

My Ultimate Interview Guide

One of the biggest mistakes that I see Leaders make when interviewing is to treat the interview like any other fire drill that they put out on a daily basis. They are usually in a meeting that backs right up to the interview time or they are checking emails, working on a project, or catching up on overdue assignments. The picture this usually paints for the interviewee is that the Leader is not organized, that this is not a priority, and that the interview is just another item to check off the “to-do list” for the day.

If you want to attract the best candidates, show them an experience that’s a cut above the competition. Develop the mindset that you are the lucky one to have them there; instead of “they are the lucky one that you have given them a piece of your valuable time”.

The Phone Interview

This sets the tone for the entire interaction. Spend a few minutes preparing for the conversation. Don’t just “wing-it”. Here’s a few of my tips for a successful phone interview:

- Mindset: “How can I show this individual that we are a company that they **have to work for?**”
- Start by letting them know who you are, why you are calling, and asking them if they have “X” minutes to discuss the position (you want to keep the phone interview relatively short. Nothing more than 20 minutes).
- Give them a little teaser about the company that fuels their desire to get the job (what your company is known for, what employees brag about).
- Pre-call planning. Just as a salesman plans out his call or visit to a potential customer, you should spend a few minutes preparing yourself for the call. Know what you want to accomplish, what information you are seeking, and have a few pre-planned questions to ask. My intent for the phone interview is to showcase the company, and to determine if they meet the criteria for experience and overall fit. Here’s a few of my go-to phone interview questions:
 - Can you please describe your experience as it relates to the position you’ve applied for (you are always going to get more information by having them dialogue their experience rather than just reading their resume).
 - How did you find out about us (or the position)?
 - Tell me what you know about our company (If the individual hasn’t spent any time researching your company, you may consider their intent: do they just want a new job, or do they want to work for **your** company).
 - Tell me about the best Leader you have worked for.
 - Why are you looking for a change?

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- Tell me about your ideal position (or company to work for).
 - What is your desired salary? (This is a controversial one, and there are varying opinions as to whether this is an appropriate question to ask here or at the in-person interview. Here's my thoughts: don't waste your own time! If their expectations are way out of your realm of possibility; it's better to know that now than learning that at an in person interview).

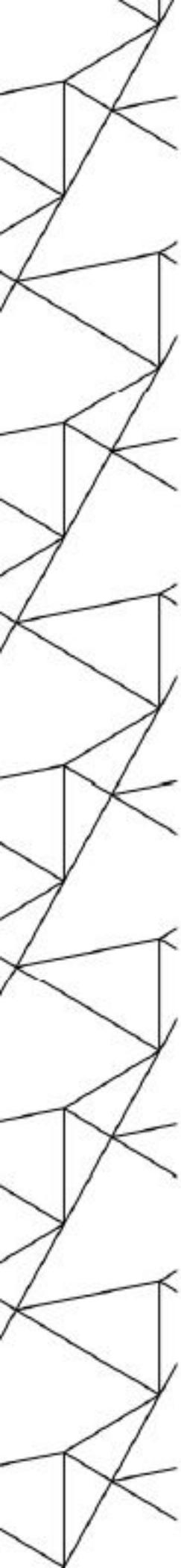
The In Person Interview.

- Spend time getting yourself prepared and in the right mindset
- If you are looking for someone who will go above and beyond for you; provide an interview experience that is a cut above. This is a non-verbal cue to set the expectations for the role. Conversely, if their experience indicates unpreparedness, rushing, or just going through the motions on your part; they're likely going to leave underwhelmed. In an environment like the one we find ourselves in currently; you must provide an exceptional experience if you want to attract exceptional talent.
 - Let a secretary or greeter know who they are, what time their interview is, and where the meeting will take place.
 - Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature and has good lighting.
 - Provide a notepad and pen for them to take notes (or even give them a little novelty or giveaway item).
 - Offer water or coffee.
 - Explain how the interview process will flow. What the plan is for today and the next steps until selection.
 - Describe your company, detail the history, or provide some data / facts about the company.
 - It's important to get the individual comfortable with talking about themselves
 - Some questions that can create connection and set the tone are:
 - Tell me something about you that I would not have read on your resume.
 - Where did you grow up?
 - What do you know about our company?
 - What do you like to do for fun?

When I interview; I'm mainly focused on trying to bring out attributes of the individual. Everything about their qualifications, experience, education, etc. can be found on their resume, or I've already uncovered in the phone interview. If their resume or the PI doesn't answer those questions for me, they are screened out. If they cannot sell themselves on their education / experience, they don't want the job bad enough.

What attributes are you looking for? The intent of every question you ask should be to identify their attributes, attitude, and values. In most jobs; everything else can be taught as long as they are teachable (again, an attribute).

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You should develop your own attribute list, and create intentional questions to see if the individual aligns with your expectations. Here is my attribute list:

- Problem solving / Resilience
- Creativity / Innovation
- Emotional Intelligence (teamwork / self-awareness / socially aware / self-improvement)
- Driven / Self-Motivated
- Ownership / Self-responsibility
- Attitude

If you want to use some of my favorite interview questions, here is the link.

[My Top 15 Interview Questions](#)

Reading Body Language

According to Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Rule of Personal Communication, verbal speech only represents 7% of total communication. 38% of communication is deduced from facial cues, and the remaining 55% from bodily clues. If you want to *really* understand your interviewee, you need to study up on non-verbal cues. I've provided a link to one of my favorite articles on the subject, written by workable.com.

<https://resources.workable.com/stories-and-insights/interview-body-language>

Wrapping It Up

A question that I like to use to indicate that the interview is coming to an end is: "Is there anything that you would like to share with me that was not covered yet?" It gives them a chance to showcase something they are proud of, or share information that might be pertinent to their job search.

Always finish the interview by asking the individual if they have any questions. Answer them as transparently as you are able. Make sure they leave with all the information they were seeking. Remember to thank the individual for their time, and remind them of the next steps. Most importantly, **follow through** on those next steps. Happy hiring!

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