

15

Interview productivity hacks

To help you get the most
out of every interview.



Make the most of every minute you spend interviewing

The interview stage has the potential to change everything.

It can make you look at someone you weren't sure about in a whole new light, or it can reveal that a great candidate might be better suited for a different position altogether.

Since interviews are such an important part of your hiring process, it's crucial to make sure you're focused on what matters. To help you spend less time and energy on the inefficient, tedious parts, we've put together this list of simple but ingenious hacks that can make your interviews more productive and enjoyable – for you and your candidates.





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TIP



Getting ready

Outline your interview process

When a candidate knows what to expect before their interview, the process can go a lot smoother. Provide a clear outline of your interview process on your careers' site. This is one way to instantly tell whether a candidate did their homework or not.

All of this information empowers candidates to proceed with confidence—meaning you won't have to field multiple questions and calls.



of candidates turn to your company's website for information while preparing for an interview.

Provide basic information:

- Let them know to bring copies of their resume or portfolio
- Let them know what's expected of them
- Do they need to check in when they arrive and, if so, where?
- What kind of questions will they be asked?



Getting ready

Use the Scheduler option in InMail

If you're scheduling one-on-one interviews with candidates, use the LinkedIn [Scheduler](#) feature in LinkedIn Recruiter. This tool allows a candidate to put time on your calendar to talk, avoiding countless back-and-forth messages to find a time that suits you both.

» How Scheduler works:

- Invites the candidate to pick a time via a link in your InMail
- Syncs with your Office 365 or Google Calendar
- Shows your availability to the candidate
- Automatically updates your schedule once a time is chosen

Simple!

[Explore Scheduler and LinkedIn Recruiter →](#)

Scheduler settings

How long do meetings last by default?

You can customize this for each invitation you send

30 minutes

How many days of availability can candidates view?

Candidates can view my availability for an indefinite period of time

Don't allow same day meetings On

What is your preferred time zone? ⓘ

(GMT-07:00) Pacific Time

Weekly availability

Sunday	OFF	+
Monday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	X
Tuesday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	X
Wednesday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	X
Thursday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	X
Friday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	X
Saturday	OFF	+



Getting ready

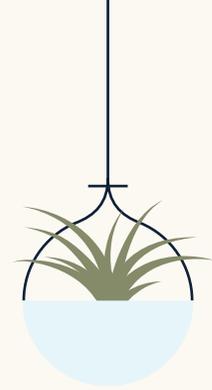
Use TextUs to text candidates directly from your computer

If there's a change of plan leading up to the interview, you want candidates to know right away. Alerting them can avoid potential confusion, such as the person arriving at the wrong time or going to a different location.

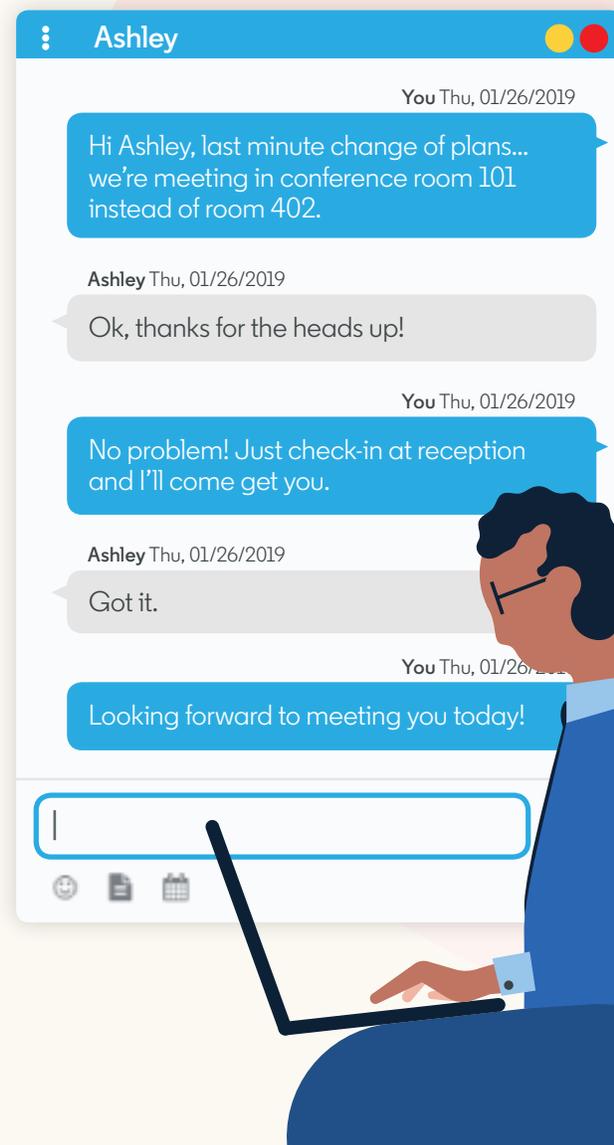
Not everyone has email on their phone, so texting the candidate is a natural option.

