



THE ULTIMATE INTERVIEWER GUIDE FOR HIRING TOP TALENT

A Step-by-Step Process for Finding
the Best People for Your Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Are you one of the three in five hiring managers that have settled for an unqualified candidate? You may have chosen a bad hire because you're part of the two in four organizations that rush the interview process.

And you wouldn't be alone; seven in ten businesses believe these problems have exacerbated in the last year and aren't expected to slow down.

Enough numbers to raise your eyebrows? Keep reading.

As experts with 25 years in the recruitment space, we've seen the consequences of poor or outdated interview processes firsthand. Most of our clients who failed to conduct proper interviews in the past saw the trickle-down effect of a bad hire: wasted resources, poor work performance, a decline in team morale, rehire costs, and inefficiency, among other things.

By recognizing potential pitfalls and actively working to improve the interview process using our proven tactics and techniques, hiring managers can gain a deep understanding of candidates beyond resume bullet points.

Check out our in-depth and comprehensive guide to learn how to drive a human-centric interview process that will help you attract top-tier candidates who will remain dedicated to your organization for the long haul.

THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF A BAD HIRE



DRAIN ON COMPANY TIME & RESOURCES: Dealing with a bad hire costs time and resources that take away from management and HR, including onboarding and training, performance management, or eventually having to terminate the individual's employment.



SUBPAR QUALITY OF WORK: A bad hire may produce subpar work or make frequent errors, which can negatively impact the overall quality of the team's output. This harms the company's reputation if clients receive substandard services.



DECREASED TEAM PRODUCTIVITY: When a bad hire is unable to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, it can lead to decreased productivity within the team or department. Other employees may need to spend additional time correcting errors, managing conflicts, or providing training and guidance to the underperforming individual, which can divert their attention from their own tasks.



UNSTABLE TEAM DYNAMICS: A bad hire can disrupt the dynamics and synergy within a team or an entire organization, depending on the role. This can cause a breakdown in communication, hinder collaboration and impede the team's ability to achieve its goals.



NEGATIVE IMPACT ON COMPANY CULTURE: If the hire fails to meet expectations or demonstrates poor work ethic, it can create frustration and resentment among other employees who have to deal with the consequences of the bad hire's mistakes.



DAMAGE TO COMPANY REPUTATION: A bad hire who interacts with clients, customers, or other external stakeholders can damage the company's reputation. Negative experiences or interactions can lead to dissatisfied clients, lost business opportunities, and a tarnished image in the marketplace.



INCREASED TURNOVER: A bad hire can significantly impact turnover within an organization, not only in the position itself but within your team, triggering a chain reaction of turnover as other top-performing employees consider leaving.



EXPENSIVE REHIRE COSTS: A bad hire can lead to expensive rehire costs due to the significant financial outlay required to correct the hiring mistake. The costs associated with onboarding, training, and lost productivity make a bad hire a costly setback.

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PART 1

Interview Preparation

- 1** Establishing a Candidate Persona
- 2** The Most Common Interview Types & When to Use Them



ESTABLISHING A CANDIDATE PERSONA

With a well-defined candidate persona, interviewers can tailor their questions and assessments to align with the specific skills and qualities sought in the ideal candidate. This targeted approach ensures that the interview process is focused and efficient, enabling interviewers to gather more relevant information about each candidate's fit for the role.

First and foremost, your 'ideal candidate' is a subjective concept. It can take on various interpretations depending on who's discussing it. For a team member, it could be someone who's communicable and savvy at Excel formulas. In comparison, next-level leaders may want someone unafraid to ask difficult questions and knows how to prioritize various projects. When we use this term, we refer to someone who possesses the necessary skills to do the job successfully and who adds to the existing organizational culture.

A candidate persona, also called a job profile, is where marketing meets recruiting. It's a research-driven representation of your ideal candidate, from their background and experience to their personality traits and work style.

To start, you'll need to identify the role's key responsibilities and objectives, then develop a list of qualities and attributes that would best complement those requirements. From there, you can build a more nuanced profile of your ideal candidate, considering factors like their experience level, education, communication style, and cultural contribution.

Done right, a candidate persona should be so comprehensive that new additions to your hiring team can use the document to get up to speed seamlessly. To create yours, there are a few items that you should define:

- ▶ Career goals
- ▶ Background and experience
- ▶ Interests – personal and professional
- ▶ Key demographics
- ▶ Devices and platforms
- ▶ Tech proficiency

**For more information on creating a candidate persona,
check out our blog on the subject. >**



Candidate Persona Template

Role | Location

Market Data:

Hiring Insights as of 00/00/00

Competition Score:

Unemployment Percentage:

Candidate Devices:

Top 5 Employers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Regional Employment:

Retirement Risk:

Racial Diversity:

Gender Diversity:

Typical Compensation Range:

Candidate Background:

Status:

Education:

Career Path:

Location:

Mannerisms:

Education Level

Personality Characteristics

Professional Motivators

Job Responsibilities

Personal Motivators

Pain Points

Other Notes

Developing your candidate persona can be time-consuming, but the process is straightforward. Allot enough time for careful planning and preparation with your team for the best outcome. (We recommend at least a 2-hour session.) Remember that you may need to revisit your persona regularly as the needs or job scope changes.

Once you have identified your ideal candidate for a role, it's time to incorporate your persona into the interview process. We advise developing a fresh candidate persona for each new post or job vacancy you fill. Over time, you'll build up a collection that you may use to streamline and improve your interview process.

Candidate personas mold the interview process, creating alignment with the job description, interview questions, assessments, and interactions with the specific attributes and characteristics outlined in the persona. During the interview, tailored questions can be asked to evaluate the candidate's alignment with the persona, such as inquiring about their relevant past experiences, problem-solving approaches, or how they handle specific situations (which we'll dive into in Part 3 of this eBook).

By consistently referencing the persona throughout the interview process, interviewers can objectively assess candidates' suitability for the role and make more informed decisions in selecting the best person for the position.



COMMON INTERVIEW TYPES & WHEN TO USE THEM

With the various interview types that have popped up in recent years, it can be challenging to determine which to pair up with your specific needs and candidate type. Choosing usually boils down to two things: The seniority level of the role and how quickly the role needs to be filled.

24 Days

In 2017, Glassdoor discovered that the typical U.S. job interview process lasted nearly 24 days.

Employers need to be aware of this balance. Do more interview layers exist because they have been shown to help choose better candidates? Or are they just an additional step that slows down hiring? It's common for hiring managers to use a methodical combination of interview types to optimize the interview process.

By understanding the different types of interviews and when to use them, you can improve your own interview process. Use our breakdown of interview types below as a benchmark for your own approach.

GENERAL INTERVIEW TYPES

PHONE SCREEN

Use Case: Directly after the preliminary screening.

Phone screening is a go-to for bigger businesses with several applicants to fish through. Before spending more time and effort on a prospect, you can swiftly narrow down your list of potential candidates and get the fundamental questions answered.

During this brief conversation, candidates answer any questions the interviewer may have about their background or experience. Before inviting a candidate in for a face-to-face interview, the interviewer may also go into further detail about the position to determine the candidate's level of interest. They'll confirm:

- ▶ Employment history
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Licenses
- ▶ Certifications
- ▶ Salary and benefits expectations (Any candidate requirements?)
- ▶ Commute
- ▶ On-site or remote work
- ▶ Shift preferences
- ▶ Full-time or part-time
- ▶ Gaps in employment discussion

IN-PERSON INTERVIEW

Use Case: Ideal for local or higher-level candidates.

