

FIXING A BROKEN INTERVIEW PROCESS:

How Automation and
Strategy Repair the
Interview Experience

White Paper

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Does your organization have high new-hire attrition?

Are there too many bad new hires?

Does it take too long to make hiring decisions?

The fault may lie in a broken interview process. Your organization may have an excellent recruitment-marketing strategy, but hiring success depends on a strong interview process, which includes an effective evaluation of each candidate's ability to impact the organization, and providing a great candidate experience.

The right combination of interviewing automation and strategy is vital. Organizations with strong interviewing practices and fully-implemented interviewing technology are more than twice as likely as those with ad hoc or developing interviewing practices to see higher levels of quality hires¹.

Conversely, a weak candidate experience hurts hiring success and damages the corporate and employer brand. It can reverberate in many undesired and unexpected ways. For example, it can influence the responses given to the interviewer, the candidate impressions of the organization as an employer and public perceptions of the organization and the candidate-interview process.

A weak candidate experience also impacts the business. Candidates who endured a poor interview experience may not purchase goods or services from the company and may share that poor experience with their personal and social network. Many organizations' candidates are already their customers. This is especially true for retail stores, fast-food restaurants and telecommunications providers.

The interviewing process impacts the organization in two major ways: hiring success and candidate experience.



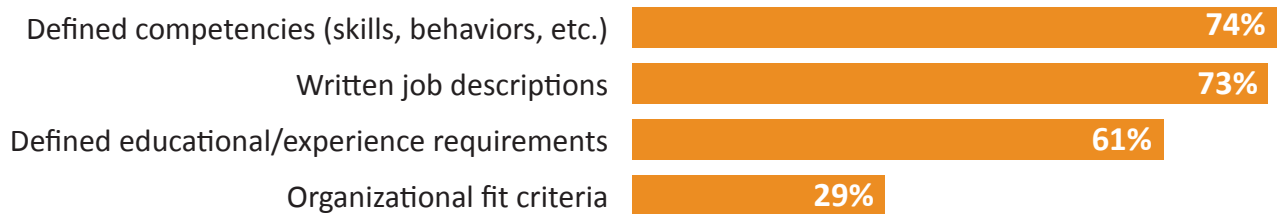
The Impact of Interviewing on Hiring Success

The interview process, when broken, is the most-cited influence on making a bad hire². A “bad hire” is characterized as one lacking requisite skills, not aligned with the culture and values of the organization, and adding to new-hire attrition.

There are several ways an interview can contribute to a bad hire. First, the criteria interviewers use may be incorrect or incomplete. For example, only 29% of organizations that identified critical roles

have organizational-fit criteria for those roles³. Without organizational-fit criteria, interviewers operate blindly in selecting new hires that fit within their culture. As an example, organizational-fit criteria can relate to work-style, such as teamwork. Without that criteria related to teamwork, the interviewer may not realize they are selecting a candidate who does not like to work in teams. Organizational fit is frequently cited as one of the primary reasons new hires leave during the first year⁴.

Guidelines In Place For Critical Roles*



Source: Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices, Internal Mobility Survey

*Among organizations that have defined critical roles to meet business roles (94%)

Additional errors in the interviewing process include asking wrong or inconsistent questions, unconscious bias impacting the hiring decision and candidates believing they were not given a fair chance to present their qualifications.

