



The Anatomy of an Ideal Interview Process

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Whether or not candidates become employees, their experience with your company—from discovery to hire—will have a direct impact on your organization’s overall brand. In fact, **83 percent** ... of professionals say a negative interview experience can change their mind about a role.¹ That’s why strong customer service is vital in recruiting and securing top talent.

From the first point-of-contact to the offer stage, each candidate should walk away from your company as a brand ambassador. Use this roadmap to ensure your talent acquisition team provides the best candidate experience throughout every phase of the interview process.

This guide will cover:

- Top pre-interview preparation tips
- Essential steps every interview process should include
- Optimal ways to conclude the interview experience

Pre-Interview Process

Cut down on time-to-hire.

There’s a reason six out of 10 companies now use video interviews: They can vet candidates while significantly reducing the time investment associated with phone screens.² Pre-recorded video interviewing can save your team from phone-screening unqualified candidates. It’s often possible to determine within the first five minutes if a particular candidate is a good fit, so pre-recorded videos provide the option to watch the entire video or stop after a few minutes. Pre-recorded video interviews help ensure only the best candidates advance through the process.

Read: [*A Recruiter's Video Interviewing Handbook*](#)



Remove the recruiting team from interview scheduling.

As the Society for Human Resource Management (SRHM) reports, “Candidate interview scheduling is one of the most fundamental steps in an organization's hiring process, and a tedious, chaotic manual system is a logistical nightmare for recruiters and leaves candidates with a terrible first impression.”⁴

"Coordinating both candidates' and the interview team's busy, always-changing schedules is a universal pain point for recruiters."³

Steve Tiufekchiev, Chief Evangelist, Yello

Don't allow scheduling issues to interfere with the hiring process. Use scheduling software to facilitate candidate interviews—

from phone screens to live video interviews—in an all-in-one solution. Scheduling software removes the recruiting team as the middlemen by providing candidates with a self-service platform to select interview slots that work best with their schedules and reschedule interviews without disruption. And a bonus benefit for career fairs or hiring at scale: Your team can finally schedule multiple candidates at once.

Help hiring managers.

... **A recruiter's relationship with the hiring manager is the number-one driver of talent acquisition performance – four times more influential than anything else.**⁵ That's why it's critical to provide hiring managers a view into the candidate pipeline, so they can make a more accurate decision in identifying the candidates moving to the next round. Video interviews are an efficient way for hiring managers to quickly compare and contrast candidates without delaying the hiring timeline. Video interviewing eliminates scheduling complications and delays, reducing the risk of losing candidates to faster-moving companies.

Ensure candidates are prepared.

... **Nearly 10,000 times a month, candidates Google “what to wear to a job interview.”**⁶ But office norms vary and every employer approaches interview attire differently. Interview outfit advice is part of a recruiter's duty to fully brief candidates before they meet with the interview team. They should also provide candidates with the interview team's LinkedIn bios and interviewers' top priorities to make them as comfortable as possible, allowing their real personalities to shine through during the tough in-person interviews.

During the Interview Process

Be a gracious host.

Every candidate who comes to your office for an in-person interview should be treated like he or she is a guest in your home. Have a designated person greet them, offer a drink, give a tour of the office and if it is a long day of interviewing, offer a snack.

Over communicate.

... **Sadly, 52 percent of candidates still haven't heard back from companies two to three months after applying.**⁷ Avoid this poor candidate experience by providing updates on exactly where candidates stand throughout the interview process. Incorporate additional touch points into the candidate interview lifecycle by automatically sending candidates and interviewers reminders before scheduled interviews. Retain the interest of top talent by putting a timely and collaborative candidate communication strategy in place. The recruiter should provide frequent updates even if there is no news to report; a brief email letting them know the interview process is still ongoing goes a long way to calm eager candidates' frayed nerves.

Read between the lines.

Listening is a carefully honed skill.

Your team needs to be able to listen to beyond what candidates are verbally communicating and hear what a candidate isn't saying—picking up on key nonverbal cues, as well.

"The best recruiters listen twice as much as they speak. Active listening, complete with the ability to ask pointed and relevant questions, is a core quality of successful recruiters."⁸

Sara Ferraioli, Partner, WinterWyman Staffing

Stay transparent.

The 2017 Talent Board North American Candidate Experience Research Report found that "candidates want a high level of transparency into organizations in which they are interested."⁹ Whether they are delivering positive or negative news, the recruiting team should understand the critical roles transparency and timely communication play in the recruitment process—both with internal and external audiences. Transparency improves the candidate experience and keeps potential talent in the pipeline for future opportunities.

Implement a central repository.

