

Plan Your Next Interview with This Quick Checklist

A Handy Interviewing Inventory

“Our interviewing process used to be a major time drain. Every candidate was brought in for an in-person interview, and I would meet with them. Now, we bring in a temp team when we need to fill a position. They phone screen a number of candidates first. Next, we have candidates talk on the phone with me for 15 minutes. The top candidates come in for an in-person interview.”

—U.S.-Based Entrepreneur

Over the course of your recruiting process so far, you may have scanned LinkedIn profiles for high performers or asked around in your network for employee referrals to find potential candidates for the opening at your business. You most likely wrote up a job listing to post on your website, on job boards or both. Finally, you selected candidates who fit the basic requirements of the position, whether reviewing applications manually or with reporting tools.¹ Once you’ve completed these preliminary steps like writing a job description, posting an ad, screening resumes and giving the candidate any online assessments to take, you can move on to the interviewing stage.

Instructions

Before conducting an interview, whether it be by phone, a 1:1 interview or a panel interview, use this checklist to prepare. Complete individual items by checking them in the checkboxes. When you’ve completed all checklist items for the applicable section, you’re ready to start interviewing!

PRE-INTERVIEW PLANNING

- Review the job description for the skills you need.
- Determine whether one or more interviews will be needed, and what type (phone screening, in-person).
- Decide who in the company will talk to each candidate at various interviewing stages.
- Select a location for each interview (e.g., office, lunch, phone, video conference).
- Put your phone on silent mode and turn off e-mail notifications to minimize distractions.
- Have a system in place for note-taking; if using a scorecard, create a scoring plan with criteria and ratings method.
- Determine the questions you want to ask, the order in which you want to ask them, and how long you want to spend on each topic.
- Prepare a few behavior-based questions to ask the candidate (use the the **STAR** method to learn about the **Situation** they faced, **Tasks** involved in the situation, **Actions** to resolve the situation, and the **Results** of their actions).
- Plan how you will describe the company to the candidate.
- Prepare answers for the questions the candidates will likely ask.
- Review the candidate's resume and any accompanying and relevant materials such as a writing sample.
- Plan what to share with the candidate about next steps.

PHONE SCREENING INTERVIEW: ADDITIONAL PLANNING

- Decide what you are screening for in this introductory phone call.
- Decide which of your planned questions are best asked by phone.
- Be sure you are in a place with a consistent phone connection.

1:1 INTERVIEW: ADDITIONAL PLANNING

- Mentally prepare yourself to be an active listener (restating what another person says to demonstrate understanding).
- Budget 15 minutes for the candidate to ask the interviewer questions.
- Provide a comfortable and safe environment to encourage the candidate to be relaxed.

PANEL INTERVIEW: ADDITIONAL PLANNING

- Reinforce that every panelist has reviewed the candidate's resume, writing sample, portfolio, etc.
- Gather a list of questions from each panel member (each panel member should ask at least one question), review questions to make sure they are appropriate, and decide who will ask each question.
- Allot time at the beginning of the interview to introduce everyone in the room (name, job title, and brief description of what they do).
- Designate a panel member to let the candidate know who will follow up with them and an estimated time frame to hear back from the company.
- Prepare a plan to escort the candidate out at the end of the interview (who will escort them out, what info to share with the candidate before escorting them out, etc.).

Conclusion

For a successful interview, plan ahead. Make sure you are adequately prepared for each type of interview so that you can find the best candidate for the job and fill the role in your company.

¹ *Screening and Evaluating Candidates*, Society for Human Resource Management (March 2, 2018), <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/screeningandevaluatingcandidates.aspx> (accessed Feb. 21, 2019).