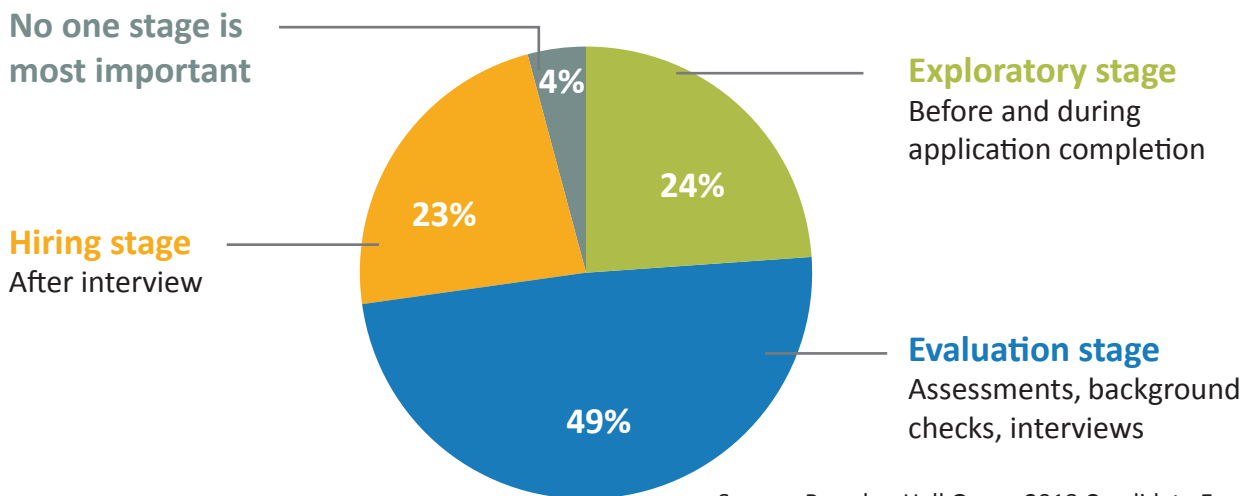
Organizations make plenty of bad hires. On average, more than one in ten hires made in the past year is considered a “bad hire.” Of these, nearly one-third were attributable to sub-optimal hiring practices⁵.

A bad hire can do substantial damage to the organization in terms of cost; employers must replace the bad hire; bad morale; employees must make up missed work and lost resources; the amount of time spent on training and lost opportunities; missed sales targets and more. The overall impact of a bad hire can more than double the cost of the original hire, especially if the organization must replace that person.

The Impact of Interviewing on Candidate Experience

Almost all organizations⁶ realize that interviewing is important or critical to their success and nearly half⁷ consider it to be the most important impact point for candidate experience.

Most Important Impact Point for Candidate Experience



Source: Brandon Hall Group 2018 Candidate Experience Survey

From the organization’s perspective, the interview is a chance to assess the candidate, shape the candidate’s perception of the employer and what it is like to work for the organization, determine if that candidate has the needed hard and soft skills, and learn whether the candidate is aligned with organizational values, culture and mission.

This is when the right questions must be asked and the appropriate hiring decisions are made. These are a few examples of behavioral questions to be asked during the interview: Tell me about a challenging project where you were successful. How did you manage that project? Describe how you have managed a difficult client. What do you do if you disagree with a co-worker?

From the candidate's point of view, the hiring process now becomes personal. They form their initial impressions of the organization as an employer, ask and answer the hiring manager's questions and invest a considerable amount of time and preparation navigating the interview process. At the same time, the candidate may be under stress or uncertain about making a transition.

If the interview goes awry, the candidate not only leaves feeling disappointed, but has negative views of the organization. In extreme cases, the candidate may believe they did not receive a fair chance to explain their qualifications or were not given information about next steps in the hiring process and will not get the job.

These perceptions damage the corporate and employer brands, especially when the candidate posts about their interview experience on social media. With the click of a mouse, candidates can publicly describe and rate their interviewing experience for future candidates to read.

Public exposure of an employer's interview practices can have negative consequences. First, it can limit the number of candidates

willing to consider the organization as an employer. Candidates know to research potential employers and will see the commentary to decide whether or not to apply. Second, not everyone looking at these sites is a candidate. Customers, the general public, investors and others will form impressions of the organization based on the candidate's comments. Like it or not, forced transparency is now part of the recruitment equation.

Organizations must focus on the interviewing experience to ensure it is effective and efficient. Given the low unemployment rates, candidates have plenty of choices and how they are interviewed influences their decisions.

For example, an enterprise corporation in the beverage industry lost a high-level candidate because they failed to introduce the person to prospective team members. The candidate assumed there was a negative reason for not meeting their direct reports and turned down the offer. Clearly, that organization must revisit their interviewing process.



Among high-volume hiring organizations with more than 500 hires per year, about 13% of job offers were declined over the past year. A strong interview process can go a long way to reducing that number.

Average Percent of Candidates Declining an Offer

9%

Low-Volume Hiring
Organizations

13%

High-Volume Hiring
Organizations

Source: Brandon Hall Group 2018
Candidate Experience Survey

High-volume hiring organizations hire
501+ employees.

Low-volume organizations hire
500 or less employees.