» Give [TextUs](#) a go:

- This simple texting software allows you to send a quick text directly from your desktop, so you don't have to stop what you're doing and pick up your phone.
- Both the Chrome Browser extension and web app allow you to send texts from your business number, so candidates know immediately who's reaching out.
- When you schedule an interview, give candidates a heads up that you might text them. Unsolicited texts – even helpful ones – can feel invasive or go unread.



+ Pro tip:
TextUs claims it can increase response rates by up to 800%.





Getting ready

Provide examples of the soft skills you're looking for

Different interviewers may have different interpretations of what a particular soft skill is and what it looks like. This can lead to unproductive misunderstandings that hold you back from evaluating candidates consistently.

So clearly explain what each soft skill looks like in action, providing a few relevant examples:

- **Problem solver:** Asks relevant questions, identifies challenges, poses achievable solutions, can speak to past work successes
- **Good communicator:** Articulate, replies promptly, adjusts tone and communication style depending on audience
- **Team player:** Active listener, willing to cooperate, can delegate tasks, open to negotiation, embraces different points of view

Pro tip:

Avoid confusion down the line by making sure all interviewers are on the same page.



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Getting ready

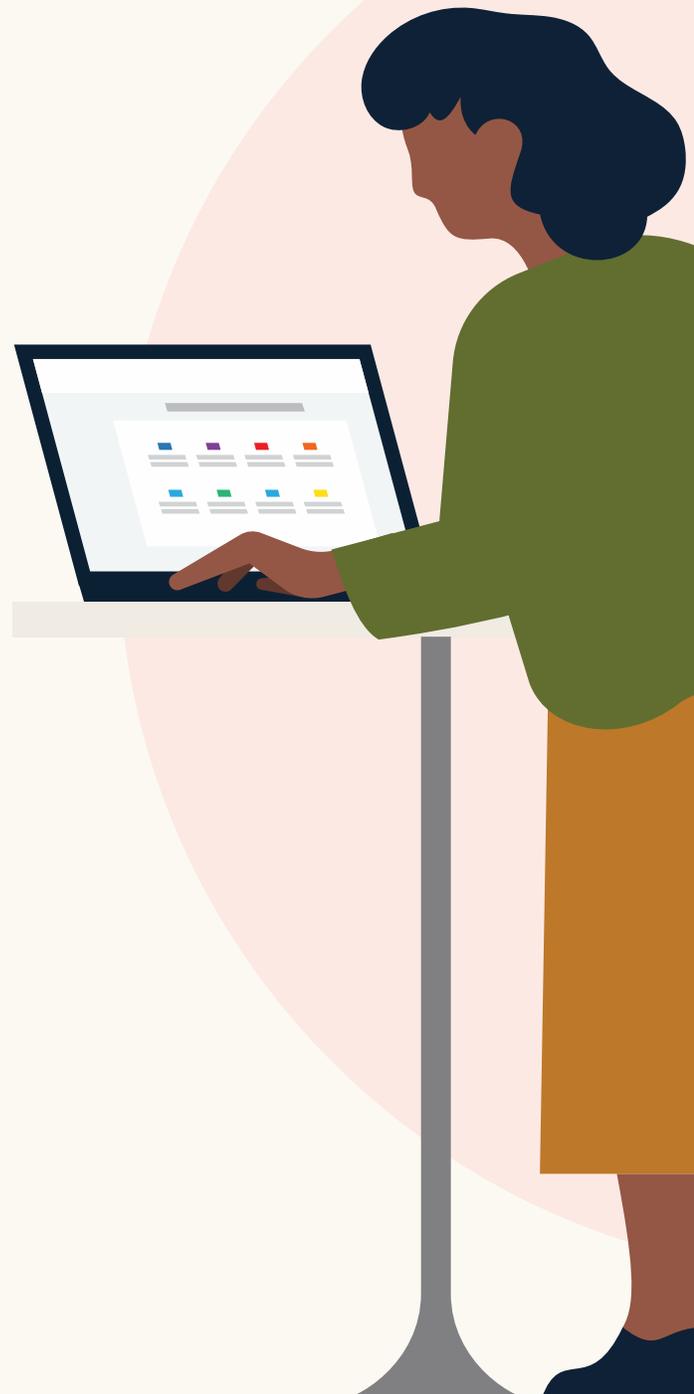
Create a list of questions tailored to the role

