# Interview Tips for a Hiring Manager

There are dozens of articles on the internet on how to prepare job candidates for an interview. On the other hand, conducting an interview is just as important. Hiring managers should be just as prepared with questions, research, and a positive outlook. Doing so, could help hiring managers achieve a better examination of their candidate.

The following techniques are essential to prepare yourself for conducting an interview:

## Lack of Preparation

Be prepared for your interviews. This includes:

1. Knowledge of the candidate's job history.
2. Customized interview questions that are focused on what you need the candidate to be able to accomplish in the first year to be considered successful.
3. Make sure the interview team is on the same page about the expectations of the successful candidate.

You can't always rely on "what you see is what you'll get.", or just "winging it" to attract the best talent. In-person interviews should be at least 45 minutes but ideally 60 minutes. While this may seem long, you are only viewing your candidate on their best behavior. If you research their job history and historical data before interviewing, you may be able to ask more specific questions to understand the qualities of your candidate.

# Arriving Late

Arriving late is one of the worst things that you can do for a job interview. You are not respecting the candidates time or effort to apply for the job, not to mention that they are using their earned time off from their current employer to come and meet with you. You may also be cutting into the time for the other members of the interview team.

Remember, the candidate is also deciding if they want to work for your company. If you do not show them respect before they even start the position than it is unlikely that they will accept your job offer.

Tardiness does not make you seem more important. It makes you seem rude and unorganized.

# Not Asking Relevant Questions

Cater your questions toward the job that you are hiring for and focused on the main duties you need performed. There is no need to dig into areas that will only be 10% of the job when time is limited, and instead focus on the areas that make up the more relevant aspects. You may want to ask them how they would approach a problem they may deal with on the job to learn their thought process.

**Consider These Question Methods:**

1. Asking a question according to their previous job history or significant achievements.
2. Ask a question that doesn't tell a story but helps you understand their way of thinking.
3. Ask what motivates them in their work.
4. Problem-solving skills or thought process in evaluating a problem or project.
5. How do they prefer to be managed and their expectations for feedback.

Make sure each interview question is catered toward their potential position.

# Acting Cold or Impolite

It is surprisingly common for employers to treat interviews like an interrogation. The employer may think that they become more important when they are intimidating. In reality, acting impolite can prevent your candidate from accepting a position with your company, especially if that candidate is employed and was recruited to consider your opportunity, and if the candidate has other offers, these types of actions can push them to accept the other offer, even if yours is better.

Think of it this way. Do you have friends that are cold and impolite? Probably not. Most of us avoid rude people. If we avoid impolite people in our personal lives then your candidate will most likely also avoid that quality in their professional life.

# Not Selling the Company

Candidates with strong experience are in demand and they are interviewing you to see if you are a company/team they would want to join. Sell your company so candidates accept your job offer.

**Characteristics to Sell:**

1. Interesting or unique products to work on
2. Milestones the company has accomplished and what’s next
3. Opportunities for growth and mentoring
4. Supporting continuing education and training
5. Incentive programs and benefits

# Rushing to Conclusions

First impressions can be lasting. Nevertheless, when a hiring manager is performing a job interview, it is important to keep an open mind. It only takes seven seconds to make a first impression. Most of us probably don’t even realize that we made the quick judgement, or that any follow up questions tend to be asked in a manner to support our first impression. You should note your first impression, but don’t draw a conclusion about the candidate until the end of the interview.

The following are characteristics that influence the candidate’s impressions of you:

1. Failing to Smile
2. Strength of Handshake
3. Introduction
4. Clarity of Speech
5. Eye Contact
6. Attire

These tips require some prior thought, but if you do it right you will have a more effective and consistent interview process and help you end up with a superior employee.

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# How To Keep Candidates Warm During the Recruiting Process

Communication is one of the biggest complaints candidates have throughout the recruiting and interviewing process, and is one of the key reasons you may be missing out on some of the best candidates. It is important to use a recruiter who establishes a strong communication system with employers and candidates and keeps both sides informed at each step of the process. This can prevent you from losing valuable candidates.