The Way Forward

To provide an exceptional interviewing experience and achieve hiring success, the organization must develop an overall interview strategy aligned with the organizational mission, an efficient interview scheduling process, an effective interview process – including collaboration on decisions, assessments and interviewer training — and a feedback mechanism. Organizations must also leverage interviewing technology, or automation, to support scheduling, the interview and receiving feedback.

Interviewing technology solutions make the hiring process efficient and save time for travel, provide scalability, enhance candidate experience and assist in making informed hiring decisions.



The Interview Strategy: Align with Organizational Mission

The interview strategy should be job/position-based and aligned with the organization's overall goals within the recruitment strategy. It must consider the interview automation that is available or needed, the talent being hired, the candidate experience, the position types and levels, the volume of hiring/turnover, the selection of the interviewers, diversity and inclusion, and any other relevant factors.

Alignment with organizational goals is a must. According to Brandon Hall Group research, the top three steps organizations take to ensure quality hires are alignment of recruitment and business objectives, investing in a standard interviewing process and strengthening communication between candidates and recruiters⁸. As an example of how to align the interviewing strategy with organizational goals, if the organization is moving toward increased innovation, criteria and competencies must be established to determine how to evaluate candidates for their aptitude and affinity for innovation.

Another example of an excellent interviewing strategy comes from an enterprise power-management company. They align the competencies used to guide the interviewing process with leadership characteristics. In that way, they set the candidate up for success. These competencies include characteristics such as ethics and passion. To promote diversity and inclusion, they cast a wide net at diversity and inclusion conferences so they include diverse talent in their pipeline. They also evaluate pre-registrants for campus events to ensure diversity.

Interviewing strategies vary substantially. An executive-level position might require an extensive number of interviews with different constituencies, while organizations with high attrition rates, like fast food restaurants, may need to institute a quicker time-to-hire model where there may be only one interview completed.

In almost all cases, interviewing technology, automation, will improve the interviewing strategy. For example, for executive-level positions, video interviewing enables multiple executives at various locations to meet with the candidate at the same time, eliminating the need for travel and facilitating scheduling. For the fast-food restaurant, short video screens and scheduling technology enable a faster interview process and show the customer-facing personalities for these positions.

Even in the situation when there are in-person interviews at an event or at an office location, interviewing automation facilitates the process in that the interviewer can view the pre-entered questions in the interviewing solution, ask them in-person, directly to the candidate, and then evaluate the candidate responses in the solution. This produces a consistent, real-time interviewing process, that can be easily shared for collaboration on decision-making.

When deciding on an interview strategy, it is critical to consider both the interview automation that is available and the manual processes that can be automated.

Automation is key to improving the interview strategy and meeting organizational goals in an effective and timely manner.

Interview Scheduling: Leverage Technology to Streamline Scheduling

Interview scheduling is a universal pain-point for both organizations and candidates. It is often a time-consuming, manual process and if last-minute changes occur, it is difficult to notify everyone in a timely manner. The need for automation is clear for this process. More than half of organizations report that it is critical or important to the organization to use scheduling technology to streamline the scheduling experience⁹.

As an example of the difficulty organizations often have scheduling candidates for interviews, one mid-size financial organization makes about 800 new hires each year. They utilize four full-time coordinators whose sole responsibility is manually scheduling interviews with hiring managers. In addition to the coordinators managing in-person interviews, recruiters do their own scheduling for telephone

screens. The entire process is considered very challenging because they have limited conference rooms for the in-person meetings and calendars rarely match up.

In contrast, a university relations manager from an enterprise power-management company found that using scheduling technology enables them to increase the scalability of their campus interviewing more than two and one-half times without adding recruiting staff.

“It was a seamless process. Our hiring volume in 2015 was about 300 candidates a year. There was no way we could have scaled to where we are today, up to 800 candidates, without the [scheduling technology]. I have the same number of staff and still have 4 recruiters; I have not added heads.”

The Best Scheduling Functionality Features

1. Syncing with Gmail and Outlook calendars
2. Automated invitations, reminders, confirmations
3. Able to view and set available interviewer time slots
4. Able to share interview schedules
5. Candidate can self-schedule interviews
6. Mobile first
7. Reporting

The Interview Process: Question Development and Technology Solutions

To lead an effective interview process, the organization must devise a consistent strategy, including interview guidelines so all parties understand their roles and the questions asked, trained interviewers, diversity and inclusion guidance, behavioral questions and competencies, recruiter and hiring manager intake meetings at the beginning of the process — to decide on the required competencies — and after, when the offer decision is made. Automation is also a major component of the interview process.

