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recruitment assessment retention

## **Interview Skills – Interviewer Guidelines** **Ardus Consulting Group**

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## OPENING THE INTERVIEW

The initial aim is to build rapport (this could involve some small talk). There is a need to clearly explain to the candidate:

- the reason for the interview
- the interview format
- the expected time-frame

## INTERVIEW CONTROL

Control of the interview must remain in the hands of the interviewer. This can be achieved by explaining to the candidate that you have a standard interview methodology that you employ to gather the relevant data and ask their permission for you to do the initial questioning. (The candidate will get their chance later).

## INTERVIEW AIDS

You should ensure the candidate is thoroughly conversant with any interview aids. These may include:

1. reading the formal job specification
2. reading supporting company literature such as product brochures

## INTERVIEW LANGUAGE

Ensure the language and questioning style used is appropriate to the position and promotes the two-way communication process.

## QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

### Open Questions

These are framed in such a way as to avoid single word or very brief answers. They usually commence with Why, What, How, Explain.

#### Advantages

1. Encourages the candidate to do most of the talking
2. These can sometimes provided unexpected information.

#### Disadvantages

1. Difficult to phrase succinctly
2. Can leave the applicant floundering or uncertain if phrased ambiguously or vaguely.
3. Eg. Self-description – How would others describe you?

## Closed Questions

Framed in such a way as to encourage answers to a very few words, eg yes or no.

### Advantages

1. Can direct an interview into specific areas
2. Can tactfully slow down a talkative candidate
3. Useful for clarification

### Disadvantages

1. Their overuse can destroy the flow of the interview (interrogation).

## General Rules

- All questions should be short, clear, unambiguous and aimed at encouraging the candidate to do most of the talking.
- All questions should be relevant to the selection criteria.
- Questions should be exploratory by nature to probe the candidate in some depth.

## INTERVIEW STYLE CHECKLIST

- Don't accept superficial answers.
- Penetrate the candidate's reluctance to speak.
- Use comments as encouragement, to put the candidate at ease and to encourage conversation – e.g. Take me through your career, highlighting things of particular relevance.
- Use empathy and be sensitive to the candidate's needs.
- Allow broad guidelines for replies.
- Be courteous, particularly when interjecting.
- Keep questions unambiguous and relevant.
- Rephrase questions if necessary.
- Avoid interruptions or arguments.
- Concentrate on strengths as well as weaknesses.
- Avoid obtrusive note taking.
- Summarise at appropriate points.
- Let the interviewee do most of the talking.
- Adapt the language to suit the candidate.
- Maintain control of the interview.
- Avoid suggestions of discrimination.
- Record facts during the interview and make judgements directly afterwards.
- Know when and how to close the interview.
- Summarise at the end of the interview.
- Explain any necessary follow-up.

## THE POWER OF SILENCE

By remaining silent, you encourage the candidate to speak or elaborate.

## THE ART OF LISTENING

Be an attentive listener and try to prevent note-taking from the interview or communication flow.

To listen effectively, you must:

1. Resist distractions
2. Use your thoughts
3. Judge content and not delivery
4. Not react to emotional words
5. Fight off the temptation to reach conclusions until the candidate's views are fully stated.

## BODY-LANGUAGE

There are four basic principles to follow in communicating with others:

1. Unlock your hands
2. Unlock your arms
3. Unlock your legs
4. Unlock your ankles

## CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Ensure that the candidate has no unanswered queries or questions regarding the position.
- Summarise the events of the interview.
- Ensure the candidate is aware of the future stages in the selection process and the expected time frame.
- Ascertain the candidate's continued interest in the position.
- Thank the candidate for their attendance and input and politely escort them to reception.

## NOTE:

1. In the event that the candidate is clearly unsuitable, it is wise to courteously end the interview as soon as possible.
2. If the candidate is very likely to be offered the position, it can be wise to accordingly give them some encouragement as to their prospects without making a firm job commitment.