When was the last time you gave your standard list of interview questions a refresh? While it's OK to have a few go-tos that you use again and again, it's a good idea to generate a unique list for every role you want to fill. This helps ensure that you're searching for the exact skills and traits the company needs.

Try our [Interview Question Generator](#). It only takes about a minute to fill out.

1. **Select the top soft skills you want to screen for.**
2. **Select the questions that are most relevant to the role.**
3. **Print your guide. It comes with space to take notes below each question and a scoring system to help you rate each candidate consistently.**

[Try the Interview Question Generator →](#)





Getting ready

Equip candidates with the STAR method

Some people are just naturally better at interviewing than others—but that doesn't mean they're necessarily the right candidate for the job.

To ensure you're always getting the information that you need to pinpoint the best of the best, provide candidates with this handy template that outlines the STAR method of answering:

- » **S Situation:** What were the circumstances of the role? What was the challenge?
- » **T Task:** What goal were you working toward?
- » **A Action:** What did you do specifically to address the situation?
- » **R Result:** What was the outcome? What did you learn?

[Get the STAR template to share →](#)

+ Pro tip: By letting candidates know that this structure for answering questions is recommended by the experts, you can also show them that you're in their corner.





Gauging fit

Meet candidates in a casual setting

Candidates are used to interviewing in offices and conference rooms, so taking them out of those formal settings can help them relax and lower their guard. Coffee shops and restaurants are good options, but some companies get really creative with it—like Mercedes-Benz, which often interviews candidates inside its latest models.

Relaxed environments also allow you to observe the candidate using their soft skills in the real world. If they're polite, timely, and engaged – whatever the setting – then you've got a strong candidate on your hands.

» Soft skills to look out for:

- They arrive on time
- They don't check their phone during the conversation
- They treat people around them, including staff, well

53%

of talent professionals agree that meeting candidates in a casual setting is one of the most useful interviewing innovations.

“Go to your local coffee shop. Science tells us when someone has a drink in hand, they're far more relaxed. You'll see their authentic selves and who they really are.”

– [Brendan Browne](#),

Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition at LinkedIn.





Gauging fit

Use a job audition to gauge performance

The job audition is a powerful but underused twist on the traditional interview that can tell you a lot about a candidate's suitability for a role.

Some companies bring candidates in for a few hours or a full day, while others hire them for a paid trial period for a week or a month. Whatever option you choose, be sure to respect the candidate's time and make the process as rewarding for them as it is for you.

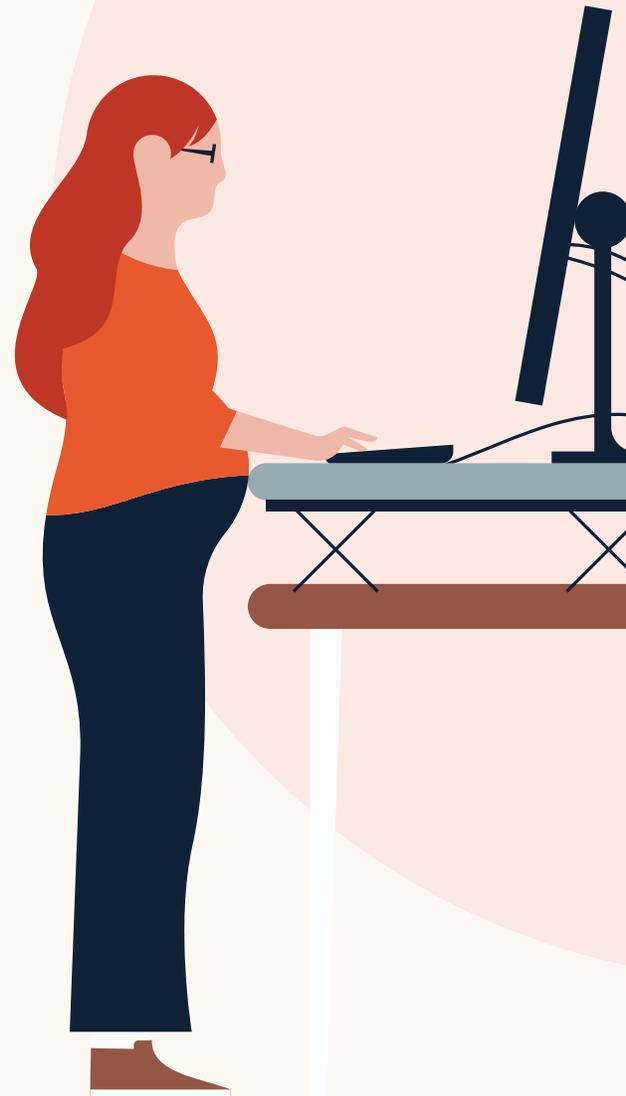
» Job audition goals:

- Observe the candidate perform the type of work they'd be doing on the job
- See how they'd use their skills and interact with the team they could be joining
- Allow the candidate to experience your culture firsthand



54%

of talent professionals consider job auditions to be a useful innovation – and that number may only increase as more companies adopt it.





Gauging fit

Streamline remote interviews using HireVue

In an ideal world, all candidates would come on-site at some point during the hiring process. But between scheduling issues and travel expenses, that isn't always possible.

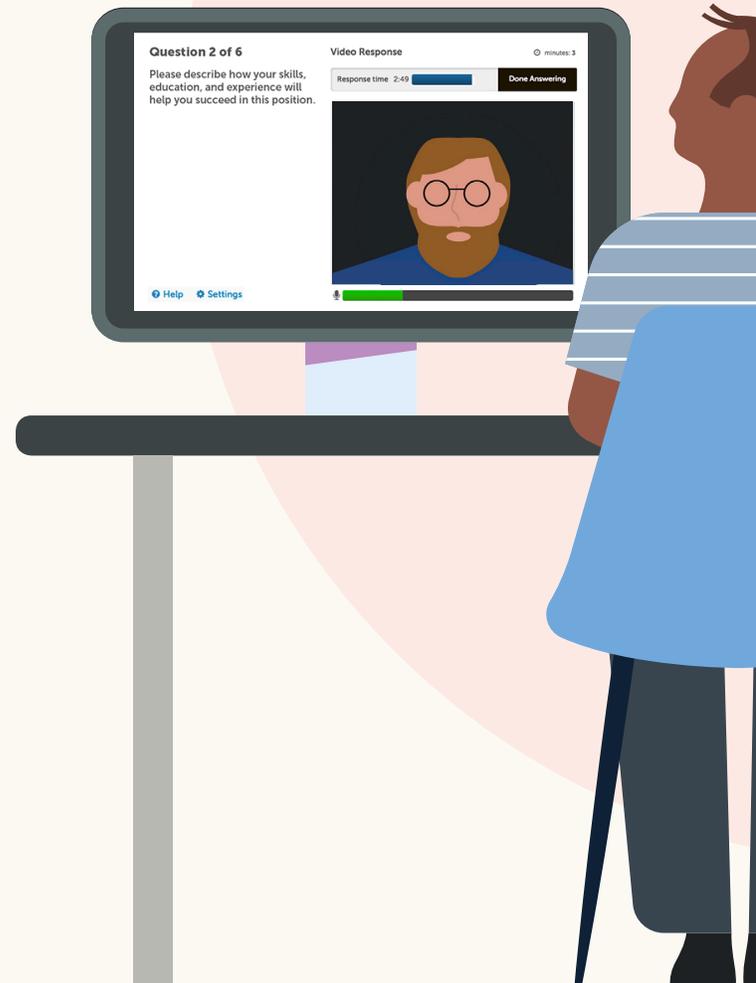
Luckily, modern technology has made it easy to connect over a webcam. You can use Skype, Hangouts, or any number of tools to do this, but one to consider is HireVue.

» **With [HireVue](#), you can:**

- Score each candidate overall or on a per-question basis in real time
- Individual interviewers can indicate whether they'd recommend the person for the position to ensure each candidate is evaluated consistently
- Chat feature lets the team communicate internally without interrupting the interview, so you can share your notes or remind interviewers to ask certain questions

+ Fun fact:

Unlike generic video conferencing tools, HireVue is specifically designed with interviewers in mind.