In terms of using behavioral questions in interviews, the VP of Talent Management at an enterprise distributor of commercial and residential power observes that some of their interviewers are not in sync with the “how” of the behavioral questions or not

fully exploring candidates’ capabilities. They are simply “hiring a warm body because I need somebody today.” This VP seeks to improve this process through continuing education and conducting a marketing campaign using stories and testimonials to demonstrate success stories. At this organization “it is all about buy-in. We can design the best system in the world but if our hiring managers are not buying into it, it doesn’t matter.”

Interviewing technology plays an important role in the interviewing process. It is considered important or critical to nearly seven in ten organizations with 501 or more employees¹⁰. Interviewing technology solutions come mainly in the form of live video interviews and pre-recorded video interviews.

Functionality to Look for in Interviewing Technology

1. Able to manage one-on-one and panel interviews
2. Able to have live and pre-recorded video options
3. Able to set finish time for candidate
4. Able to limit number of times candidates can respond to each recorded question
5. Able to share recordings with hiring manager
6. Able to compare responses from multiple candidate videos by question

The benefits of video interviewing technology are improving the consistency of the interviewing approach: control over questions to be asked by each interviewer, the time-to-hire, the candidate experience and allowing multiple interviewers from different locations to participate in the same interview.

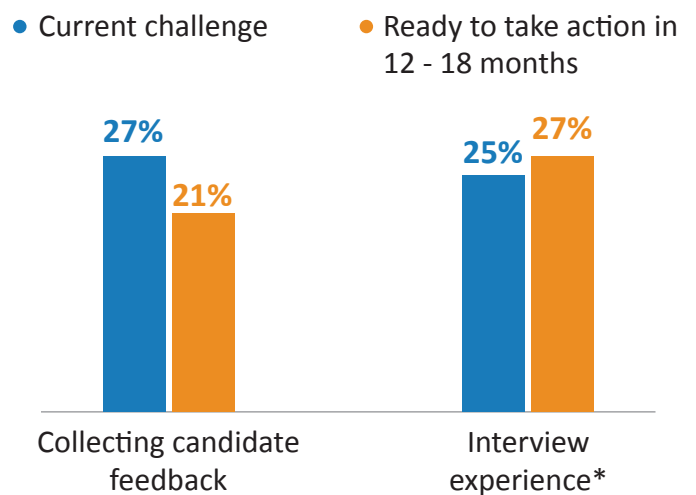
A University Relations Manager from a global enterprise-management project firm said “We see results in real time. The information is collected in one place. Moving to that process, we removed six weeks of work over the course of a year from our previous interview guide distribution [which was a manual process].”

Not all interviewing solutions are the same. For instance, a vice president of talent from a mid-size distributor of commercial and residential plumbing reports when they use Skype for their interviews, it “freezes up on occasion.” In essence, while the interviewer can do a live interview with the candidate using Skype, it does not provide all the same functionalities as a dedicated video interviewing solution.

Video interviewing also delivers a better candidate experience because it is more personal than a telephone interview, and recorded video interviews enable the candidate to complete the interview when it is convenient. About 80% of high-volume hiring organizations, those that hire on average 501 plus employees, and 86% of high-performance¹¹ organizations believe that video interviewing provides candidates with an engaging interview experience.

Collecting candidate feedback helps organizations improve their interview process and the entire recruitment experience and avoid negative impressions about the company. But not all organizations obtain candidate feedback and only about one-third indicate they are effective or very effective at getting candidate feedback¹². In addition, about one quarter consider collecting candidate feedback a challenge and only one-fifth are ready to take action in the next 12 to 18 months to improve candidate feedback.¹³

Candidate Experience Challenges vs. Intended Actions



Source: Brandon Hall Group 2018 Candidate Experience Survey
*Interview experience includes length, type, scheduling, etc.

Examples of negative feedback heard from a variety of responding organizations include: the hiring manager fails to show up for an interview, the interview process is “too long and exhausting,” not receiving updates from the interviewer about the candidate’s status, better communication about the interview process and the inability to set the location where the candidate would potentially work¹⁴.