In-person interviews (which typically follow the phone screen) are the most disruptive but are the best way to get to know a candidate and allow you to pick up on non-verbal cues (more on that later). Additionally, these interviews are preferable for organizations with a smaller applicant pool and jobs where only one person is needed to conduct the interview.

The traditional in-person interview is still the most common type used in interview processes across organizations and industries.

61% of job searchers questioned by Jobvite have gone through a face-to-face interview.

During in-person interviews, you can observe what it's like to be in the same room and establish a deeper connection with a candidate. While it's true that interview anxiety can affect applicants' behavior, there will likely be moments when they must deal with coworkers in awkward or difficult situations. You can use an in-person interview to get a sense of how a candidate will react in these settings.

It is worth noting the drawbacks of an in-person interview. First, this interview type requires more time commitment, and scheduling difficulties on both sides can cause the interview process to slow to a crawl. In addition, it's possible that people with impairments and members of unrepresented groups may not perform as well in person as they would online. Lastly, you may also unintentionally reject those who might find it challenging to travel, even locally, for interviews, such as single parents, low-income individuals, etc.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

Use Case: If candidates cannot be seen in person or there are scheduling conflicts among leadership.

During Covid, virtual interviewing became the norm out of necessity. However, this type of interview has become commonplace due to the convenience of using platforms like Zoom and Teams. According to a recent [Indeed survey](#), **82% of employers surveyed use virtual interviews, and 93% of employers plan to continue using them.**

Virtual interviews may be perfect for businesses with remote, telecommuting, or freelance staff as it will enable them to interview any candidate from anywhere with a more face-to-face feel than a phone interview. Virtual interviews are typically faster and require less downtime in between. They can therefore speed up the interview process by enabling you to meet with more candidates in a single day. Plus, candidates are more likely to be available for interviews when they are relaxed about logistics like childcare, travel, or commuting.

While flexibility is beneficial, a potential downside is that you are at the whim of networks and software during virtual interviews. Interviews could be disrupted or complicated by connectivity issues and software bugs. Additionally, some candidates may not have access to the technology required to participate in an online interview, such as a computer or mobile device.

CASE STUDY OR CASE INTERVIEW

Use Case: Most effective mechanism for a measure of skill.

Case interviews give your candidate a hypothetical problem to investigate and solve. This allows you to evaluate their business personality, critical thinking, technical knowledge, and problem-solving abilities. An example prompt might be, “How can Company X double its profits in the next three years?”

This interview is quite specialized and is typically used to hire professionals from various types of industries. After being a standard for consulting agencies and financial institutions, it’s now been adopted by software companies, NGOs, and marketing firms.

You can also provide technical projects with time constraints and base recruiting decisions on which applicant completes the task the best. This test may be the majority of the formal screening process in specific circumstances.

For example, if you need a web designer, you may have the candidate analyze and critique an existing web page to see what new concepts they can bring to the table. Or it could look something like this if you’re feeling inventive.

MORE ADVANCED INTERVIEW TYPES

SELF-GUIDED VIDEO INTERVIEW

Use Case: Efficient for companies with hefty hiring needs or who need more control.

Self-guided or one-way interviews are a pre-screening tactic employers use to decide whether candidates should advance to the next round of interviews. These typically take the place of phone screens in industries involving high-tech and SaaS positions.

These on-demand interviews have the candidate record themselves responding to pre-determined on-screen questions or prompts instead of being asked directly by the hiring manager or recruiter.

According to video interview [experts at HireVue](#), there are various ways to deliver these types of questions, including:

- ▶ **Questions asked via pre-recorded video:** Gives the candidate a given time to respond after the video finishes (generally around 3 minutes).
- ▶ **Questions asked in a simple text format:** Normally, 30 seconds are given for the candidate to read the question and prepare their response.
- ▶ **Questions requiring written responses (or drawings):** If you need to fill a role that involves a great deal of writing, it's best to ask for a written response to a prompt. Often these will involve outside research outside the interview window.
- ▶ **Coding challenges:** When trying to fill a software development or other high-tech role, ask for coded responses to a prompt. These challenges can be in any language the candidate is expected to code on the job.

While this interview style can be beneficial when filtering a high number of candidates and provides flexibility, some candidates may feel uncomfortable or come off as impersonal when recording themselves. Many consider these the most [awkward type of interview](#) for candidates.

TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

Use Case: Made to assess a candidate's technical skillset.

Employers hiring for engineering, scientific, or software roles frequently conduct technical interviews. It is essentially an interview to determine technical suitability for the position and the depth and breadth of the candidate's subject-matter expertise.

Technical interviews are also intended to evaluate the candidate's capacity for problem-solving, communication, and decision-making under pressure. You'll be able to monitor the method utilized to complete a challenge, like solving a technical problem, writing code, debugging, etc., since it provides a window into how the candidate approaches challenges in the workplace. **Examples of technical interview questions include:**

- ▶ What is your preferred mobile application, and what improvements would you make?
- ▶ Describe a challenging engineering challenge you recently overcame.
- ▶ Can you describe when you developed and used a technical ability in practice?
- ▶ How would you create a device's touch interface?
- ▶ Without utilizing the divide “/” operator, create a function that divides two numbers.
- ▶ Describe how symmetric and asymmetric encryption differs and when either is more suited for a particular situation.

GROUP INTERVIEW

Use Case: A need for multiple candidates to fill a similar role.

A group interview is an assessment process where one or more interviewers evaluate multiple candidates at the same time. Instead of the traditional one-on-one format, candidates are brought together in a group setting to participate in various activities or discussions designed to evaluate their skills, abilities, and fit for the job.

Group interviews offer several benefits to employers, such as efficient use of time, the ability to observe candidate dynamics and interpersonal skills, and the opportunity to assess teamwork and collaboration. These interview types are ideal when filling positions that demand exceptional people skills, particularly those frequently interacting with customers or the public.

PANEL INTERVIEW

Use Case: Expedites the hiring process and helps reduce bias.

In a panel interview, a number of managers and executives come together to question a single candidate. Three to five interviewers ensure the procedure is manageable and the candidates are seen from various angles. The panel typically includes the hiring manager, an HR representative, and members of the department the new hire will be working with. Interviewers take turns posing questions and can use the answers to guide subsequent inquiries.

Panel interviews provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate a candidate's skills and quickly obtain a well-rounded viewpoint from a diverse panel of participants who contribute various experiences, viewpoints, and ideas to the discussion.

Additionally, panel interviews facilitate consistency and standardization in the evaluation process. All candidates face the same set of interviewers, ensuring a fair and equitable assessment. It minimizes the risk of individual biases or subjective evaluations that may occur in one-on-one interviews.



WHICH INTERVIEW TYPE WORKS BEST FOR YOUR ROLE(S)

Choosing the best interview type for a role involves considering various factors, including the nature of the position, the skills and qualities being assessed, the number of candidates, and the resources available. Ask yourself the following questions to get started:

What are the job requirements?

Identify the critical skills, competencies, and qualities that are essential for success in the position. Consider the level of complexity, the need for specific technical expertise, and the importance of interpersonal or communication skills.