## Important Steps to Remember

Your recruiter should be following up with candidates after an interview and providing you feedback from the candidate's perspective.

Many recruiters tell their clients, "I will let you know when I have news," but that is not good enough. Your candidate should hear from you within 1-2 days to do a debrief of their interview experience. It is respectful to the candidate and keeps them engaged with your position, but also gives you valuable feedback on how your company and interview team are being perceived by candidates. It is also the first chance to identify and clarify any possible "miscommunications" that may have come up during the interviews.

Many recruiters or hiring managers choose to use email to follow up with candidates, and that is certainly a good option and better than no contact with them at all, but you get a much better picture of where things stand by having an actual conversation with the candidate. That is where a good recruiter can use their relationship with the candidate to get honest feedback for you on the interview and also see if they are interviewing elsewhere and if there may be other competitors for this candidate.

If you choose to use an email to follow up with candidates after an interview, here is a template that you can use to follow-up on an interview:

Dear [X],

We would like to thank you for coming in to interview with our team. We are in the process of collecting feedback from all of the interview team members to let you know their decision, and it may take a few more days to hear from everyone, but I didn't want you to think I had forgotten about you.

You may have questions for me, and I hope you'll let me know if that is the case. I will be in touch as soon as the interview team's feedback is complete, but I am always happy to answer your questions in the meantime.

Thanks and have an outstanding day!

Yours,
[X]

This simple email made a positive difference in the candidate's interview experience.

The stronger the candidate, the stronger the expectations. Make sure you are using a recruiter that builds a strong communication system with your candidates.

Jeff King of RQ Focus follows through with each candidate to make sure you know how the he or she feels about your company and opportunity, and helps you prepare an offer for your chosen candidate that is fair and will be accepted. His professional methodologies help ensure that you hire the highest-quality candidate.

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# How-To Make Your Search a Top Priority For Your Recruiter

Since Recruiters are paid strictly on a commission basis, we are constantly evaluating our workload to determine where we should be focusing our efforts. We do this for two reasons: 1) to ensure our client company's needs are being met, and 2) to ensure a placement is made, and a commission is earned.

The elements of a search assignment that we use as a basis of our evaluation are as follows:

- An urgent need to fill the position.
- A well defined and realistic idea of the job candidate you are looking for.
- An open line of communication with the hiring manager.

- A commitment to work as a team to attract and hire top talent.
- Prompt return of phone calls and feedback on job candidates submitted and interviewed.
- A fair and competitive salary is being offered.
- The company is attractive to potential job candidates.
- A fair fee agreement has been signed.

When we receive a job order, we evaluate these elements to categorize the search into one of three classifications:

**"A" Search** – This classification means the search contains all of these elements. This type of search will get our full attention, meaning we will:

- Conduct a thorough search of our database of current, qualified job candidates.
- Conduct a search of our database of job candidates we know that have the right background, but are not yet qualified job candidates.
- Tap into our networks for referrals to qualified job candidates.
- Cold calling into competitor companies to lure their employees to your opportunity.
- Give weekly updates as the search progresses.

**"B" Search** – This classification means there are some elements missing, but it's still a pretty good search. It will still get our attention, but takes a back seat to the A searches. For this type of search we will:

- Conduct a thorough search of our database of current, qualified job candidates.
- Conduct a search of our database of job candidates we know that have the right background, but are not yet qualified job candidates.
- Keep the position in mind as we recruit for our A client companies.
- Submit job candidates only after our A client companies have had first right of refusal for them.

**"F" Search** – This classification means most or all of the elements are missing. It's not important to the client company, so it's not important to us. For this type of search we will:

- Keep the position in mind as we recruit for our A and B client companies.

- Submit possible job candidates only after the A and B client companies have had first right of refusal.

# ACTIONS THAT LOWER A CLIENT COMPANY'S CLASSIFICATION

Let's elaborate on some of the search elements listed above, and how a client company's actions can reduce the attractiveness of a search assignment.

