

Interviewing Framework



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You need to be clear about what you want someone to achieve.

What does success look like as you look ahead?



1. Establish what you want someone to achieve (key performance indicators)
2. Determine what someone needs to do in order to achieve those goals (job description / nature of the job)
3. Identify the characteristics required of someone in order to make this happen (person criteria)

If you seek to hire an “A” player you need to be clear about what you have to offer a candidate who is heads down and happy.

Regardless, you should be conscious of the fact that recruitment is a reciprocal process.

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Determine the hiring challenge

When building the brief (job & person spec) consider....

- The business – its operations, the environment in which it operates, any significant plans. Consider what you choose to make public and what you don't
- Background to the role becoming available – what has happened to create the vacancy?
- Where the role sits – organisation structure, team (functionally and physically).
- The purpose of the role, its scope and its dimensions.
- The principal accountabilities of the role.
- Exactly what would you like someone to accomplish in the role and in what timescales
- Key challenges in the role and attractions to it.
- Future plans for the role – career/progression/intentions.
- The person spec criteria and what's essential/desirable experience (track record), knowledge, qualifications, skills, technical competencies. This should be done with the inputs of other people. When building the brief consider....
- You should determine which competencies are required in the role and to what extent these may be required i.e. to a greater or lesser extent



Achievement Orientated	Analytical Ability	Communication Skills (Oral, written, presentation)	Creativity / innovation
Decision-Making Skills	Integrity / Honesty	Flexibility / Adaptability	Initiative
Interpersonal Skills	Leadership	Management Skills	Persuasiveness / Influencing
Planning and Organisational Skills	Problem-Solving Skills	Team Building / Team Work	Time Management

- Work to a manageable number of criteria
- Where to look – candidate background.
- Recruitment and selection process – stages, participants, criteria, tools, timescales...
- Remuneration package, reward and benefits.
- On-boarding and engagement plans.

First interviews	Second interviews	Final interviews
A one to one meeting: the manager and the candidate.	<p>Panel interview, often with a presentation or role play.</p> <p>Panel: the hiring manager, HR officer, a peer or team member and sometimes the boss's boss</p> <p>A one on one session with an HR officer.</p>	The manager's manager. Often a rubber stamp.

You need to determine what questions will be asked of the candidate, at what stages and by whom.



First Interviews

Assume control of the interview from the outset.

Opening statement

First interviews are best structured in a chronological order i.e. past, present, future.

Tell the candidate what you wish to cover. Rather than proceed to tell them about your company and the job, *instead ask them what they know about your company and the job they are interviewing for*. A great way to assess and see how prepared the candidates is.

You may then wish to move on to tell them a little bit more about the role – however keep this concise and stick to the point. In advance of the interview you should consider writing down five bullet points of information which best describe the company, the role and what's expected.

Tell them we can talk further about the role towards the end of the meeting, let's now talk about you...

Past

Most people interviewing do not want to hear a candidate's life story, so be firm when probing about the past.

- I don't want to cover your entire career history, I'm most interested in the last five years. However, I am keen to understand how and why you have chosen the career path you have followed.
- What three accomplishments are you most proud of in your career to date?
- Would you talk me through your last 5 years?
- When they have done so, this is a good time to probe about experience, skills and accomplishments which are going to be most relevant to your hiring requirement.
- How do you go about...?
- What results have you got...?
- What do you like and dislike about your current job?

Present

- What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your current situation / why are you looking to move?
- What kind of role are you looking for?

Future

- How do you wish to develop your career?
- What would be your ideal job?
- How does this job fit in with your career plans?

Wrapping up

- What questions do you have for me?
- Ask the candidate how they feel about the opportunity on the basis of their understanding of the opening.
- End the meeting by thanking the candidate for their time and suggest a timeframe in which you may get back to them.

Following the interview, jot down any thoughts you may have had, and, in particular, any areas you may wish to probe further at second interview.

Competency based interviewing

Competence (or competency) is the ability of an individual to do a job properly. A competency is a set of defined behaviours that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviours in individual employees.