What criteria you will use to evaluate skills?

Are you primarily looking for technical proficiency, cultural fit, problem-solving abilities, or a combination of factors? Understanding your evaluation criteria will help guide the selection of an appropriate interview type.

How many candidates are you interviewing?

If you have a large pool of candidates, a group interview may be more efficient to assess multiple candidates simultaneously. However, if you have a smaller number of highly qualified candidates, individual interviews may provide a more personalized and in-depth assessment.

How much time can you allot to the interview?

Consider the time, resources, and logistics required for each interview type. Some formats, such as assessment centers or panel interviews, may demand more planning, coordination, and resources. Ensure you have the resources available to conduct the chosen interview type effectively.

Delays may benefit the company in the long run if they lead to better hires due to more deliberate, time-intensive interview processes. However, an interview process that's too slow runs the risk of wasting money and losing impatient prospects to rival organizations. Companies must choose between more thoroughly vetting applicants or filling open positions faster.

What is the work environment and the dynamics of the position?

For example, if the role requires strong teamwork and collaboration, a group discussion or a team exercise during the interview process may be more suitable to assess candidates' interpersonal skills and ability to work in a team.

What does the candidate prefer?

Offering job seekers the opportunity to choose between a face-to-face and virtual interview could benefit your interview process. **Over 50% of candidates** say they felt that virtual interviews gave them an advantage in allowing their true selves to shine through.

Allowing candidates to select how they prefer to be interviewed may reduce anxiety and enable you to gain further insight into who would fit well in the vacant role.



PART 2

Laying Out the Interview Process

- 1 Choosing Interviewers
- 2 Interviewer Briefs
- 3 Choosing the Best Skill Assessments
- 4 How to Hire for Cultural Alignment
- 5 How to Mitigate Bias

CHOOSING INTERVIEWERS

Now that you've made the initial preparations for your interview, it's time to select interviewers.

This group should possess relevant expertise and knowledge related to the role for which the candidate is being interviewed. Their insights and understanding of the job requirements will help you evaluate the candidate's qualifications more effectively.

Also, if you're utilizing more than one person for the interview process, aim for a cohesive, balanced group that can effectively collaborate and provide constructive feedback. It's best to restructure the interviews to maintain a fair and unbiased evaluation if there are existing conflicts or tensions.

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED, & DURING WHICH STAGES?

It's important to note that these roles can vary based on the organization's structure and the specific requirements of the role being interviewed. The hiring manager, or your desired interview coordinator, ensures direction and effective communication while each person contributes their unique expertise and perspective to evaluate the candidate holistically.

Internal Recruiting Team

This team determines current and future hiring needs, posts job openings online, sources candidates, and sometimes creates employee referral programs. They will be charged with uncovering candidates to include during the preliminary screening of the interview process.

Internal Recruiter

Once the top candidates are identified, an internal recruiter will schedule a 15–30-minute discussion of the candidate's resume and qualifications during the initial phone screen. They will gather more behavioral and essential information to gauge the candidate's personality and capabilities. Recruiters may also schedule discussions with direct applicants or candidates that weren't sourced by the recruiting team.

Hiring Manager

As the hiring manager, you should be involved in each stage of the interview process, but you may not necessarily take part in every interview. In other words, you should coordinate with other interviewers within the organization. Nowadays, a virtual interview is usually a good starting point for hiring managers because it takes less time from your day. Also, less communication is required before the interview about parking, the office's location, day-to-day job expectations, etc. During a one-on-one interview, you can learn more about the candidate's background and other qualifications.

Panel Team

We recommend choosing three to five people for a panel interview. Representatives who are seasoned workers, colleagues, or managers should be included.

Hiring Manager (Point Person)

- ▶ Facilitates the interview process and ensures it runs smoothly.
- ▶ Sets the agenda, establishes ground rules, and guides panel discussions.
- ▶ Ensures that each panelist has an opportunity to provide input.
- ▶ Summarizes key points and leads the panel in making final decisions.

HR Representative

- ▶ Ensures compliance with legal and organizational policies.
- ▶ May guide diversity and inclusion aspects to minimize bias.
- ▶ Facilitates communication between the panel and the candidate regarding logistical matters, such as salary negotiation or benefits.

Subject Matter Expert

- ▶ Possesses deep knowledge and expertise related to the role.
- ▶ Evaluates the candidate's skills, industry knowledge, and specific competencies.
- ▶ Asks relevant questions to assess the candidate's qualifications and responses within the subject matter.

Team Members (Optional)

- ▶ Represents the perspective of potential colleagues or teammates.
- ▶ Evaluates the candidate's interpersonal skills, teamwork abilities, and fit within the team.
- ▶ Asks questions about team collaboration, communication skills, or conflict resolution.



INTERVIEWER BRIEFS

Creating interview briefs is an essential step in preparing for interviews. It will provide context to the interviewers about the role, the team dynamics, and any specific challenges or opportunities associated with the position.

Offer guidance on what to focus on during the interview, such as technical skills, leadership abilities, cultural fit, or specific competencies. These briefs outline the key information about the candidates and provide guidance to the interviewers, such as:

CREATING AN INTERVIEW TIMELINE

Once you've decided who should participate in each step of the interview process, set clear expectations for how and when each party should prepare for the interview. This includes **scheduling dates and times for all interviews, ensuring all parties know the deadlines for submitting work samples, questions, or other materials, and setting formal expectations** for your organization.

Having a timeline will allow you to monitor progress throughout the interview more effectively and help identify points where additional participants may need to be included or guidance from hiring managers. With this information already mapped out in advance, employers and candidates can feel more confident throughout the interview process.

REVIEWING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

By sharing a job description beforehand, you can ensure that your team is well informed about the role they are interviewing for — **responsibilities, duties, qualifications, skills, and other requirements of the specific job role within an organization**. This can also help other team members, such as HR personnel or department heads, understand the context of the position they're helping to fill.

The main distinction **between a job description and a candidate persona** is that a job description is more generic and provides an external overview of the job requirements, while a candidate persona focuses on creating a detailed profile of the ideal candidate to attract and select the most suitable individuals for the role.

REVIEWING THE CANDIDATE PERSONA

This is a great time to introduce your interviewers to the candidate persona. Cross-compare which skills need to be performed in job-specific tasks using the knowledge you gained about the candidate persona. It goes beyond the general job description and delves into the ideal candidate's characteristics, traits, and preferences. Key characteristics of a candidate persona include:

- ▶ **CANDIDATE FOCUS:** Focuses on creating a detailed profile of the ideal individual to fill the job role, including their personality traits, motivations, and goals.
- ▶ **TARGETED APPROACH:** Narrow down and target specific candidates with the required qualifications, desired characteristics, and cultural fit.
- ▶ **EXTERNAL ORIENTATION:** Guide the selection of candidates who align with the organization's culture and values.
- ▶ **DETAILED SPECIFICS:** Nuanced information about the candidate, such as their preferred work environment, communication style, and personal attributes.



IDENTIFYING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Based on the job requirements and interview objectives, develop a list of interview questions to help evaluate your candidates effectively. Consider a mix of **behavioral, situational, and questions tailored to the specific role and your organization.** (We'll go more in-depth on these question types in the next section of this guide.)