Ideally, the organization should request feedback on the interview process immediately after the interviews are completed. This is important because it aids in the accuracy of the recall. Some interviewing technology solutions include a candidate feedback survey. It is beneficial to survey candidates, even those not receiving an offer. Organizations must be cognizant of the potential pitfalls of the candidate experience and act quickly to resolve any issues.

Recommendations for Fixing the Interview Process

Brandon Hall Group compiled recommendations from top organizations to improve the interview process. These include:

Recommendations for Campus Interviews

Send the right interviewers. Your best strategy is to deploy great talent scouts that can speak about the company and provide a realistic job preview. The solution is not always sending a leader or executive. Sometimes, the best approach is to send an early-career representative who can speak about their experience and connect with students.

Invest in a technology. Technology is critical to being able to scale up and respond to candidates in real time.

Candidates want authentic and relatable interviewers, such as alumni from their school. Bring them together with people who will put them at ease and always train the interviewers.

Recommendations for Professional Interviews

Standardize the interview process. Capture pre and post-candidate impressions. [Pre is impressions about how easy it is to apply, post is for the entire hiring process, including interviews and new hire impressions].

Hiring managers and recruiters must agree on what they are looking for. Focus on process — how the job gets done. More than one person should make the hiring decision. Schedule formal intake meetings before the interview to decide on competencies, and after the interviews are completed to decide on the offer. Decrease the number of interviews and allow candidates to schedule their own interviews. Recruiters and hiring managers must realize they are in sales roles. It is not just about assessing candidates, but selling the organization and the position.

To fix your organization's broken interview process, follow these guidelines:

- Develop an interviewing strategy aligned with your organizational goals, position types, candidate levels and hiring volume.
- Train all interviewers, including hiring managers, to conduct interviews successfully.
- Select the right interviewers for the right situation. Talent scouts or alumni may be needed for campus interviews. The right interviewer will make the candidate feel at ease.
- Leverage technology to conduct and schedule interviews. Scheduling technology can make your interviewing process scalable and interviewing technology will provide a better candidate experience, enable consistent interviewing, facilitate comparing candidate responses and enable decision-making collaboration.
- Provide standard interview guidelines with behavioral questions and aligned competencies. Ensure all interviewers understand their roles and how to determine whether the candidate has the needed competencies.
- Provide diversity and inclusion best practices. Ensure the talent pool includes diverse candidates. As examples, treat all candidates in the same unbiased manner and make sure interview questions are related to qualifications for the job.
- Hold two hiring manager and recruiter intake meetings: one at the beginning of the process to agree on competencies and approach and another after the interview to make a collaborative hiring decision.
- Obtain candidate feedback on their interviewing and interview-scheduling experience as soon as possible following the interview. This ensures the organization continues to improve their interviewing capabilities.
- Manage expectations. At the end of the interview(s), provide candidates with information about the next steps in the process and the anticipated timeline for those next steps. To the extent it is possible, provide feedback to the candidate at each step.
- Implement change-management strategies. Find champions and influencers to promote the improved interview process. Provide success stories and testimonials to explain how the new interviewing process impacts the organization and employee performance.

¹Brandon Hall Group 2017 State of Talent Acquisition Survey.

²Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices Internal Mobility Survey.

³Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices Internal Mobility Survey.

⁴Brandon Hall Group 2015 Hiring Practices Talent Shortage Survey.

⁵Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices Internal Mobility Survey.

⁶Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices Internal Mobility Survey.

⁷Brandon Hall Group 2018 Candidate Experience Survey.

⁸Brandon Hall Group 2017 Hiring Practices Internal Mobility Survey.

⁹Brandon Hall Group 2018 Talent Acquisition Technology Survey.

¹⁰Brandon Hall Group 2018 Talent Acquisition Technology Survey.

¹¹Brandon Hall Group considers an organization to be high-performance when they have seen improvement in most of their key performance indicators over the past year. Examples of key performance indicators are customer retention, revenue, customer satisfaction and employee engagement.

¹²Brandon Hall Group 2017 Talent Acquisition Survey.

¹³Brandon Hall Group 2018 Candidate Experience Survey.

¹⁴Brandon Hall Group conducted six qualitative interviews for this project.

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About Brandon Hall Group

Brandon Hall Group is a HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management.

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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