## Prompt Feedback on Job Candidates

If it takes more than 2 or 3 days to get some initial feedback on a job candidate, it can kill the momentum and interest the Recruiter has worked so hard to instill in the job candidate. It also tells the Recruiter that filling this position is not urgent. Also, the better job candidates usually have other options. There is ALWAYS a need for top talent and they will most likely choose to go to a place that shows interest in them and appears more organized during the interviewing process.

## Bottlenecks in Communication

If a Recruiter is told "you have to direct all communications through HR", in most cases that will drop the search to at least a B level search, if not an F. This is not an insult to HR departments, but is more indicative of the problems with this type of approach. The person in HR is usually a lower level person that may not fully understand what a hiring manager is looking for in a job candidate, and probably also has several other open requisitions on their desk, as well as other duties outside of the recruiting process. Often times these people are overworked and outside of their area of expertise. It's inefficient to ask them to funnel the appropriate job candidates to you when they might not know what that job candidate looks like, or how to select them.

Also, as part of matching a possible job candidate to a company and job, a Recruiter needs to have some contact with the hiring manager to get a feel for personality fits and departmental culture (management style, departmental priorities in the coming months, etc.). HR should certainly by kept in the loop in all communications and activities with the job candidates, but if that is the ONLY communications allowed with a client company, it is extremely rare that that client company will ever get to the “A” priority.

## Too Much Authority in the Wrong Hands

In cases where a lower level HR representative is given the authority to review job candidate resumes, or conduct an initial phone interview, and then make the decision of whether or not the hiring manager will even see the job candidate’s resume, we will decline the search 90% of the time. This may seem like a stream lined approach to recruiting, but it often backfires in the following ways:

- VERY few people in the lower levels of HR have a strong enough understanding of the roles of Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality to be able to decide who is a good job candidate and who isn’t.
- An HR employee or contract Recruiter intentionally stalling on a Recruiter’s job candidate to see if they can find someone stronger by themselves to preserve job security.
- An HR employee showing favoritism for a particular search firm’s job candidate because they like that search firm better, or got a nice gift basket from them.

The hiring manager misses out on some very good job candidates and is unaware any of this is going on. The Recruiter can move on to another search assignment, but the client company’s job remains open.

## If One Recruiter is Good, Maybe Five Would Be Better

Don’t count on it. You may be thinking that you will have more eyes and ears in the market looking for you, however, there is a limited supply of job candidates in the Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality fields, and even fewer that are considered top talent. If several Recruiters are calling the same people, two things will happen; none of which are good for you.

**First** – the qualified pool of job candidates will begin to wonder what’s wrong with that company, thinking that they are really desperate needing so many Recruiters because:

1. The opportunity isn't very appealing.
2. The company must be disorganized.
3. The job opening has an overwhelming workload, and no one else wants to step into that situation.
4. The company is looking for just any "warm body" to fill the position.

**Second** – the Recruiters will hear that these job candidates are getting calls from several other Recruiters for this position, and they will immediately drop them to a B or F level search.

You may think you have 4, 5, or 10 Recruiters out there working for you when in fact you have 4, 5, or 10 Recruiters that have placed your search on the back burner and have moved on to searches that have a better chance of being filled.

## Cutting the Recruiter Out of the Interview Process

This is one that really makes no sense and, luckily, doesn't happen too often. The Recruiter submits a job candidate you like and you want to interview them. You decide to handle setting up the interviews and contacting the job candidate yourself, without involving the Recruiter. It sends the message you don't trust the Recruiter. Even more important, you shut yourself off to the inside knowledge the Recruiter has already obtained during their screening process to see if the job candidate is right for your job. For example, we inquire as to whether the job candidate is motivated by salary, title, a new set of responsibilities, etc. Job candidates are less guarded about discussing their concerns with their Recruiter than they would be with a potential employer. If the job candidate gets hired, you still have to pay the Recruiter's fee – why not get the absolute most for your money? Let the trained Recruiter do their job and earn their fee.

