

# Interviewing & Selection - Insider Tips

**M**ost business owners and managers would agree that people are their most valuable resource. The performance of your employees impacts upon the performance and profitability of your organisation perhaps more than anything else.

So how do you go about interviewing and selecting the brightest and best when a vacancy arises? Most managers and business owners do not have specialist skills in this area which can often lead to bad recruitment decisions, costing the business time and money it can ill afford.

The good news is that there are some fundamental guidelines you can follow to cut down on mistakes and improve the outcome of your interviewing and selection process.

The most common issues are lack of preparation and too much reliance on gut instinct rather than following due processes. It's easy to get carried away when an interview is going well but skimming over crucial information and not following up references are typical examples of oversights that can lead to disastrous recruitment decisions.

## PREPARATION

- Write a job description and determine the key attributes and experience you are looking for in the ideal candidate
- Read & digest the content of each candidate's CV prior to interview and jot down any notes
- Prepare your interview questions in advance and ensure that they are designed to find evidence of skills and experience in the key areas of your job description. Asking all candidates the same basic questions aids with comparison.
- If more than one person will be interviewing, agree each person's role in advance

## DELIVERY

- Put candidates at ease by introducing those present and explaining the structure of the interview/what to expect
- Ask open ended questions and ask for examples/elaboration (ones that cannot be answered with yes or no). Phrases such as "Tell me about...How did you... Explain to me..." are ideal.
- Cover any gaps in employment – these can be very revealing
- Ask the reasons for leaving previous jobs – this can be useful in determining the candidate's motives and approach to decision making
- Give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions – this can reveal how interested they are in the role and how much preparation they have put in



## POST INTERVIEW

- Obtain referee details & make sure you follow them up. Many people don't. Always try to speak to referees personally – you can usually learn a lot more from talking to a person than you can from a form.
- Write up interview notes or complete a scoring sheet/matrix to refer back to after each interview. By the time you have interviewed 3-4 candidates it will be a lot easier to accurately compare them if you have documented your findings.
- Keep candidates informed throughout the process, particularly if there are any delays. Good candidates can be lost through poor communication and delayed decisions.

Whilst some of this advice may seem obvious to experienced recruiters, it's usually the basics that get overlooked. Get the basics right every time by following this process and you should enjoy an increase in the number of successful recruitment decisions. Interviewing and selection is a subject area that is covered in-depth on several business advice websites such as [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) and you can watch free video tutorials on sites like [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Good luck!

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