Preparing in advance gives everyone involved enough time to think through their questions and fully assess candidates on paper before making any decisions in person. This also improves accuracy in candidate evaluation since more people can contribute feedback without feeling pressured by time constraints during an in-person session.



3

CHOOSING THE BEST SKILL ASSESSMENTS

Skill assessments help hiring managers understand a candidate's hard and soft skills and give them a way to verify the qualifications on their resumes.

These assessments vary depending on the industry, job level, and organization's preferences. Most skills evaluations in the past have taken the form of exams intended to determine if a person possesses the abilities required to carry out crucial job functions.



ESTABLISH YOUR OBJECTIVES: Determine the specific objectives of the skill assessment. What do you want to measure or evaluate? Is it technical proficiency, problem-solving abilities, creativity, or other job-specific skills? Clarifying the assessment objectives will help you identify the most relevant assessment methods.



DETERMINE SCALABILITY: Consider the number of candidates you need to assess. Some assessments may be more scalable and efficient for evaluating a large number of candidates, while others may be more suitable for a smaller candidate pool.



MONITOR & ADJUST: Continuously monitor the effectiveness of the skill assessment over time. Collect feedback from hiring managers, interviewers, and candidates to identify any areas of improvement or potential biases in the assessment process.



EVALUATE RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS: Consider the resources needed to implement the skill assessment. Assess whether you have the tools, software, or expertise to administer and evaluate the assessment effectively. Take into account the cost and time investment required to implement the assessment.

Skill evaluations can make the job of a hiring manager much easier, especially when there is a massive volume of applicants. It also gives your top candidates the ability to demonstrate their knowledge. Your prospects will have the chance to shine in a way that may not be apparent from an interview or résumé during a quantitative pre-hire review.

Skill Assessment Types Include:

- ▶ **Hard Skills Assessment**
- ▶ **Work Sample Test**
- ▶ **Cognitive Ability Assessment**
- ▶ **Personality Assessment**



Hard Skills Assessments

Hard skills assessments evaluate a candidate's specific technical or job-related skills. These assessments measure the knowledge, abilities, and proficiency required to perform specific tasks or functions related to a particular job or industry. Hard skills assessments are typically objective and measurable, allowing employers to assess a candidate's level of competence in a specific skill area.

- ▶ **Technical Assessments:** These assessments evaluate a candidate's knowledge and skills specific to the job's technical requirements. They can include coding challenges, programming tests, system design exercises, or practical simulations. Popular options for technical skill screening include [TestGorilla](#), [Codility](#), [CodeSignal](#), and [eSkill](#).
- ▶ **Design or Creativity Assessments:** These assessments assess a candidate's skills in graphic design, user experience (UX) design, or other creative fields. They may involve creating visual designs, wireframes, and prototypes using design software or providing a portfolio.
- ▶ **Industry-Specific Tests:** Certain industries or professions may have specialized hard skills assessments. For example, in healthcare, assessments may focus on medical knowledge, patient care, or diagnostic skills. Assessments may evaluate network administration, cybersecurity, or system administration skills in the IT industry.
- ▶ **Language Proficiency Tests:** [Language Proficiency Tests](#) assess a candidate's proficiency in a specific language, such as English, Spanish, or French. They evaluate grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing ability, and speaking skills.



Work Sample Tests

Work sample tests, also called job simulations or performance-based assessments, simulate or replicate tasks and activities that candidates encounter on the job. These tests aim to evaluate a candidate's ability to perform specific job-related tasks and assess their skills, knowledge, and decision-making abilities in a realistic setting.

Work sample tests are particularly effective in assessing a candidate's practical skills and job readiness. For example, a dexterity test may be used for a commercial / manufacturing role, where candidates are asked to perform at a certain level or speed.

- ▶ **Job Simulations:** These assessments simulate real work scenarios to assess a candidate's ability to perform specific tasks or handle job-related challenges. They can take the form of case studies, role playing, or simulations using specialized software.
- ▶ **Role Plays:** Candidates are given a specific role or scenario and are asked to act out a particular interaction or situation. This can assess customer service, negotiation, conflict resolution, or leadership skills.
- ▶ **Presentations or Demonstrations:** Candidates are asked to prepare and deliver a presentation or demonstrate a specific skill relevant to the job. This could include tasks like delivering a sales pitch, conducting a training session, or showcasing technical expertise.
- ▶ **Work Samples or Portfolios:** Candidates are asked to submit samples of their previous work, such as writing samples, design projects, coding projects, or marketing campaigns. Employers can evaluate the quality of the work and assess the candidate's skills directly.



Cognitive Ability Assessments

Cognitive ability tests measure a candidate's cognitive aptitude or mental abilities. These tests assess a candidate's capacity to learn, solve problems, think critically, reason logically, and process information quickly and accurately. Cognitive ability tests are widely used in hiring as they provide valuable insights into a candidate's intellectual potential and ability to perform well in complex job roles.

- ▶ **Predictive Index (PI) Cognitive Assessment:** The timed PI Cognitive Assessment[™] is a cognitive ability test for employment. This assessment measures a person's general mental ability and capacity for critical thinking. According to The Predictive Index, in just twelve minutes, you'll have more information about someone's likelihood of success and job performance than you would after a one-hour interview or standard aptitude test.
- ▶ **Neuroworx Problem-Solving Test:** These assessments evaluate a candidate's ability to analyze and solve problems. They may involve presenting candidates with hypothetical or real-life problems and assessing their problem-solving approach, analytical thinking, and decision-making skills.
- ▶ **Inductive Reasoning:** These tests measure a candidate's ability to identify underlying principles or rules from specific examples. Candidates are presented with patterns, shapes, or symbols and asked to determine the underlying rule or select the next item in the series.
- ▶ **Numerical Reasoning Test:** These tests measure a candidate's ability to work with numbers and perform mathematical operations. Candidates are given numerical data, charts, or graphs and are required to solve problems, calculate figures, and make data-based decisions.



Personality Assessments

Certain personality traits, such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability, have been linked to job performance and success in various professions. By assessing these traits, employers can understand how well a candidate's personality aligns with the role's requirements and your company culture.

Personality assessments can also identify candidates with similar values, work styles, and attitudes as your existing team members, fostering a harmonious and collaborative work environment. In addition, they can help you determine if their personality traits complement existing team dynamics or if they're bringing in unique qualities that can enhance your team's effectiveness.

- ▶ **CliftonStrengths Online Talent Assessment by Gallup:** This online test measures the intensity of your talents in each of the 34 CliftonStrengths themes. These 34 themes represent what people do best. They categorize all that's right with humankind -- distilled down to 34 different themes.
- ▶ **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):** MBTI is one of the most well-known personality assessments based on Carl Jung's theories. It categorizes individuals into one of 16 personality types, considering preferences such as extraversion vs. introversion, sensing vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling, and judging vs. perceiving.
- ▶ **DISC Assessment:** The DISC assessment categorizes individuals into four behavioral styles: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. DISC assessments, such as the Everything DiSC and DISC Classic, are commonly used for team building, communication training, and leadership development.
- ▶ **Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI):** The HPI focuses on core personality characteristics, such as ambition, sociability, prudence, and inquisitiveness. The HPI provides insights into an individual's strengths, weaknesses, and potential work derailers.



HOW TO INTERVIEW FOR CULTURAL ALIGNMENT

By hiring for cultural compatibility, companies can successfully find individuals who are great at their job, collaborate well with their coworkers, and share the same values as their employers.