Gauging fit

Cut down on the number of interviews and interviewers

It's easy to assume interview-score accuracy is based on having more interviews per candidate with more interviewers involved in each one. And this is true – to an extent.

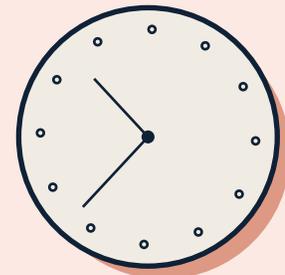
When [Google recruiters](#) tested this theory at their company, they found that after the fourth interview, the likelihood that an extra interview would improve a candidate's chances of getting an offer dropped.

Spend less time scheduling and interviewing, and avoid a stressful candidate experience, by trying the rule of four:

- » Cut your number of interviews and interviewers down, then measure the results
- » If you can still predict future job performance with a relatively high degree of accuracy, then make the change stick

+ Fun fact:

The rule of four can save thousands of hours of employee time.





Great first impressions

Turn off notifications to avoid distractions

You'd be frustrated if a candidate fidgeted with their phone during the interview, right? Well, the feeling's mutual. Checking your phone signals to the candidate that you're not really interested in what they have to say, which doesn't make them feel good. It also increases the likelihood that you'll miss something important.

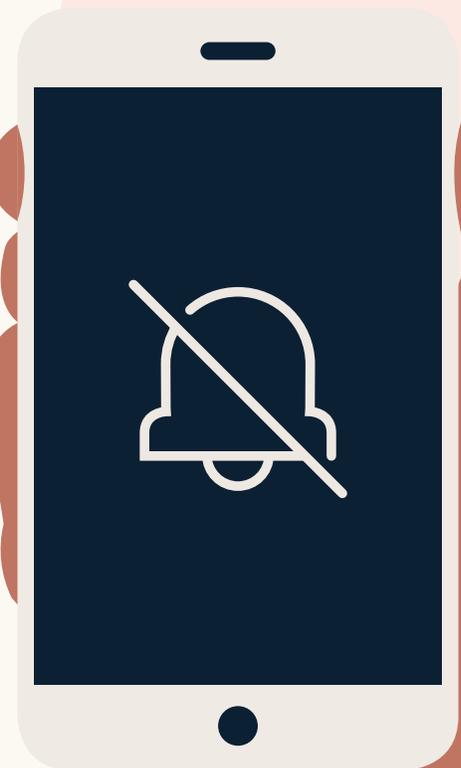
Phone distractions can interrupt the flow of the interview, waste valuable moments as you fumble to turn it off, and make you forget what was being said.

» Avoid phone distractions by:

- Turning off notifications on all of your devices
- Leaving them outside the room entirely
- Using a pen and notepad
- Creating a standardized evaluation template – more on that later

+ Pro tip:

By giving candidates your undivided attention, you can leave them with a favorable impression – and get the most out of every interview.





Great first impressions

Have candidates meet your best interviewers first and last

You probably already have an idea of who your company's best interviewers are. And one swift way to make your interviews better is to arrange for candidates to meet these particular interviewers first and last.

With just a little smart scheduling, you can ensure candidates leave with the best possible impression of your company – making it more likely they'll accept an offer should you extend one.

» Did you know?

The human brain remembers the [first and last events](#) in a series better than any events that fall in the middle.





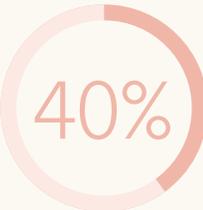
Great first impressions

Get leaders involved

Where possible, ask leaders to sit down and talk with each in-person candidate, even if it's just for a few minutes. This lets the interviewee know that they're dealing with a leader who believes in taking a hands-on approach.

But candidates understand that leaders are busy people, so if you can arrange for them to share a quick handshake and a few words, this will still go a long way.

+ **Why it matters:**
Meeting with a future boss can boost the experience for candidates.



40%

of candidates want to have a conversation with leadership during the interview process.