## POST INTERVIEW EVALUATION

### The Equal Opportunity Act

1. The Act specifies that only characteristics that are inherent to the nature of the job will be used to define it, and these characteristics will be used to select, on merit, the person to fill the position.
2. Preconceptions and biases normally occur in the following areas:
  - a. race
  - b. colour
  - c. sex
  - d. religion
  - e. political opinion
  - f. national extractions
  - g. social origin

- h. age
  - i. criminal record
  - j. marital status
  - k. medical record
  - l. nationality
  - m. personal attributes
  - n. physical disability
  - o. sexual preference
  - p. trade union activities
3. Job descriptions, advertising, application forms and the selection process should be structured so as not to exclude members because of the above biases.

## **SELECTION PROCESS GUIDELINES**

1. All applicants should be evaluated by the same objective selection criteria.
2. No assumption about the working pattern of individuals should be made.
3. All people in the selection process should apply the same selection criteria.
4. Applicants should not be questioned in a way that implies unfair or impartial attitudes.
5. Information about the position should be offered to the applicants in exactly the same way.
6. Ideally, all relevant decision-makers should be involved in the selection process.
7. All candidates should be advised of the final decision as soon as possible, after the decision has been made.
8. Consideration should be given to providing counselling to applicants who seek comment on their interview performance.
9. Your Consultant can assist with selection objectivity, counselling and advice.

## **OBJECTIVITY VS SUBJECTIVITY**

1. In making judgements, the interviewer must be as objective as possible and look for evidence to support the judgement.
2. All evidence must be related to the critical requirements of the job.
3. To be reliable the interview must be consciously designed to gather information about the candidate which evidence shows as the necessary skills for successful job performance.
4. The interview should cover no more ground than is required to contribute to the process of prediction.
5. Information from other sources such as psychological tests, reference checks and samples of work should be used to confirm judgements.
6. An interview is not an event to be considered in pure isolation.

## **INTERVIEWING PITFALLS**

1. The Halo Effect - the tendency to judge an individual in many areas on the basis of one strong point.
2. The tendency to consider candidates who have interests, experiences and backgrounds similar to the interviewer as being more acceptable than those who differ.
3. Stereotyping - this is making judgements of various types of people and assigning unverified qualities to those people.

## EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following is a broad range of questions, which could be appropriately selected in line with the position criteria prior to the interview.

### Attitudinal Questions

- Why are you looking for another position OR Why did you leave your last position?
- What attracted you to our advertised position?
- Now that you have an understanding of the brief, does the role appeal to you?
- What do you see as its major positive challenges? Why?
- What do you see as drawbacks? Why?
- What do you think you could bring to this position?
- What do you know of our company?
- What are your career ambitions and what would be your expectations of this company in relation to your career objectives?
- What type of organisations have you been seeking employment with?
- Describe your ideal working environment.
- What would your most recent manager say about you?
- How would your subordinates describe you as a manager?
- Describe your management style.
- How do you motivate sales people?
- Describe how you handle a difficult disciplinary situation eg non-performance
- Are you an effective delegator? What is your reasoning behind delegation?
- How do you go about decision-making?
- Where do you see your strengths?
- What about limitations and what have you done to overcome these?
- What have you done in your career that has been different or where you have taken a different approach?
- How do you handle stress and what interests do you have outside of your career?
- What motivates you?
- What frustrates you in the working environment?
- What type of manager do you work best with?
- In your current or most recent position, what are the things you liked most?
- And like/d least?
- What are your time management and organisational skills like?
- How would your clients describe you?
- Describe the selling environments you and your sales team have been involved with, eg retail, trade, industrial, corporate.
- What did you find most challenging and why?
- What do you base your success in sales on?
- What are your greatest career achievements?
- How would you describe your own personality?
- If the position were offered to you,
  - a. would you accept;
  - b. what salary would you seek;
  - c. what time-frame would you require to start?

## Questions Relating To Technical Skills Summary

- Describe a project or assignment you have managed relevant to our technical requirements.
- What were the major technical considerations and how did you overcome them?
- Where have you developed your technical skills? Expand.
- How have you handled technical issues outside of your direct level of experience?
- How would your former supervisors assess your technical competency?
- What technical areas require further development?
- What are your greatest strengths in a technical sense?
- Give examples of projects that have been successfully completed within agreed budgets (time and cost).
- Give an example of a project that incurred budget overrun. What were the circumstances? How were they managed from an internal and client perspective?
- What has been the size and scope of projects you have managed?

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