Up to 50% of an employee's overall job satisfaction is attributed to company culture. Candidates want more than bean bags and pizza parties when choosing where to work; they crave authenticity. However, confusing cultural alignment with a culture “fit” is a common misconception. Employment practices that prioritize culture “fit” overlook the potential of different perspectives to raise the performance of an entire group.

Research from Columbia Business School indicates that diverse teams tend to make better decisions, generate higher financial returns and alter how individuals feel and think. Here are four key steps you should keep in mind during the interview process when it comes to finding a person that adds to your organization's culture:

- 1 Give candidates a complete view of your organization.** Provide candidates with the opportunity to become familiar with the atmosphere of your organization and motivate them to engage their possible coworkers in conversation. By doing these activities, you can observe how they could positively impact the company culture (as well as enjoy a different kind of interview than the usual seated one).
- 2 Allow candidates to steer the discussion.** Their questions and observations may provide powerful insights into their suitability for the role. When a candidate is engaged and asks questions about your organization, it shows their interest in the company. **A rule of thumb is only to talk 20% of the time and listen during the other 80%.**
- 3 Don't mistake personal affinity for professional fit.** Recruit complementary people who align with your organization's core values. Stay focused on what a candidate brings to the position and the organization. If they meet those criteria, you can start thinking about their personality.

4 Get creative. Before the interview, craft a few questions to ask the candidate. Be open to modifying your questions based on what they tell you and generate follow-up queries related to their answers. Here are some [great examples from LinkedIn](#), a few of which we use at Huelman:

- ▶ **“What is the one thing you like most about your current manager, and what is one thing you would change?”** As the hiring manager, recognize the atmosphere best suited to the role and how to communicate effectively.
- ▶ **“Give me an example of someone that you coached and developed and were able to promote. What did you work on with them to make it happen?”** This question demonstrates their enthusiasm for guiding others and their method of maintaining and cultivating a team.
- ▶ **“How would you describe yourself in one word?”** The most desirable applicants are self-aware. It’s not about the language they use to describe themselves but how they define their identity.
- ▶ **“How long are you willing to fail at this job before you succeed?”** The ideal job applicant should demonstrate dedication to the task and a commitment to staying as long as possible to succeed.



5 HOW TO MITIGATE BIAS DURING THE INTERVIEW

Creating an inclusive and diverse workplace begins with fair and unbiased job interviews. While biases can seep into the interview process, addressing them is essential.

“I’m always looking for the opposite of what I am, for the most part,” said Lisa Borders, president of the Women’s National Basketball Association. “I think so many of us, because of unconscious bias, hire people who look just like us, who have the same skills that we do, to complement us. That’s not a compliment at all. That’s a duplicate. So, I am often looking for the person who can complement the skills I already have.”

There are many different kinds of hiring biases, but they all stem from mental shortcuts we take that enable us to misinterpret prospects based on our individual experiences, which results in more unreliable judgments.

The Harvard Business School's Francesca Gino defines hiring bias as the tendency for "us to make decisions in favor of one person or group to the detriment of others." This interferes with the diversity of the environment that businesses need to thrive in.

HOW TO AVOID BIAS WITH STANDARDIZED INTERVIEWS

Eliminating biases involves conducting interviews objectively. One method to achieve this is to standardize the procedure. The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) advises employing structured interviews, in which **candidates are asked the same set of predetermined questions that concentrate on elements that directly affect job performance.**

By eliminating subjective factors like ability or attractiveness, this framework reduces bias. Focus on how a candidate would approach a particular issue or carry out specific job-related duties.

Here are some tips for creating a standardized interview:

- ▶ **CREATE A QUESTION STRUCTURE:** Establish a consistent structure for each question to ensure uniformity. This may include an introduction to the question, a description of the situation or task, a request for the candidate's response, and any follow-up probes for clarification or elaboration.
- ▶ **TRAIN INTERVIEWERS:** Provide comprehensive training to ensure they understand the standardized interview process, evaluation criteria, and scoring system. Train them on bias awareness and mitigation techniques to promote fairness and consistency.
- ▶ **STANDARDIZE INTERVIEW ENVIRONMENT:** Ensure that the interview environment is consistent for all candidates. This includes using the same location, format, and allotted time for each interview. This helps create a level playing field for all candidates.
- ▶ **DOCUMENT INTERVIEW FEEDBACK:** Require interviewers to document their feedback and ratings immediately after each interview while the details are fresh in their minds. This promotes accuracy and consistency in evaluation.
- ▶ **REVIEW AND REFINE:** Regularly review and refine the standardized interview process based on interviewers' feedback and the questions' effectiveness and evaluation criteria. Continuously improve the process to enhance its validity and fairness.

HOW TO AVOID BIAS WITH CANDIDATE SCORING

Establish a candidate scoring method or candidate evaluation that aligns with the job requirements and desired competencies. Interviewers may also have varying standards and interpretations of candidate performance, leading to inconsistent assessments and potential bias in the interview process. Rather than relying solely on subjective impressions, interviewers use predetermined criteria and scoring rubrics to assess each candidate consistently and fairly.

This approach shifts the focus from gut feelings or personal biases to concrete evidence of a candidate's skills, experiences, and alignment with the job requirements and candidate persona.

Once your team has a candidate persona that perfectly depicts the candidate your organization needs and wants for a specific role, make sure they stick with it! Remind them to maintain their standards and avoid making exceptions. Trust that the right candidate will eventually present themselves.

A candidate score sheet is usually comprised of the following:

- ▶ A reliable grading system (To keep metrics simple, consider scoring on a 1-5 scale)
- ▶ Inquiries that assess a candidate's abilities, characteristics, credentials, and experience.
- ▶ Clearly stated requirements that are unique to the position.
- ▶ Criteria for determining whether a recruit shares the company values.
- ▶ A section for comments.
- ▶ A "score total."

Before any interviews for a position start, present score sheets to the interviewing team to ensure that everyone is impartial throughout the process and is aware of the desired characteristics.

For example, you may have seven categories (sales skills, organizational skills, leadership qualities, etc.) that each interviewer uses to evaluate candidates on a scale from 1-5. This approach will objectively measure each candidate regarding their relevant experience for the job.

EXAMPLE OF A CANDIDATE SCORECARD

Interview question	H. Yifan	R. Huebner	D. Bronstein	J. Capablanca	S. Polgar	R. Fischer
Describe situations where you had to work with “difficult” people in the workplace and how you overcame the problem.	4	4	3	5	5	4
What does “teamwork” mean to you, and what are some examples of applying teamwork in past positions?	5	3	4	5	5	2
Do you have examples of an occasion where you had to respond to questions that went beyond your knowledge?	3	5	5	5	3	4
Have you ever dealt with situations at work that required confidentiality? How did you handle the situation?	3	3	4	5	5	3
Describe a past situation where you had to manage a difficult client.	5	1	4	5	2	5
Think of a time when things went wrong, how did you recover afterward?	5	4	2	5	4	5
Total Score #/30	25/30	20/30	22/30	30/30	24/30	23/40

PART 3

The Interview Process

- 1** A Positive Candidate Experience
- 2** Types of Questions to Ask & When
- 3** Red Flags to Look Out For
- 4** Ask for Candidate Questions



CREATE A POSITIVE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Enhancing your candidate experience creates a great first impression and a wider talent pool. Clear communication, efficient scheduling, and a smoother candidate journey during the interview process can improve satisfaction and strengthen your employer brand.