Gathering feedback

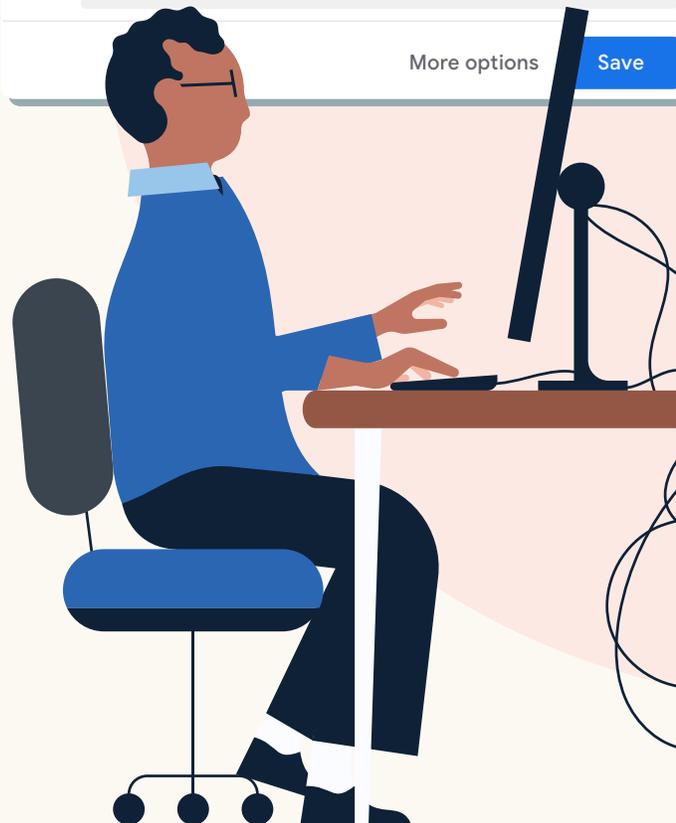
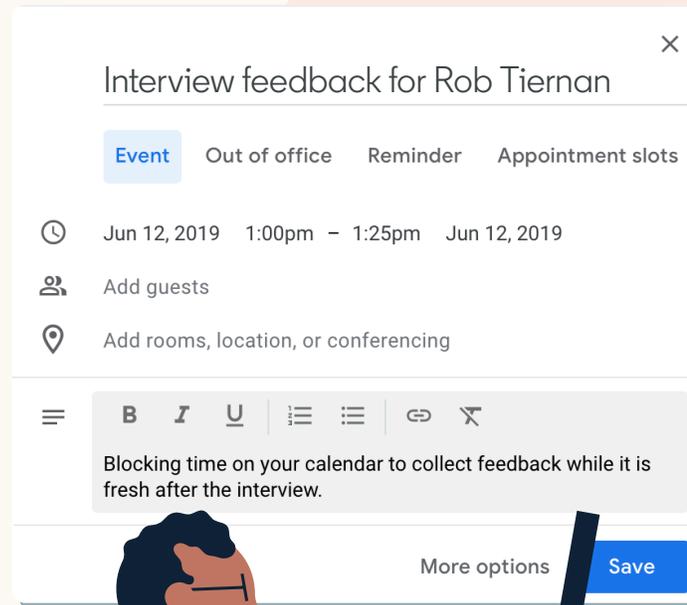
Block time to gather feedback while it's fresh

Chasing down individual interviewers to gather feedback on each candidate can be a full-time job. Worse, if a lot of time goes by between interviewing and reporting feedback, key points may be forgotten – or inadvertently allow the opinions of other interviewers to cloud judgments.

Block off time on each interviewer's calendar to talk to them after they've met the candidates.

» Remember to remind interviewers:

- They need to meet with you before getting buried in other tasks
- Not to discuss candidates with anyone else until all feedback is in





Gathering feedback

Use a standardized evaluation form

To streamline the feedback-gathering process even further, consider equipping each interviewer with a standardized evaluation form before they go into each interview.

Try our handy interview evaluation template. Your interviewers can edit the interactive form directly, or they can print a copy out and fill it in by hand.

» Why use standardized evaluations?

1. Easy to reference
2. Easy to rate
3. Easy to fill out
4. Easy to compare candidates

Even if you use a form, you should insist that interviewers return their feedback in a timely manner and not discuss candidates before completing it.

