

Best Practices - Your Hiring Process

As an employer, conducting interviews is a crucial part of the hiring process. Here are some tips to help you conduct effective interviews and make informed decisions:

1. **Clearly define the job requirements:** Before posting the position or conducting interviews, ensure that you have a clear understanding of the skills, critical qualifications, and experience required for the position. This is for the job posting. This will help you ask relevant questions, stay focused, and assess candidates effectively. Job postings are not the same as job descriptions.
2. **Consider a panel interview:** Involving multiple interviewers can provide different perspectives and reduce individual biases. Panel interviews also allow for more comprehensive evaluation of a candidate's fit within the organization. It's recommended that all panel members are present for all candidate interviews, start to finish.
3. **Choosing the interview team:** This gets tricky. Many companies like involving peers in the interview process, but it's not recommended. First, they don't have a say in the process. Second, if the candidate is more qualified, better skilled, etc., the peer may feel threatened. Candidates pick up on these vibes and may decline to move forward in the process because let's face it, you should like the people you work with. Instead, choose a qualified team trained in interviewing that knows the position and how it fits into the organization's overall success. Choose 2-3 people who are available for all candidate interviews. Be sure everyone has a copy of and understands the job description as posted.
4. **Prepare a structured interview format:** Plan the interview by creating a structured format. This may include a mix of behavioral, situational, and technical questions. Having a consistent framework for all candidates will make it easier to compare their responses and make a fair assessment. Be sure the interview team knows who is leading the various sections. Keep the interview process streamlined. Time is your enemy.
5. **Review resumes beforehand:** Familiarize yourself with the candidates' resumes before the interview. This will help you understand their background and identify areas to probe deeper during the interview.
6. **Use behavioral questions:** Ask candidates about their past experiences and how they handled specific situations. Behavioral questions help assess their problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and fit within the company culture. For example, you could ask, "Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult team member. How did you handle the situation?"

7. Ask open-ended questions: Avoid yes or no questions as they don't provide much insight into a candidate's abilities. Instead, ask open-ended questions that encourage candidates to provide detailed responses. This will help you evaluate their thought process and communication skills.
8. Utilize hypothetical scenarios: Present candidates with hypothetical situations related to the job and ask them how they would approach or solve them. This helps assess their problem-solving abilities, analytical thinking, and how they apply their knowledge in practical scenarios.
9. Allow candidates to ask questions during the interview, not just at the end: Remember, candidates are interviewing you as much as you are interviewing them. Give them an opportunity to ask questions about the role, company, or any concerns they might have. This not only helps them gain clarity but also demonstrates their interest and engagement in the position.
10. Take notes during the interview: Take notes on each candidate's responses and overall impressions. This will help you remember the details and make an objective comparison when evaluating candidates later. Each person on the interview team should rate the candidate independently immediately after the interview. Then discuss as an interview team and take notes on open questions and concerns, positives and negatives, and what the next steps will be.
11. Before making an offer: make sure all job-related questions are answered on both sides. Share the salary range with the candidate. Know that candidates wish for the high number and employers wish for the low number. Make sure they can compare current benefits and costs with your company's benefits and costs. Then have a frank discussion about title, compensation and benefits, start date, etc. before surprising them with an offer letter that may be disappointing. This also significantly helps reduce counteroffers.
12. Offer letter details: be sure to include compensation, benefits or attach a benefits guide, title, start date/time/location, supervisor's name, office location, deadline for accepting the offer, and other important information. Include a signature line indicating their acceptance.
13. Provide feedback and follow-up: After the interview, provide feedback to candidates in a timely manner. Whether they are successful or not, offering constructive feedback shows professionalism and maintains a positive employer brand.

Remember, interviews are just one part of the hiring process. It's essential to combine interviews with other evaluation methods, such as reference checks and skills assessments, to make a well-informed hiring decision.

Do you know why your company loses great candidates? Need help with your hiring process? Contact Kim at klane@synergyrecruitingpartners.com.