What does competency-based interviewing mean?

Competency-based interviews are structured, with the interviewer working from a set of predetermined questions. They work on the basis that a candidate's past performance is a reliable predictor of the future, so you should ask a number of questions that require the candidate to draw on specific aspects of his or her past performance and therefore provide evidence (or more realistically suggest) that the candidate is well or suitably qualified for the role.

Competency-based interview questions will typically begin:



These are often based around core behavioural competencies such as:



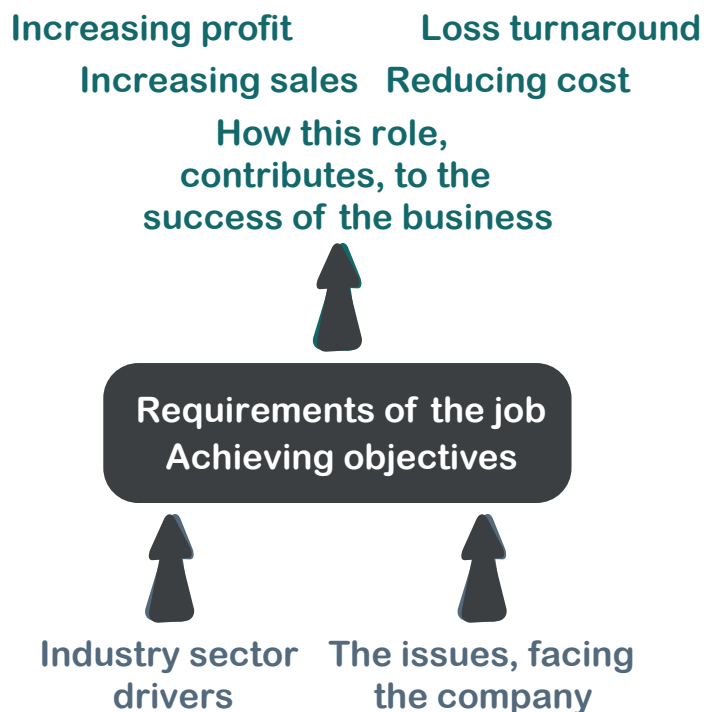
The concept here is that you are seeking to establish with some precision that the candidate possesses the competencies required to be able to perform in the role.

Whilst HR practice concerning Competency based interviewing is based on the basis that the past is a predictor of future success, another way of exploring competency is to attempt to determine how a candidate is able to perform in real time.

So, additional ways in which you can assess competencies include through: role plays, presentations or by looking at examples of work. Or asking how the candidate would approach a particular project, task, problem.... How would you go about....?

You may wish to include 3 or more competency based interview questions or exercises when interviewing (these could be spread over 1st, 2nd, 3rd... interview stages) covering quite specific past experiences on the one hand and more general competencies (aptitude) on the other.

When determining what competency based interview questions to ask, consider the business issues your organisation is encountering, its strategic objectives, changes you may envisage looking ahead and, of course, fundamentally how this job contributes to the success of your business.



You can find a comprehensive question bank in our white paper “Competency based interviewing”. It contains examples of generic competency based interview questions in addition to those for specific functional areas and applying to different levels of seniority.

Second, third and subsequent interviews

Shortly after the first interview, you should jot down any areas which, in hindsight you feel you should have covered, or perhaps ones which require additional exploration. Include these in your second interview discussions.

Does the candidate understand the exact nature of the job?

- Outline the detail, expectations, realities....
- You do not want the candidate arriving and having misinterpreted what is required.
- When you outline the detail, you will be able to interpret the candidate's responses and body language, which may prompt confirmation of ability and interest or shortcomings and indifference – or worse.

What did you not cover properly at the first interview?

- Questions you should have asked and things you should have said.

Candidate presentations....

