

HIRING THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Exemplary Recruiting & Hiring Practices



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Table of Contents

Welcome to our eBook: Hiring the Ideal Candidate – Your Step-by-Step Guide to Exemplary Recruiting & Hiring Practices. This guide is for small business owners, HR professionals, and talent acquisition specialists. In this eBook, we focus on the evaluation processes that take place during and after candidate interviews. Our 3-part hiring guide covers the entire hiring workflow.

Volume	Content	Page
1	How to Create a Job Requisition Approval Process How to Create a Job Description How to Advertise Your Job	
2	How to Do Candidate Prescreening How to Conduct Interviews How to Avoid Hiring Bias	
3	Candidate Scorecards for Interview Evaluation Background and Reference Checks Extend the Job Offer	3 7 9

SECTION 1

How can I get useful interview feedback from my hiring team?

One of the most challenging aspects of the hiring process is obtaining useful feedback from your staff. No matter how many employees you engage in the hiring process, it's important that you gather the feedback in a consistent and meaningful way.

Use candidate evaluation forms that your team can complete during the review process. When each member of the hiring team contributes to the interview feedback, you elevate the entire process. Each person's perspective and expertise improves the scoring. Use multiple choice, star ratings or scale questions in the evaluation form. This prevents vague "gut feelings" from entering your process.

The result? You will find best-fit employees quickly.

Job interview evaluation comments samples

Here are some examples of effective interview feedback evaluation forms. You can modify them as appropriate for the specific position. For example, if the position requires additional skills not listed here, add the skills to the first evaluation sample.

Interview feedback examples (pre-interview)

Very often, the manager reads the candidate's resume and uses a gut feeling to determine if the candidate should be considered. They may even make a judgment based on the resume format, the number of jobs and where they went to school. If you ask the manager exactly what it is they liked or didn't like, you will receive more meaningful information and can make a more informed decision about whether you should invite this candidate in for an actual face-to-face interview.

Examples of effective manager feedback questions (post-interview)

Give each member of the interview team the scorecards before the interviews. List skills or competencies needed to be successful in the job so the interviewer can explore these areas during the interview and rate each candidate effectively. Note the two different examples below.

Negative/Positive Interview Comments Example #1

Education / Training

✖ The candidate has the necessary education and/or training required by the position.

- ☐ Exceeds requirements
- ☐ Meets requirements
- ☐ Needs a little more training
- ☐ Doesn't meet requirements
- ☐ Not applicable

Comments:

Work Experience

✖ The candidate has prior work experience that is related to the position.

- ☐ Extensive experience
- ☐ Meets requirements
- ☐ Not related but transferable skills
- ☐ No prior experience
- ☐ Not applicable

Comments:

Skills (Technical)

* The candidate demonstrated to your satisfaction that he/she had the necessary technical skills to perform the job successfully.

- ☐ Exceeds requirements
- ☐ Meets requirements
- ☐ Needs a little more training
- ☐ Doesn't meet requirements
- ☐ Not applicable

Comments:

Negative/Positive Interview Comments Example #2

Evaluation Rating Key:

- 1: Ability level appears to be unacceptable
- 2: Ability level appears to be below expectations
- 3: Ability level appears to meet expectations for position
- 4: Ability level appears to exceed expectations for position
- 5: Ability level appears to far exceed expectations for position
- NA: Not applicable for this position

- * Demonstrating Technical Proficiency: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Moving to Action: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Operating Ethically: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Planning and Organizing Work: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Valuing Customers: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Working Collaboratively: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Growing the Business: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Selecting and Developing People: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Managing Employee Performance: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Managing Unit Work: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ NA
- * Overall Rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Job interview evaluation influences other applicant touchpoints. As such, it can help you improve job descriptions, interview scripts, and other candidate communications. It also helps members of your hiring team become better at evaluating candidates. It's a key best practice for any company that is serious about improving hiring outcomes.

SECTION 2

Benefits of a structured feedback process

We've touched on some of the benefits of a systematic review process. Here is a comprehensive list. A structured feedback process:

1. Avoids typical evaluations of candidates that may be filled with ambiguity, superficial statements, and generalizations
2. Ensures your hiring decision is based on objective information that the candidate's skills match your job or project requirements—not because they are an excellent resume writer
3. The standardized evaluation questions point out the different opinions of the interview/ evaluation staff and help raise any red flags about the candidate
4. Ensures your hiring process is compliant with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations
5. Helps avoid costly hiring mistakes
6. Uses multiple selection methods to help ensure you are choosing the best candidate—no single technique on its own can predict on-the-job performance and success
7. Ensures each interviewer is thorough in their evaluation
8. Speeds up the interview feedback process
9. Measures hard and soft skills
10. Helps differentiate candidates with near-identical qualifications
11. Improves the candidate experience

At this point, you should be down to only a few candidates for the position. It's time to check references and do background checks.

