

Webinar giveaway

Recruitment guide:

Assessment or scenario-based
interviews

Preparation

- **Understand the Role:**

Review the job description, key responsibilities, and required skills. Understand what “good” looks like.

Identify the essential and desirable competencies. Not just for the requirements today, but what skills or knowledge may be required for the future? Or – what skills or knowledge could enhance current operations?

Have you evaluated your requirements? Rather than adopting a “one out/one in” approach, is there an opportunity to redefine or restructure the role? Is there an opportunity to introduce efficiencies that may reduce the burden on headcount?

Is outsourcing an opportunity?

- **Develop Assessment Criteria:**

Create a list of skills, knowledge, and behaviours critical for the role.

Based on this list, what method is best suited, or should you use a combination of these?

- Questions/Answers
- Practical demonstration
- Scenario-based questions
- Psychometric testing

- **Prepare your Questions/Demonstrations and/or scenarios**

In some situations, it may be appropriate to provide the scenario to the candidate ahead of the interview to allow them time to prepare. An example of this might be the recruitment of a trainer. In this situation, you could request that they prepare and present a short training session based on a specific topic.

- **Develop a Scoring System:**

Create a standardised scoring system for responses and use a legend that will help ensure consistency between reviewers.

Define what constitutes a good, average, and poor answer for each question.

Be Consistent: Use the same set of questions for all candidates to ensure fairness.

Avoid Bias: Focus on objective criteria

Conducting the Interview

Build Rapport:

- Begin with introductions and a brief overview of the interview process.
- Make the candidate feel comfortable to encourage open communication.

Types of Questions

Structured Questions:

- Start with general questions to understand the candidate's background.
- Proceed to specific questions related to the assessment criteria.

Behavioural Questions:

- Example: "Can you describe a time when you had to overcome a significant challenge at work?"

Scenario Assessment:

- Consider a typical task for the role.
- Identify how you can adapt this as an assessment tool. See below for some examples.
- Identify the preferred responses to the scenarios that you select.

Technical/Role-specific Questions:

- Ask questions that test the candidate's specific knowledge and skills pertinent to the role.

Examples of Scenario Assessments

Client requesting a Refund

Provide the candidate with a product brochure and your return policy.

Scenario:

A customer calls up to request a refund for a product that is outside the return policy period. The policy clearly states that refunds are only available within 30 days of purchase. How would you respond?

Preferred Responses

- The policy is explained clearly but in a tone that conveys good customer service: "I understand your concern, but according to our return policy, we can only process refunds within 30 days of purchase."
- Do they think to offer alternatives: "While I can't process a refund, I can offer you store credit or exchange the product for something else."
- Did they maintain a helpful and positive attitude throughout the interaction?

Handling a miscommunication

Provide the candidate with a product brochure and your pricing policy. Instruct them that they can use a degree of "artistic license" – they are not being tested on your policy and process, but more about how they might go about this interaction.

Scenario:

A customer complains that they were promised a discount by a previous representative, but there is no record of it in the system. They are insisting on receiving the discount. How would you address this?

Desired Response:

- Did they apologise for the miscommunication: "I'm sorry for any confusion. Let me look into this for you."
- Take sufficient details from the customer so that they can verify their claim.
- Did they offer a resolution, such as honouring the discount or providing an alternative: "As a gesture of goodwill, I can offer you a 10% discount on your next purchase."

Interview Tips

Active Listening and Probing

Listen Actively:

- Pay close attention to the candidate's responses.
- Note down key points and examples provided by the candidate.

Probe for Details:

- Ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the candidate's experience and thought process.
- Example: "Can you tell me more about your role in that project?"

Assessing and Scoring

Record Responses:

- Take notes of key points during the interview to ensure accurate recall later.

Score Responses:

- Use a predetermined scoring system to evaluate each answer.
- Be consistent and objective in your scoring.

Post-Interview Evaluation

Review Scores:

- Compare the scores for all candidates to identify the top performers.

Discuss with the Interview Panel:

- If applicable, discuss the candidates with other interviewers to gain different perspectives.

Final Decision:

- Consider the scores along with the overall fit for the team and organisational culture.
- Make a decision based on a balanced view of all assessment criteria.