Top 10 Tips for Effective Interviewing

Jennifer Hopp, SPHR, SHRM-CP
Human Resources Administrator
American Board of Anesthesiology
Objectives

• Review various approaches to interviewing
• Provide tips and techniques to guide the interview process
• How to create best interview experience for you and the candidate
• Ensure selection of the best fit for your organization
Types of Interviews

1. Structured Interview
   - Uses a set of standardized questions that are asked of all applicants. Every applicant is asked the same basic questions, so that comparisons can be made more easily.

2. Situational Interview
   - A structured interview that is composed of questions about how applicants might handle specific job situations.

3. Behavioral Description Interview
   - Interview in which applicants give specific examples of how they have performed or handled problems in the past.

4. Nondirective Interview
   - Interview that uses general questions, from which other questions are developed.

5. Stress Interview
   - Interview designed to create anxiety and put pressure on an applicant to see how the person responds.

6. Panel Interview
   - Interview in which several interviewers interview the candidate at the same time.
Before the Interview

• Make sure interview schedule includes appropriate amount of time for each panel group
  • Approx 30 minutes per group
• Send out candidate’s resume to all interview panel members for review ahead of time
  • Should also include job description
• Ensure candidate knows your office location and the time of their interview
  • Ex. Where to park, what floor you are on
• Provide an itinerary of their interview, if possible, to avoid surprises
Top 10 Tips for Effective Interviewing
1. Prepare questions in advance

- Create your list of questions before heading into an interview
  - Ensure you have a good selection of behavioral/situational questions (see handout for examples)
- Try to ask each candidate the same questions to provide an true comparison
- Don’t wing it!
#2 Ensure questions are legal

- Asking certain questions can be discriminatory
- Avoid questions related to gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion
  - Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
  - Would also avoid questions regarding sexual orientation
- If a candidate reveals one of these categories, do not write down or continue discussion, move on
- Always ask HR if not sure!
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

That’s an interesting accent you have, where are you from?  Are you authorized to work in the US?
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

Do you have any disabilities I should be aware of?

Are you able to perform all of the job duties for this position?
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

Tell me what type of clubs, social organizations or lodges you belong to.

Are you a member of the Society for Human Resources Management?
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

Do you have children?

This position requires 2-3 hours of OT per month. Are you available to full-fill that?
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

I see you are in the military reserves. Do you know if you’ll be deployed anytime soon?

I see you are in the military reserves. Tell me about your position in the military and what training you received.
Test: Is it legal or illegal?

Have you ever been arrested?

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please elaborate.
#3 Prepare to be flexible

- Be ready to venture outside of your original question
- Candidate may ask questions throughout the interview for clarification
- Don’t fill in the silence, give the candidate time to think about their response
- Ask for more information if you don’t get the response you need
- Feel free to change course of questions based on candidates response
#4 Put candidates at ease

- Interviews are highly stressful for candidates and some interviewers
  - Offer the candidate something to drink or ask them about their day
- Give a tour of your office
  - Let the candidate envision themselves as your employee
- Remember that you are selling your organization just as much as the candidate is selling themselves!
#5 Ensure interview isn’t too short/long

- Limit the number of questions you ask to provide time for the candidate to respond and ask their own questions
  - No more than 4-6 questions for a 30-minute interview
  - No more than 8-12 questions for a 60-minute interview
#6 Focus on the interview

- Stay engaged with the candidate
- Put away cell phone, laptop or other distractions
- Be an active listener
- Avoid Halo/Horn effect
  - Halo-subconsciously focusing on a candidates *positive* attributes higher than others
  - Horn-subconsciously focusing on a candidates *negative* attributes higher than others
#7 Include more than one interviewer

- Highly recommend panel interviews if possible
- Increases the reliability of the interview
- Provides various perspectives and experiences
- Only utilize staff who would work with the position
#8 Include all stakeholders

- Utilize staff who will interact with this position as panel members
  - Also provides buy-in from stakeholders and allows their participation in this process
  - Provides transparency
- Help the candidate envision themselves in the position
#9 Take detailed notes

- Makes a candidate feel respected and listened to
- Helps interviewers remember details of responses
  - Reminds you of how the candidate presented themselves
- Allows interviewers to be specific in their reasons selecting a final candidate
- Do not make notes regarding the candidates age, gender, national origin, race, color, sexual orientation, etc.
- All notes should be maintained for 2 years
#10 Interview for cultural fit

- Make sure you ask questions to help you determine if the candidate is right for your culture
- Cultural fit is key in retaining an employee and sustaining overall organizational morale
- If they are not a cultural fit, their skills won’t matter.
- Go with your gut!
After the Interview

• Schedule a time to debrief with all panelists from the interview
  • Use feedback to help make the right decision
  • ABA uses in-person debriefs
• Once a final candidate has been selected, work with HR or hiring manager to determine offer
  • What is your salary range?
  • Expect a counter-offer
After the Interview

• After offer has been extended and accepted, ensure all other candidates are notified
  • A standard email is sufficient, try not to elaborate

• Example:
  Good Morning,

  Thank you so much for coming and interviewing with the ABA and our team. We greatly enjoyed meeting you and discussing your interest in our Assistant position. I wanted to let you know that we have decided to pursue other candidates for our position at this time. We wish you great success in your future endeavors!
Takeaways

• Be more effective at structuring interviews and interview questions
• Your interview performance is just as important as the candidate’s
• Make sure the candidate is a cultural fit for your organization. Go with your gut feeling!
• Make sure your interviews are legally sound
• Follow-up with candidates who weren’t selected

Handouts Provided
• 75 Behavioral Interview Questions
• Legal vs. Illegal Interview Questions
What are your favorite interview questions?

Thank you