

10 Tips to Hone Your Interviewing Technique

Conducting a successful interview with potential new candidates goes beyond just running through some simple questions to check their competencies. Excellent interviewers know that how they phrase their questions can elicit responses that reveal more about the candidate's skills and personality and whether they're a good match for your team.

Interviews are important as new employees at any level will have an impact on the team and the quality of their work. It is vital to the success of the business to focus on finding diligent, hardworking employees who will make immediate contributions to the business and bring about positive progress in their job role.

How do you find them? Here are **ten interviewing techniques** and **sample questions** curated from various sources that will help you to identify the best candidates.

An interview is just as much about whether a candidate wants to work for your business as it is whether they are the person that you want to hire. Both parties need to make a good impression, so make sure to prepare your questions in advance before stepping into the interview room.

1. What is the Candidate Looking For?

Before diving into questions about the job role and figuring out if the candidate has the right skills to fill those boots, find out what it is the candidate wants to get from their new job.

Do they want to get their hands dirty and tackle a new challenge?
Are they looking for more flexible work arrangements?
Is their decision to look for a new job a financially motivated one?

Instead of asking: "Why do you want to work for us?"

rephrase the question to be: "What are your top three criteria for your next job?"

It's a comfortable question but one that will highlight some key information for you. Finding out the answer to this question may even show that your job and this candidate aren't a match — for example, they may not have the availability you need or the ability to commit to a small business. Better to find out right away!

2. What Makes This Candidate Tick?

Next, you want to find out what this candidate would consider a great day at work, or a great week, or a great year. Start off by asking a question like: "When you hit the sofa after work and think about your day, what parts of your day make you smile?"



The aim here is to get the candidate into a zone where they're really imagining the end of a great work day. Not only does this give the candidate the impression that your workplace is somewhere they can have great work days, but this way you're more likely to get some honest answers and gain insight into what they like about work (do they enjoy team projects, complex problem solving, contributing new ideas, organising? etc.)

3. Will They Gel with You as a Manager?

You're interviewing this person to see if they could be a valuable member of your team, so you want to find out whether you and they can work together effectively.

The best way to discover this is through asking about their past experiences with their managers.

Here's a good line of questioning for finding this out:

"Tell me about a past boss or manager who brought out the best in you. What did they do that particularly motivated/inspired you?"

Follow up with: "....and what about a manager who brought out the worst in you? What did you find difficult about working with them?"

The aim of these questions is to:

1. See what managerial styles the candidate responds well to and whether that fits with your own style of management
2. Get an idea of whether the candidate prefers to follow set rules, or is an independent thinker
3. Uncover their attitude towards management and how they describe other people – are they positive or negative? Are they judgmental or understanding?

4. How Would This Candidate Get on with the Team?

When hiring new employees, you want to make sure that they're a good cultural fit for your organisation. In teams different personalities and working styles can be just as important to consider as skills and experience.

You should tailor your questions to the role which you are trying to fill, but here are a few starting points:

"Tell me about a shared or group project on which you really enjoyed working?"

"How do you handle working with a colleague who you find difficult to get along with?"

"Can you tell me a time when there has been a disagreement within your team and how you handled it?"

“We really value honesty, integrity and open communication in our team members. Can you give me an example of a time when you have demonstrated these qualities?”

Behavioural questions such as "tell me about a time when you..." which ask a candidate for examples of their past performance and behaviour are a great way to predict what a candidate's future performance will be like.

5. Who Inspires the Candidate?

Who inspires a candidate is a good indicator of their values, ambitions and long-term goals.

Ask a simple question, such as:

“Who in the world most inspires you? What is it about them that inspires you?”

6. Test the Candidate's Understanding of Business Relationships

All businesses are different, but they all involve building and maintaining relationships with others, whether that's with suppliers, partner organisations, or customers. Structure your questions to reflect the kinds of business relationships relevant to the job role you're hiring for.

For example:

“What are the three most important aspects of maintaining a good relationship with a supplier?”

“Why is customer service important?”

“What do you think is the secret of excellent customer service?”

7. Strengths and Weaknesses

All candidates have come to expect a question relating to strengths and weaknesses, and the savvy ones will have prepared an answer – something along the lines of “I'm a bit of a perfectionist” is quite a common answer. Use slightly different variations of this line of questioning to dig a little deeper. You might start off with:

“What do you hope to learn from this job?”

“What parts of this job would push you outside of your comfort zone?”

8. The Bigger Picture

If you are hiring for a long-term position, it's a good idea to find out how this job would fit into the candidate's long-term career plans.



Are they planning on settling into this job long-term? Are they ambitious and after career progression, and can you offer them that?

Ask questions such as:

“Where does this job fit into your long-term career plan?”

“We sometimes have opportunities for employees to get involved in other projects – do you have any further skills or interests you would like to highlight that could be relevant?”

9. Invite Them for a Tour of the Office

If the candidate has given you a good impression, you may want to invite them for a quick tour of the office. If it's appropriate, give them the opportunity to speak with other team members to see how they might fit in at your organisation.

However, do be careful to keep the interview professional and refrain from any indication that an office tour means that you're definitely hiring them for the job. Even if you're sure they're a good fit for your business, wait until you've interviewed all prospective candidates before making a final decision.

10. Follow Up with a Candidate

Following up with a candidate by email, phone or in-person to let them know whether they've got the job is a professional courtesy which is often overlooked.

This is not only good practice, but it gives the interview process closure and leaves the candidate with a good impression of you and your business. You never know who this candidate might talk to about your company, or whether they might end up being relevant for another job opening in your business in the future.