According to [Talent Board's research](#), companies that provide a positive candidate experience receive **2.5 times more applicants**.

It's common for candidates to feel anxious when invited to an interview, which can sometimes negatively impact their performance, even if they are otherwise exceptional. To mitigate this risk, remember to do your part in making the interviewee as relaxed and comfortable as possible.

Here are some essential practices to follow to ensure a positive candidate interview experience:

Clear & Transparent Communication

Provide clear and timely communication with candidates throughout the interview process. Set expectations regarding the timeline, interview format, and any necessary preparations. Let them know:

- ▶ **How much time** the interview process is expected to take, how many stages the interview has, and when a decision will be made.
- ▶ **The number of interviewers** who will meet with them, who they are, and what positions they hold in the company.
- ▶ **The interview structure**, what the candidate should prepare beforehand, and possible questions that could be asked.

Warm Welcome

Begin the interview with a warm and friendly greeting. Make the candidate feel comfortable and valued when they arrive or join the virtual interview. Create a welcoming atmosphere by introducing the interviewers, offering refreshments, and ensuring a professional and respectful environment.

RELATED: [How Huelman RPO Improves Candidate Experience for Food Packaging Partner >](#)

Engaging Conversation

Conduct the interview as a conversation rather than a strict interrogation. Encourage candidates to share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas. Active listening and follow-up questions demonstrate a genuine interest in the candidate and help build rapport.

Showcase Company Benefits

Highlight the benefits and perks of working for the company. Discuss career development opportunities, employee wellness programs, work-life balance initiatives, or any unique aspects that make the organization an attractive workplace. This can help candidates see the value of joining the company beyond the specific role.

Respect & Professionalism

Be mindful of the candidate's time, actively listen to their responses, and provide clear and thoughtful answers to their questions. Create an environment that promotes open dialogue and allows candidates to showcase their best qualities.



CHOOSING THE TYPES OF QUESTIONS & WHEN

Nowadays, starting an interview with A-typical questions should be criminal. “Where do you see yourself in five years?” “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” “Why did you decide to apply for this position?”

You can count on most applicants to be ready for these routine interview questions and to spin any negatives into advantages. They'll be anxious that confessing their flaws or weaknesses will cause them to lose brownie points. Here are the best types of questions to include and when to ask them in your interview process.

STEP 1: Introduction And Basic Qualification Questions

Begin with a warm introduction, allowing the candidate to feel comfortable and build rapport. Start with general questions to help the candidate ease into the conversation and establish a positive atmosphere. From there, proceed with questions focusing on the candidate's qualifications, skills, and experience directly related to the job requirements. This phase allows you to assess the candidate's expertise and verify their suitability for the role based on their past experiences.

STEP 2: Behavioral Questions

Once you have covered the initial job-related questions, move on to behavioral questions. These questions ask candidates to provide specific examples from their past experiences to illustrate how they handled various situations, solved problems, demonstrated vital skills, or achieved results.

Asking behavioral questions provides a window into a candidate's experience and understanding of handling challenging situations. Additionally, their answer gives insight into what accomplishments they value most. For example, questions that answer, "Tell us about a time when you..."

- ▶ Mishandled a situation and what you learned."
- ▶ Went above and beyond for a client."
- ▶ Had a conflict with a colleague, and how you resolved it."
- ▶ Had to think on your feet."
- ▶ Managed multiple tasks at one time."

STEP 3: Situational Questions

To better understand how a candidate would handle a hypothetical situation, ask questions that will showcase where their priorities lie and how they think on their feet.

"I often give the person a real problem, whatever I'm wrestling with right now, because you can learn a lot about a person that way," explained Jane Park, chief executive of Julep. "Are they going to be my partner and be able to see the strategic issue and how to execute it? Are they interested and engaged and curious about it?"

For example, utilize questions that answer, "How would you..."

- ▶ Handle an angry customer?"
- ▶ Work with a colleague you don't like?"
- ▶ Handle a disagreement with your manager?"
- ▶ Prioritize multiple tasks from different managers?"
- ▶ Handle an unproductive subordinate?"

STEP 4: Hueman's Four-Question Truth Serum

Over the years, we've compiled 'the big four' questions that often get candidates to open up about difficult situations and how they deal with them. It's an excellent way for interviewers to see the actual human behind the candidate – not just who they portray pre-hire.

Don't be afraid to put candidates on the spot. It's completely acceptable to ask about their previous manager. At Hueman, we call this **The Four Question Truth Serum**. "Start with questions like, what was your manager's name? Oh, Sally? What's her number? And then ask the question, when I call Sally next week, what is she going to tell me about your strengths and weaknesses?" says Sarah Hall, Director of Talent Solutions at Hueman. "Whether you conduct a reference check or not doesn't matter. You still want to ask some of these questions to better understand the candidate's behavioral patterns. That gives you a full picture."

These questions encourage applicants to be more truthful and help identify the people who best fit your organization. Here are a few that we recommend:

- ▶ Who was your supervisor? (Ask them to spell their name)
- ▶ How was "name" as a boss?
- ▶ If we ask "name" about you, what would "name" say about you?
- ▶ How many people were on your team in a similar role? How would "name" rank you in this group, one being the highest?

STEP 5: Probing And Follow-Up Questions

Probing and follow-up questions help you dig deeper into a candidate's responses and allow you to gather more detailed information during an interview. They encourage candidates to provide further context, elaborate on their experiences, and showcase their thought processes.

Remember to tailor the probing and follow-up questions based on the candidate's specific responses and the context of the situation being discussed. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Can you walk me through the specific steps you took in that situation?
- ▶ How did you approach the problem from different angles before settling on a solution?
- ▶ What were the main factors you considered when making that decision?
- ▶ Can you provide more details about your challenges or obstacles during that time?
- ▶ How did you prioritize your tasks or responsibilities in that scenario?



RED FLAGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Having a well-defined idea of what you want in an employee can help you identify potential warning signs for current or future applicants. Below are some of the common red flags to look out for, and a few uncommon ones.

COMMON RED FLAGS INCLUDE

Lack of Preparation

Candidates who still need to adequately research the company or position they are applying for may demonstrate a lack of interest, motivation, or attention to detail.

Poor Communication

Candidates who need help to articulate their thoughts clearly, have difficulty answering questions concisely, or demonstrate ineffective listening skills may have challenges communicating effectively in the workplace.

Negative Attitude

Candidates who exhibit a consistently negative or dismissive attitude toward previous employers, colleagues, or job experiences may indicate a potential for poor teamwork, low morale, or complicated interpersonal relationships.

Unexplained Employment Gaps

Significant gaps in a candidate's employment history without reasonable explanations may raise concerns about reliability, commitment, or potential issues that led to the gaps.

Inconsistent or Untruthful Responses

Candidates who provide inconsistent or contradictory answers or appear dishonest or evasive may raise integrity and trust concerns.

Lack of Enthusiasm or Passion

Candidates who demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm, interest, or passion for the role or the industry may indicate a mismatch between their motivations and the job requirements.

