actually done.

6 PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

It is important to make sure each interviewer has:

- A copy of the interview schedule
- A copy of the advert, person specification and job description
- A copy of the CV or application form provided by the candidate
- The interview questions and assessment form

The interview room - Make sure that the interview room is private and that there will be no interruptions during the interview. The layout of the room should be professional and comfortable.

Opening the Interview - It is usually the hiring manager who will open the interview. Here are a few ways to help the candidate to feel at ease:

- Make introductions. Ideally candidates should know from their invite who they meeting prior to the interview.
- Outline the format of the interview and explain the role played by each interviewer. If the candidate is required to give a presentation as part of the interview, explain when they will be asked to do it.
- Let the candidate know what type of questions to expect and encourage them to take their time to answer questions.
- Let candidates know whether you are happy for them to ask questions through the interview or whether they should save these until the end.
- Mention that notes will be taken.
- Give a brief introduction to the company and/or the role they have applied for.

Closing the interview - Give the interview candidates an opportunity to ask questions. It is good practice to ask: *"Is there anything else you would like to tell us?"*. This gives the candidate a final chance to say anything that they haven't felt they have had the opportunity to cover.

Thank the candidate for their time and explain the next steps. Let them know when they will know the outcome of the interview. The close should be the same for all candidates whether you have a sense that they are potentially the successful candidate or not.

7 TAKING NOTES

It is important that the interview panel makes notes throughout the process for several reasons:

- It is difficult to remember everything a candidate said, even if it's just one candidate attending an interview.
- The interview panel should make notes against each question and the notes should be clear and factual.
- The panel should not note down any personal comments about the candidate.
- If you receive a claim for discrimination in your recruitment processes, your notes will help to demonstrate that you conducted a structured and unbiased recruitment process.

8 NEXT STEPS

- Create a template form to capture the answers to interview questions.
- Prepare a plan and schedule for your interviews.
- Ensure that you keep and securely store your notes from the interview process for the required amount of time.

9 FACTSHEETS & TEMPLATES TO HELP

- How to Create a Job Description and Person Specification
- Promoting an equal opportunities workplace and avoiding discrimination
- How to Invite Candidates to Interview
- How to Conduct a Telephone Interview
- How to Review Candidates and Make a Hiring Decision
- Interview Assessment Form

10 FOR MORE ADVICE AND INFORMATION

ACAS - (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. www.acas.org.uk

Achieve in Bath & North East Somerset - free recruitment support, advice and help. Matching job seekers, employers and course providers to help employers recruit, train and retain employees. www.achieveinbathnes.co.uk

Future Bright - free help & support for businesses and employees to realise their full potential. Provide access to training and development, workshops and networking. HR support to promote career progression and best practice to attract and retain staff. www.futurebright.org.uk

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