## Deteriorating Facilities

You may think this is not very relevant to the decision-making process for a job candidate that is considering an offer from a company, but it's actually in the top 3 or 4 factors on their list. A job candidate is not only looking for a good opportunity, with a chance to progress in their career, but also a pleasant place to spend 40+ hours a week of their lives. If the building is run down, dimly lit, and depressing, you are fighting an uphill battle in the war for talent.

When we have a job candidate turn down an offer, and the money, title, and scope of responsibilities are all in line with what they are looking for, the next reasons that come up are either the commute, or the facilities. After a job candidate's first interview, we always ask them if they can picture themselves working for the company. If they say "not without getting a good shrink", you will have a difficult time getting them on board and offering more money probably won't do the trick.

Reverse the roles for a minute and consider this. If a job candidate came in to interview for a job wearing ripped jeans and a tee shirt with their favorite band on the front, and had little life to their personality, chances are you would pass on that job candidate. Even if they have the perfect background for the job, and you also have another really good job candidate (but not quite as good as the sloppier job candidate) that is in contention for the job, who showed up dressed much more professionally, you will most likely choose the one that made the better impression. It's no different for a job candidate considering a new job.

## Too Many Decision Makers in the Interview Process

The more people involved in the interviewing process that get to cast a deciding vote, the more likely the job is going to remain open for a very long time, or possibly never get filled. While you will want the job candidate meet with all of the people that are considered critical, and the people they will be working directly with, you should try to limit the number of people that can cast a "deciding" vote to 2 or 3. Any more than that and you significantly decrease your chances of getting a unanimous approval.

If you've had some difficulties getting results from recruiters on past searches, maybe you can look back and see where some of these elements may have contributed to the poor results. Or if a recruiter was doing a good job for you and then stopped producing, call them and ask if anything has changed on your search. Sometimes things are going well with the recruiter and the hiring manager, but they keep running into roadblocks or getting different instructions from HR (or vice versa) causing enough confusion and conflict to lower your search ranking.

Of course, it could also be that you were choosing the wrong recruiter for the job. But that's a discussion for another article.

If you have comments or a story to share, we would love to hear them. And if you have questions, we would love to hear them too.

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# How to Prepare for a New Hire

The time between accepting an offer and the end of the first week on the new job can be an emotional time for a new hire. During this period your new employee will feel disconnected from the job they had, and uncertain about what lies ahead. This makes them extremely vulnerable to a counter offer. There are a few steps that you can take to make them feel welcome and confirm to them they have made the right decision.

Once your offer letter has been signed and returned to you, you need to start preparing to bring your new employee on board. These are small actions on your part, but have a huge, positive impact on a new hire. The suggested steps are:

1. **Send a Welcome Package** – This would include any company promotional material, an employee handbook, benefits package, etc.
2. **Notify Payroll** of the new employee so there is no delay in them getting paid.
3. **Notify Security** (if applicable) to get the process of providing them with a security/I.D. badge underway.
4. **Create an Email and Voicemail account** for them along with instructions on how to change their password.

5. **Office Announcements** – Let the rest of the team know about the new employee and include their new phone number and email address. A nice touch would be to have the team send them a welcome email or voice mail.
6. **Introductory Lunch** – Within the first few days on the job, arrange for a lunch with the new employee and the rest of the department or key people they will interact with. This too helps them settle in quickly and start feeling like part of the team.
7. **Industry Announcement** (if applicable)
8. **Start the enrollment process** for health and other benefit programs.
9. **Allocate a Work Space.** Make sure they have a desk (cleaned out) and computer (preferably loaded and configured) on the day they start. There is nothing worse than showing up to your new job excited about getting going only to find that you had been forgotten about, and not planned for. Having a place ready for them lets them know you are happy they have joined your team, and allows them to get settled in and become productive much faster.
10. **Order Business Cards and Office Name Plates.** Again, a simple touch, but it tells the new employee you're glad they have joined your team.

Once your new employee knows you have gone to the trouble to make them feel welcome, they are much more confident they have made the right choice and feel ready to start this next step in their career. It also makes your job easier because you know you are ready for your new team member to begin without having to do a last minute dash. I hope this list is helpful and makes this process as smooth as possible for you.