Careerbuilder conducted a study consisting of 2,100 hiring managers and human resource managers and asked employers to share their top three candidate red flags:



UNCOMMON RED FLAGS INCLUDE

Overqualification

Candidates who are significantly overqualified for the position may indicate a potential lack of long-term commitment, dissatisfaction, or difficulty adjusting to the role's demands.

Excessive Job Hopping

A history of frequent job changes without valid reasons may raise concerns about a candidate's stability, reliability, or ability to stay committed to a position long term.

Unprofessional Behavior

Candidates who present themselves inappropriately or unprofessionally during the interview, such as arriving late, using inappropriate language, or demonstrating poor manners, may indicate a lack of professionalism or respect for the job opportunity.

Lack of Curiosity or Questions

Candidates who show little interest in learning more about the company, the team, or the job by not asking insightful questions may lack curiosity, engagement, or a proactive attitude.

Inability to Accept Critical Feedback

Candidates who react defensively or negatively to feedback provided during the interview may indicate a lack of openness, coachability, or difficulty accepting criticism.

HOW TO SPOT CANDIDATE RED FLAGS

- ▶ **Turn the interview into an authentic conversation.** Making potential employees feel at ease will permit their personalities to come through, giving you a better sense of who they are. Once they're comfortable enough to speak openly, it becomes easier for you to spot both the positives and negatives about their character.
- ▶ **Ask pertinent questions.** To fully understand an applicant, asking questions aligned with your goals and values is essential. To gauge their level of enthusiasm, ask about their interest in the position, product, and company. Another approach is to inquire about their previous employers and how they speak about their former colleagues.
- ▶ **Take a second look.** During an interview, if you notice something that you believe may be a red flag, discuss it with your colleagues and see what they think. This is one of the advantages of using a panel interview.
- ▶ **Use technology.** If you're stuck, tools like video interviewing platforms can be helpful. Analyzing signals like body language, speech patterns, and word choice provides a neutral evaluation of the candidate, which can assist in guiding your next steps.



ASK FOR CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

One of the best tips for employers interviewing someone is to leave them with a good first impression.

Do this by building 10 - 15 minutes into an interview for **candidates to ask questions about the job and your organization**. This can tell you a lot about the candidate's priorities, such as if their main concern is salary. Remember, to express your gratitude for the candidates' time, give them an expectation of when they will hear back about a decision or additional interviews, and direct them out. Amiable behavior is critical in making the interview an enjoyable experience for everyone.

A job interview isn't just for the applicant to showcase their skills; it's also an excellent chance for you to entice potential candidates and make the open position appear more attractive. Promoting your company can ignite passion among attendees and ensure everyone feels satisfied with the overall experience.



PART 4

Post-Interview Alignment

- 1** Conducting Team Debriefs
- 2** Continuing Communication
- 3** Conducting Reference Checks
- 4** Making the Final Decision



CONDUCTING TEAM DEBRIEFS

A proper interview allows you to gather feedback and different perspectives from other leaders, no matter how good you think you may be at judging your character.

Immediately after wrapping up the candidate interview, ensure the interviewers stick around for at least **30 minutes afterward to debrief**. Doing this quickly is important because your thoughts are still fresh, and it keeps the candidate process moving along.

Brian Halligan, the co-founder and executive chairman of HubSpot, made an interesting observation about the renowned Tom Brady. Despite being one of the most successful quarterbacks in NFL history, with seven Super Bowl visits and five championships under his belt, Brady was only picked in the sixth round of the draft. “I think people overestimate their ability to pick,” he said.

The main objective of a team debrief is to reach a conclusion about the candidate, though this is only the tip of the iceberg. A top-level debrief should aim for more than just deciding. You should base your debriefing approach on the following five crucial steps:

- ▶ **Collect this information ASAP** so you, the hiring manager, can make an informed choice.
- ▶ **Set standards** for the interview team around what qualifies a candidate as good, what matters, and what would be nice to have.
- ▶ **Review your candidate scorecards** and notes for each criterion and compare candidate evaluations. Double-check for consistency and ensure that the scores accurately reflect the candidate’s performance. This can help you make data-driven decisions and identify the strongest candidates based on their overall scores.
- ▶ **Secure the hiring staff’s approval** (not necessarily consensus) on the candidate selection. Even if there is disagreement, they can still agree to it, provided you explain your reasoning openly and honestly.
- ▶ **Create a system of feedback** on the efficacy of the interview process. This will help the team understand if the quality of the conversation is effective or if adjustments are needed.



Running An Interview Debrief Session

STEP 1: PRE-DEBRIEFING PLANNING

Hiring managers ought to know the aspects of the candidate's profile that call for further discussion before the debriefing meeting. Therefore, before the meeting, you must:

- ▶ Read the interviewers' written evaluations.
- ▶ Pick out the main ideas and be prepared to summarize them with the group.
- ▶ Be aware of the areas you wish to explore and prepare the appropriate inquiries.

STEP 2: INITIAL FEEDBACK

The hiring manager takes a turn around the room, allowing each interviewer to give a concise summary (lasting one or two minutes) of their observations and a judgment of the candidate's overall performance, strengths, and weaknesses.

STEP 3: THE HIRING MANAGER OVERVIEW

You'll subsequently summarize the main points and outline your current views on the merits and drawbacks of the candidate in terms of how well they fit the organization's requirements. Be completely transparent about your thought process.

FINAL STEP: TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

When conducting deeper analyses, it is essential to pinpoint areas of potential red flags that require a closer look and areas where more details are needed to make an informed decision. Your aim is not to make your interviewers see things from a different perspective. You only need to get as much information as possible from your teammates.

CONTINUING COMMUNICATION

At each step in the process, it's important to keep applicants informed and update them on their progress. The higher up the position is, the more conversations and communication you will need to have with candidates.

INSTANCES TO REACH OUT TO A CANDIDATE INCLUDE:

