

Tips for Successful Interviewing

How can I be more effective when interviewing candidates for my company? Straightforward and precise, here are some suggestions to increase your hit rate for identifying A-players:

- Conduct a thorough investigation of the candidate's history to assess the track record of accomplishments. Look for promotions, awards, certificates, degrees, GPAs, salary increases, bonuses, etc. Base your final evaluation more on achievement, not likability or "gut" feel.
- Ask questions that require numerical answers such as, "What was the percentage in profits during your time with the company?" or "How many people have you released because of poor performance?" Quantitative questions are verifiable and less likely to be faked.
- In interpreting answers from the interview, do not make excuses for what appears to be under-performance or bad breaks. If there is a pattern of numerous layoffs, investigate the reasons why the candidate was not one of those selected to stay during times of cutbacks.
- Use a verifying selection system deploying a variety of methods and indicators. Different techniques such as open-ended questions, applicant self-rating, behavioral inquiries, dichotomies, assessment testing, panel and individual interviewing, along with incisive probing of the person's history can boost the validity of your conclusions.
- Use a cross-functional selection team to obtain diverse opinions.
- Remember that core personality traits tend not to change significantly. While knowledge may expand, it is possible and likely that a person's behavioral weakness from the past still exists in some form today. To determine or confirm these, ask how they have improved, what self-help books have they read, etc.

Finally, check your demeanor to ensure that your style is welcoming. Give positive, non-verbal feedback to promote openness. And, do not forget to allow time at the end of the interview for questions from the applicant and also time to promote the benefits of working with your corporation. While we all want to carefully scrutinize and evaluate a candidate, it must be done in a balanced way to ensure a positive experience for what may be your next employee.