[Download the evaluation form →](#)

Post-interview feedback

Candidate interview evaluation form

Date:	Interviewer(s):	Recommendation:
Name of applicant:	Position interviewed for:	H=Hire HC=Hold for Consideration NH=Do Not Hire BQ=Better Qualified for Another Position

Application selection criteria matrix

Suggested scoring system:

5 - Excellent (significantly exceeds criteria)	2 - Below Average (generally does not meet criteria)
4 - Above Average (exceeds criteria)	1 - Unacceptable (significantly below criteria)
3 - Average (meets criteria)	

	Score (1 - 5)	Notes/Comments
Decision making/judgement:		
Functional and technical:		
Communication skills:		
Meets educational requirements:		
Cultural fit:		
Initiative:		
Problem solving:		
Quality:		
Teamwork:		
Enthusiasm:		
Overall evaluation:		
Additional notes/comments:		

+ Pro tip:
 Use this form as a starting point to design your own form, adding boxes for all of the information you find most important.



Bonus

5 red flags to watch out for

After the interviews are all wrapped up, narrowing down top candidates can be tough. These red flags may indicate that a candidate isn't quite right for the role. While they may not be deal breakers, they're worth factoring into your final deliberations.

- 1. The candidate arrives late and doesn't send an update.**

Failing to notify you that they're behind schedule shows a lack of judgment and courtesy – as well as poor time-management skills.
- 2. The candidate is rude to the receptionist or other staff.**

If they acted unfriendly or unprofessional toward the receptionist or any other staff, they may prove to be a toxic presence in a team environment.
- 3. The candidate says they want to leave their current job because they're bored.**

The best candidates are able to find something interesting in every task. If they're quick to bore, they may not stick around at your company for long.
- 4. The candidate dodges questions about their failures.**

If they don't give a straight answer to questions about weaknesses and past failures, it may be because they lack self-awareness or because they've never taken a real strategic risk.
- 5. The candidate asks questions just for the sake of asking questions.**

Asking pointless questions shows a lack of critical thinking – and, in some cases, inattention to detail. If they ask, "What's your office culture like?" when you've just gone into depth about it, have they been listening?

To conduct the best interviews, you'll need the best candidates

Improving your interviews is only half of the equation. To hire the best people, you'll need to find them first. LinkedIn can help with that, too.

Source exceptional candidates

LinkedIn Recruiter

Search among LinkedIn's 630+ million members, hone in on specific skills, and reach out directly to candidates who match your job's requirements. Recruiter's powerful custom search filters make it easy to identify and start talking to your next great hire.

[Request demo →](#)

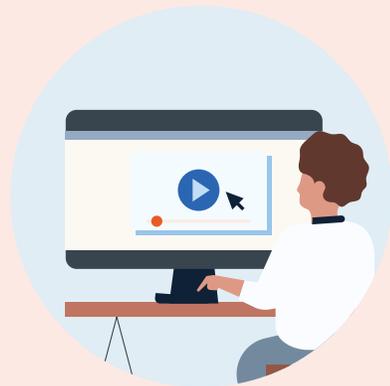


Build a stronger pipeline

Pipeline Builder

Put your company and open positions in front of thousands of qualified candidates. With personalized Sponsored Content and Recruitment Ads, you can catch the attention of candidates who are thinking about a change at exactly the right moment.

[Request demo →](#)

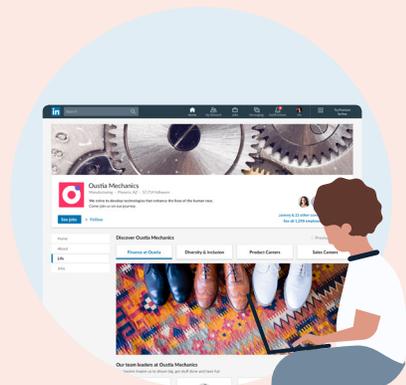


Show them something good

Career Pages

Never leave candidates on the fence. Share videos, testimonials, and more to create an outstanding portrait of your company that convinces candidates you're where they need to be—and makes them eager to come in for an interview.

[Request demo →](#)



Conclusion

Spend less time interviewing – and more time getting to know your candidates

The best interviews don't feel like a chore – for you or the candidate. When things run smoothly and everyone's prepared and organized, interviews can turn into engaging, meaningful conversations that leave everyone feeling invigorated and informed.

Embrace each interview as an opportunity to get to know the candidate better, and let them get to know your company, team, and culture. They should leave with a clear idea of whether or not the role is a good fit for them – and so should you.



See LinkedIn in action

LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a full range of recruiting solutions to help organizations of all sizes find, attract, and engage the best talent. Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With 630+ million members worldwide, including 75% of the US workforce, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.

[Request free demo →](#)

Try LinkedIn's hiring and recruiting products.