Provide your team a place where every team member can access all candidate data—resumes, video interviews and hiring team feedback. Neither employee turnover or mismanaged information should be a reason your company loses top talent. Any recruiting team member, at any point in time, should be able to access all candidate data from a central repository of information (such as a shared drive or a talent relationship management solution) to decrease the time to make an offer.

If one recruiter is out during part of a candidate's interview process, every team member should be able to easily provide support. While delays are often inevitable, inaccessibility of candidate information should not be the cause.

"Offering competitive compensation and great benefits aside, it's way too common for inexperienced hiring managers to ask the wrong interview questions to size up job candidates for job/culture fit, and the people skills that lend to success on the job. This is a problem that needs fixing."¹¹

Marcel Schwantes, principal and founder, Leadership from the Core

"Once a recruiting CRM is in place, every member of your firm can effectively share data, notes, monitor candidate/applicant movements, nurture and chase leads, while also evaluating document activity –with significantly enhanced transparency and collaboration."¹⁰

HR Technologist

Ask strategic questions.

Many candidates have their interviewing game down to a science; they know the most common questions an interviewer will ask and have their canned responses perfected. Based on these carefully honed responses, the interview team may think they are hiring the right person for the job. But, it's possible this candidate may be a great interviewee, and not such a great employee.



5 Strategic Interview Questions

Avoid a great interviewee and a not-so-great employee by coaching the interview team to ask the right questions.

? **“Tell me about the interactions you’ve had with co-workers. How would you describe the best relationships? The worst?”**

This question will provide insight into how particular candidates would be perceived by your existing team and the types of communication strategies they would bring to the group. When answering the question about their worst working relationships, interviewers will gain a clearer answer on how they approach conflict.

? **“How will you continue your learning?”**

During hiring, the expectation is new hires will continue to grow in order to advance to more senior roles. This question will provide additional insight into whether particular candidates are motivated to explore diverse learning opportunities, whether they are virtual, workshops, conferences, or other modes of education. This question will determine if candidates are lifelong learners who are looking to continually better themselves professionally.

? **“If we were sitting here a year from now celebrating a spectacular year, what would we be celebrating?”**

Candidates should know why they want to join your company, and what they think success looks like. A successful answer to that question will demonstrate their bigger-picture understanding of the company, and their motivations. Interviewers will be able to differentiate between a candidate who has the strategic vision for the specific role, and a candidate with the perfect canned response to, “what does success look like to you?”

? **“In five minutes, explain something complicated that you know well.”**

The key with this question is to see how well they can explain a subject to someone who doesn’t understand it—an important skill if the position requires them to teach co-workers or make presentations to potential clients. The “something” in the question does not have to relate to the position that they are applying for, but can be a personal hobby or talent. If a candidate is enthusiastic in his or her explanations, he or she will usually end up being charismatic and influential at the workplace.

? **“What does being a team player mean to you?”**

The best employees will gladly perform tasks outside their initial job descriptions. Do the candidates think that way? It’s important to identify those candidates who are willing to pitch in at a moment’s notice and assume a leadership role as the business grows.

Post-Interview Process

Deliver bad news over the phone.

The courtesy of a phone call to let a candidate know your company is moving forward with other candidates demonstrates mutual respect. Additionally, halting all communication with candidates who aren't advancing can lead to long-term consequences. These candidates could have an excellent referral network, or be a top future employee after they gain a few more years experience. Don't jeopardize the company's hiring future because of a lack of professionalism.

"Continue the communication, whether you plan to move forward with the candidate or not. Candidates who aren't qualified now could be qualified for future roles, or could potentially refer candidates."¹²

Angie Verros, Founder, Vaia Talent

"Creating opportunities for candidates to provide feedback provides a platform for candid reviews, and helps talent acquisition teams continually enhance the recruiting experience."¹⁴

Steve Tiufekchiev, Chief Evangelist, Yello

Be a mentor.

Take the extra step to provide final stage candidates who didn't get the job feedback as to why they didn't receive the offer. **Nearly all candidates (94 percent) want post-interview feedback.**¹³

Providing candidates with valuable feedback will not only pay it forward, but you never know when you will cross paths with them in the future, or with whom or where they will discuss the experience they had with your hiring team and company.

Gather post-process insight.

Surveying candidates post-interview, whether they have accepted or rejected the offer, is a key component of the candidate lifecycle. The survey results will provide insight on what is working and what needs to be refocused going forward. Evaluate that feedback and notice any recurring trends from candidates; you may gain insight into gaps in your process you need to fine tune.

By seeking information from candidates you can address problems in your hiring process you never knew existed, or find out what is working well to ensure the experience keeps improving.

Are you looking to refine your organization's
interview experience?

Find out how talent acquisition software can help.

[Request a Demo](#)



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