

How to Interview?

Once SkyBlue has found you suitable applicants for the role, the next stage is to hold interviews. Here's some useful advice to sift out the talent!

Research

Though this may be a luxury for some, preparing for your meeting does help. Before the meeting, read through the candidate CV again. Candidates should know their CV inside out to speak with conviction so likewise, you should be in a position to ask them pertinent questions.

Although the hiring power ultimately lies with you, they too will be assessing whether they want to be working for your company; in effect interviewing you. They will have a first impression too.

Shaking their hand and making good eye contact is often said to be the most important part of the interview. Bear in mind, the candidate may be nervous. Try to put them at ease with an ice breaker such as asking how their journey to the meeting was. Nerves are not necessarily a bad thing; it gives you an idea of how they deal with pressure and how they will deal with strangers when potentially starting with you.



The interview

The first thing you should do is set the agenda. Just explain very briefly how the meeting will be structured. This is logical, it also gives you control of the meeting. Introduce yourself and also give a very brief overview of the company, your department and the role on offer.

A basic thing to be aware of is how you phrase your questions. The interview will not progress if you ask closed questions. This is when you limit the candidate's response to a one word answer. The best suggestion would be to ask questions with an open word such as who, what, where, when, why or how. Another technique would be to give the candidate a statement and then asking them to expand such as 'You have had a lot of experience in managing teams. Tell me about it'. If using this, just bear in mind the candidate may not give you the information you want to hear so be prepared to prompt them with further questions.

Below we suggest four different ways to structure the meeting.

1. Chronological – here you take a 'whistle-stop tour' of the candidate's CV from past to present. If you want to see how the candidate has developed their skill set over time, this may be the most sensible approach
2. Competency – if the role you are recruiting requires a certain skill set, this may be a better way to ask them questions. Pick out the key skills the candidate will need for the role for example, creativity, leadership and resilience and ask questions around these attributes.
3. Role specific – if the vacancy is very specific, this could be the most effective way for you. This tends to be used for temporary roles also.
4. The 'informal chat'
Again, another method used for temporary roles though some interviewers use this for permanent recruitment too. It can be seen as a good way to build relations with the candidate quickly however, it may not give the right impression of the role, department or company.

Ending the meeting

Once you have asked all you need to, give the candidate the chance to ask any questions. On top of being another chance to sell the benefits of working for you, it will also give you an insight into what is at the forefront of their mind with regards to the role. It may be appropriate to ask what their notice period is.

We generally advise people not to offer candidates positions at the end of the interview. If only, it gives the chance to properly assess if they are right for the role.

