

Ask the Career Coach: Selecting Talent

You've been asked to interview candidates. Now what?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I was recently asked to recruit for my functional area. I am concerned about how to select the best candidates. How do I refine the selection? Is giving an interview tougher than taking one?

KG
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Congratulations on this added responsibility. Understanding your company's views and what they want in terms of future recruitment is critical. Is your company looking to build a pipeline of talent for future development or do they need the experience now? What mix will be needed?

Think strategically about current and future trends in the marketplace, the economy and the talent available. Do you need to develop in-house talent? Or do you need to sponsor external talent through a program to feed your future needs? Furthermore, what investments need to be considered?

For immediate hires, think about who is successful in your company—what values, skills and style do they demonstrate? What companies have they come from? What educational backgrounds are preferred? What additional training does your company value? Are the current team members strong and able to lead for the future or are there competency gaps that need to be considered? If the answer is yes, would you consider reformulating the current hiring profile?

Once you have determined the core competencies of the candidates desired, review the values of your organization. Once you have the values and your organization's culture correctly identified, then formulate questions for screening candidates. Screening or interviewing candidates for the right personality and cultural fit is not difficult when the right questions are asked. Many times, the best questions come from the individuals performing the work and the managers evaluating them. Ask your colleagues for advice about specific questions or situations you may ask about.

Consider the industry and technical knowledge needed; personality traits desired; work style and how the new hire will work with the team, vendors, and others; and behavioral responses if asking situational-based questions. Ask for specific examples. Consider asking what they might have done differently now they have had the chance to reflect on the situation.

Is interviewing tougher than taking one? This depends on how you handle it. Interviewing is two-sided—you are screening candidates and selling your organization. If you have invested the time doing your research and assessing the situation thoroughly, the interviewing process should be a worthwhile, challenging, and gratifying endeavor.

"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com.

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