

WILY MANAGER

*Just-in-Time
Management Advice*

How to Conduct an Interview

3 Things to Remember About Interviews

1. Don't underestimate the importance of interviews, and the risk of doing it badly
2. Don't wing it. Prepare in advance, and follow up afterwards
3. Think of an interview as a way to establish a good match between an individual's skills and the competencies required for a position

A good interview process greatly improves the chances of landing the best possible hire. This is critical because turnover is expensive.

A bad interview is an inquisition that provides the illusion of power to the interviewer and a high level of anxiety to the candidate – “*tell me about your strengths and weaknesses...*”

A great interview is a mutually respectful conversation that determines the quality of the match between a candidate's skills and the competencies required for a specific position.

Before The Interview

Know what you're interviewing for:

- Start with an up-to-date job description. If one doesn't exist, create one
- Who do we want – *What skills? What knowledge? What experience?*
- What corporate fit – *What attitudes? What outlooks?*
- Do we have realistic expectations?
- Don't chase the 'hit the ground running' myth

Now that you've got a stack of resumes:

- Score and rank all resumes and choose a limited number to telephone interview (no more than 10)
- Conduct a telephone 'mini-interview' to wean down the list further
 - Remember cultural fit and what makes people in your team successful
 - Look for clues: *career ADD, cover letters, relevant experience*



This is one of a series of management cheat sheets available from www.wilymanager.com

Prepare the candidate for the interview:

- Let them know in advance who they are going to see
- Let them know in advance what the process will be
- Consider providing some or all of the questions to the candidate in advance

Prepare yourself for the interview:

- Remember you and the company are being assessed in this process as well
- Read the resume in advance
- Come with a list of questions:
 - Create questions that are based on the key needs identified in the job description
 - Design questions that build understanding
 - Use both open-ended and closed-ended questions
 - Use **situational questions** – “*What would you do if you were given a project timeline that you knew you could not meet?*”; “*What would you do if you had a direct conflict with another employee?*”

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- Use **behavioral questions** – “Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?”; “Describe a time when you had to sacrifice your own goals for the good of the team”
- Answer the questions yourself. What do you need the answers to be? Write down what themes you would like to see in a candidate’s responses.
- Book an appropriate location for the interview
- Try to have at least one other person present in the interview

During The Interview

Attempt to keep the interview informal but professional. Be respectful and professional. Turn off your Blackberry!

Interview format:

- Introduction
- Explain the process
- Ask your questions
- Describe the job
- Let them ask questions
- Indication of next steps and timeline
- Close

Assessing a candidate’s responses:

- Do you believe them?
- Are they just saying what they think you want to hear?
- Make sure you challenge the role they actually played and how much they were responsible as opposed to being part of a team’s success
- Challenge if you are not convinced

Bring to a close:

- Provide a realistic estimate of decision time and stick to it
- If you are keen on them, ask them to let you know if their circumstances change in the interim
- Don’t promise anything until you have seen all the candidates

After the Interview

Remember that your intuition is a powerful tool in the interviewing process but it is not the only one – you should score and rank each interview performance.

Consider:

- What skills are nice to have, and what can be taught?
- Where are you comfortable to compromise?
- What is not up for negotiation

Be sure to call all the candidates (even the unsuccessful ones) to let them know when a decision has been made.

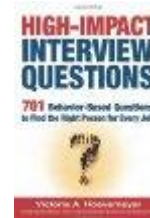
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At Wily Manager, we offer easy-to-understand management tools and advice that you can put to work right away.

Get the complete '**How to Conduct an Interview**' topic bundle at www.wilymanager.com

Wily Manager Picks

[High-Impact Interview Questions: 701 Behavior-Based Questions to find the Right Person for Every Job](#)
(Victoria A. Hoevemeyer)



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