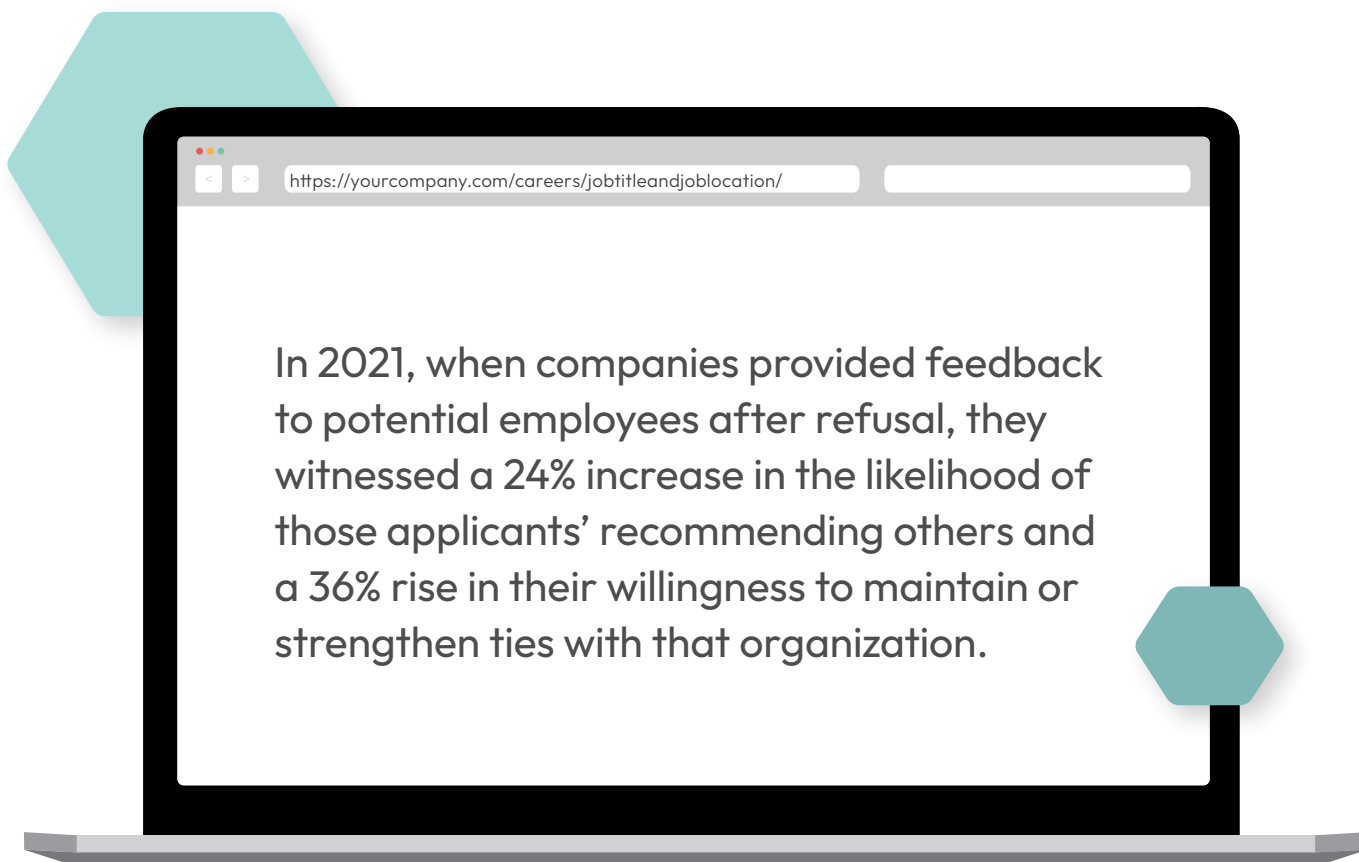
- ▶ Sending a thank-you note after an interview.
- ▶ Telling unsuccessful candidates that they were not selected for the role.
- ▶ Informing successful applicants that they got the job.
- ▶ Writing a message to those who haven't received any response yet.
- ▶ Sending a follow-up email to passive candidates.

According to a [Forbes article](#) by Jack Kelly, “ghosting,” or failing to respond to messages from candidates, is becoming increasingly common. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, **77% of job seekers report that they have experienced ghosting from a prospective employer, with 10% having been ghosted even after being given a verbal job offer.**

Failing to respond can leave your employer brand in the gutter. Future applicants will be less likely to apply if they know employers don't take communication seriously and are not open about sharing negative experiences. As such, employers must ensure that their candidates receive timely responses and feel valued during the interview process.

DELIVERING THE “BAD NEWS” TO THE CANDIDATES

Now is the opportunity to offer the candidates not chosen for the role valuable, constructive criticism. Doing so provides candidates with practical insights and establishes a positive relationship for the future.



Giving unsuccessful candidates detailed feedback helps them understand exactly why they were not hired. Their interview could have gone better than it did, or they needed the right skills and experience; this feedback allows them to know what to work on next time to ensure they fill any knowledge or expertise gaps you highlighted.

Providing personalized feedback demonstrates that you are a thoughtful employer that cares about helping them grow and develop. Showing candidates constructive ways to improve, even if it isn't the right fit this time, reflects your commitment to their success.

Additionally, the candidate selection process doesn't always end with the chosen candidate being hired. This can happen for various reasons, such as a change in financial requirements or the selected individual withdrawing from consideration. Consequently, you should keep your options open by maintaining relationships with the other applicants throughout the recruitment process.

These individuals may be prime candidates for future positions that might arise in your business. Don't burn bridges with second or third-choice candidates. Instead, thank them for their time and consideration, stay friendly, and communicate openly with them regarding their status in the recruitment process.



CONDUCTING REFERENCE CHECKS

Verifying references is usually the last step in the recruitment process before you offer a job to an applicant.

References can help you gain insights into a job candidate's strengths and weaknesses while helping to provide support for them after they are hired.

Amy Gutmann, president of the University of Pennsylvania, often stresses focusing on something other than the job interview when making a decision. "References and what somebody has done are more important than what somebody tells you in an interview. Well done is better than well said, and there's no substitute for good referencing."

To maximize the information obtained through reference checks, here are some helpful tips:

To start, allow an hour for the reference call. Though it likely won't take this long, there's no need to rush. At the beginning of the conversation, ask how the reference knows the candidate so that you can check that you're speaking to a valid source.

Begin the conversation by complimenting the candidate. Showing disbelief or suspicion might make the reference reluctant to say much out of loyalty. Letting them know beforehand that it'll be a beneficial chat for both parties is a good way to prepare them. Nobody is perfect, but it's beneficial to gather as much knowledge as possible so that you can provide an appropriate integration into the onboarding process.

Finally, go beyond the references the candidate provides. Ask for an honest opinion of the candidate's capabilities—their strengths and weaknesses, how well they can handle pressure, how they interact with others, or anything else that matters to your company. (LinkedIn is a great way to get references for a potential candidate.)



MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

Following the hard work by both your interview team and the candidate, extending an offer for employment should be a moment of joy and accomplishment—second only to having the candidate accept that offer and have a successful career at your business! We suggest conveying this news in person whenever possible or over the phone if need be.

HERE ARE A FEW BEST PRACTICES:

- ▶ **Don't bury the lead!** Make it absolutely clear that you are extending an offer to the candidate. Avoid any buildup or small talk; don't beat around the bush. Keep it short and to the point: "We are delighted to offer you the [blank] position at our company!"
- ▶ **Elevate the enthusiasm.** Channel your eagerness into specific reasons why they would be an invaluable addition to the team. Shed light on the roadblocks the crew has encountered and how their unique perspective can help overcome them. Make sure to mention all of the exciting projects they'll get to dive into once they come aboard.
- ▶ **Ask about the competition.** Have they received any other offers? Are they expecting to be presented with more in the future? They may need additional details to decide whether they are willing to consider the offer before making their choice.
- ▶ **Give the candidate an outlet to share their concerns.** Ensure that there is someone they can talk to who won't be in a lead role. This could involve topics regarding cultural differences, reporting structures, health benefits, or even salary discussions.
- ▶ **Be open and honest about compensation.** Explain that you will provide a formal offer letter, including details of the candidate's pay and benefits. If you are confident your offer will meet their expectations, then reviewing the compensation package during the interview is an option.
- ▶ **Check in.** After making the offer, you should remain visible and not let too much time pass without contact. We recommend reaching out every two to three days, so they avoid signing an offer from another organization. Be aware of any news of them accepting a different job.



PART 5

Next Steps

The interview process is just one part of the recruitment process.

Ready to take your total talent acquisition strategy to the next level? Explore some of our other high-value resources:

[How To Build Effective Recruitment Strategies >](#)

[The World-Class Recruitment Guide >](#)

[Resource Library: eBooks and Guides >](#)

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