For senior / professional type roles it may be appropriate to ask the candidate to give a presentation: "How would you approach your first 100 days in the role" OR "How would you go about undertaking a particular task". In the latter case the most useful will be that task which will most greatly determine their success or failure in the role. It is quite commonplace for employers to state very clearly to candidates that a presentation should be no more than 20 minutes and that a hard stop will take place regardless as to whether the presentation is completed or not. If you ask the candidate to make a presentation be sure to email the details so that what is expected is not subject to misinterpretation.

Role plays....

Use of role plays – it is very important that parameters and expectations are clear. You may wish to outline the role play at the second interview so that you can see how well the person responds. Alternatively you may wish to email the details so that they can prepare accordingly.

Questions which you may wish to put to a candidate at a second or subsequent interview stage include:

- How do you see yourself / your strengths and weaknesses?
- How would your boss / colleagues describe you?
- Tell me about a good boss you have had? How do you like to be managed?
- What did your last appraisal say?
- What do you think your developmental needs are?
- How do you best learn?



At a second interview stage you may ask a candidate to sit a personality profile or an assessment. Personality profiles are not only useful when making appointments but also a great point of reference when managing someone.

When interviewing be sure to record any thoughts you may have about any knowledge gaps i.e. shortcomings between a candidate's current skill set and what is required in the role.

Miscellaneous tips

You need to position the opening particularly well. Attractive and accurate. The better you set out your stall, the more people who will pay attention, especially those better people who may be more discerning!

Whilst the candidate seated in front of you may not be the answer to your hiring need, you do not wish to set a bad impression – who knows what he or she may say and to whom. Consider your employer brand, you need to set the impression that your company is a great place to work.

Many people, and indeed experienced managers, are familiar only with hiring people who are in between jobs, and have a perception of recruitment and interviewing where the prospective employer examines the candidate.

Whilst it's fundamental to check a candidate's ability to perform the job effectively, there is also the need to position the opening in an attractive light to a candidate who may be subject to several offers, and to understand and be cognizant of the balance of power.

Strong candidates who are heads down and happy, and who may have been encouraged to the interview table, are likely to be well respected at their current employer and highly sought after by others. In instances such as this you need to be especially aware of the fact that recruitment is a reciprocal process.

Hiring is best done as a team.

Experience suggests that, rather than jumping to conclusions about candidates' suitability on the spot – and in particular whilst perhaps feeling good in the presence of a seemingly well qualified candidate – reflect on the interview overnight.

References: It amazes me that people invariably take up references or soundings at the end of the interview process, after they have made up their mind to hire.

Red-flags! Be aware of Red flags such as job hopping, long or difficult commutes to work, relationship problems with other people and big differences between a candidate's salary package and what you have to offer.

“Motivations are key” Look for patterns of behaviour and in answers given by the candidate at interview.

How well does the candidate's experience align with the requirements of your job opening in respect of scope of responsibility or scale, number of reports, target, budget, geographic dimensions and timescales relating to sense of urgency or patience?

Does the candidate's career progression suggest that they are working towards the focus of this job or away from it?

Do you consider the candidate to be on an upward trajectory in their career, to have reached a peak or to be on a downward spiral?

Is the candidate genuinely interested in this job? Or are they more interested in a job downstream i.e. the next level up?

Candidate check list & rating sheet

This can be used as a way of checking a candidate's suitability as well as benchmarking one candidate against another.

Candidate name:	Interviewed by:
Position:	Date:

Rating:

5) Excellent: Does the candidate meet all aspects of the characteristic?

4) Good / suitable: The candidate gave suitable responses – meets the standard well.

3) Satisfactory: The candidate gave suitable responses – meets the standard.

2) Poor / some doubts: Not an area of strength – responses lack substance.

1) Unacceptable: Evident weakness – responses did not meet the standard.

Weighting	Dimension (competency, experience, track record....)	Rating	Comments:

Notes...

Whether hiring a Chef or CEO, its essential be able to say “yes” to these three questions.

Can they do the job?	Do they want the job?	Will they fit in?
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Qualify the following as appropriate:

Background checks References / soundings.	Verify / seek proof of candidates' salary package.	When will the candidate resign?
Qualifications.	Discuss counter offer?	When can the candidate start?