Reference Checks

You may have collected references at the very beginning of the process or may do it now. In any case, this is usually the point where you invest time talking to previous employers and looking for any issues that were not uncovered. Try to automate this process as much as you can. For example,

send an automated email to the references asking them to fill out a linked questionnaire. To speed this step, call references and fill out the questionnaire yourself. Either way, try to gather information in a consistent manner from each reference for each final candidate. To save time, you can begin checking

references during the interview process. Create a checklist and ask a team member to conduct phone interviews with references while candidates are being interviewed.

Background Checks

Background checks are an important part of an employer's due diligence. They protect your business, your employees, your customers and the public at large.

Background screenings:

- Protect employees from violence or harassment
- Protect customers from theft or harassment
- Protect your business from fraud, theft, a tarnished reputation or legal liability

Federal laws that govern background checks

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) applies when employers hire a third-party service agency to conduct consumer credit reports and other investigative reports. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforces the FCRA.

When a third party service performs background checks, they may obtain information termed as "investigative reporting." An investigative consumer report may contain subjective judgment regarding the job candidate.

How does the FTC define a "report"?

It's important to know that a report doesn't need to be in written form. A report could refer to information obtained in a short phone call which is communicated orally to the hiring manager in another short phone call.

An FCRA consumer report is "Any written, oral or other communication of any information by a consumer-reporting

agency bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics or mode of living. In the employment context, this definition may, for example, include credit reports, criminal history reports, driving records and other background check reports created by a third party, such as drug tests." SHRM

Employers must provide the applicant with a formal written disclosure and obtain the applicant's consent before conducting the research. The disclosure and consent form must be a separate document and can't be included in the application. The employer must disclose that the information may be used to influence the hiring decision.

After you've obtained consent from the applicant, you must inform the background check company that you notified the candidate and obtained their consent and verify to the company that you complied with the FCRA anti-discrimination provisions.

"If you are asking a company to provide an «investigative report» - a report based on personal interviews concerning a person's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and lifestyle - you must also tell the applicant or employee of his or her right to a description of the nature and scope of the investigation." EEOC

Here is a sample Background Check Policy notification for employers to give job candidates from the Society of Human Resource Management.

Background Check Policy and Procedure

All offers of employment at [Company Name] are contingent upon clear results of a thorough background check. Background checks will be conducted on all final candidates and on all employees who are promoted, as deemed necessary.

Background checks will include:

- **Social Security Verification:** validates the applicant's Social Security number, date of birth and former addresses.
- **Prior Employment Verification:** confirms applicant's employment with the listed companies, including dates of employment, position held and additional information available pertaining to performance rating, reason for departure and eligibility for rehire. This verification will be run on the past two employers or the previous five years, whichever comes first.
- **Personal and Professional References:** calls will be placed to individuals listed as references by the applicant.
- **Educational Verification:** confirms the applicant's claimed educational institution, including the years attended and the degree/diploma received.
- **Criminal History:** includes review of criminal convictions and probation. The following factors will be considered for applicants with a criminal history:
 - The nature of the crime and its relationship to the position
 - The time since the conviction
 - The number (if more than one) of convictions
 - Whether hiring, transferring or promoting the applicant would pose an unreasonable risk to the business, its employees or its customers and vendors

The following additional background searches will be required if applicable to the position:

- **Motor Vehicle Records:** provides a report on an individual's driving history in the state requested. This search will be run when driving is an essential requirement of the position.
- **Credit History:** confirms candidate's credit history. This search will be run for positions that involve management of [Company Name] funds and/or handling of cash or credit cards.

[Company Name] reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

Make a selection

Once the checks are complete, it is time to make a selection. Give the selection team access to all candidate information (unless it is confidential) and make it easy to compare candidates if there are more than one still standing. You can use a scorecard as explained previously.

Offer the job

When the hiring team has made a decision, it is time for the lucky applicant to weigh in. If everything has gone well, the candidate is excited about the job and wants to join your company. If everything has gone fast, the candidate is still available for hire.

Send an offer letter

Send an offer letter that states clearly the key information about the offer, including age, location and start date. You might also want to include where and when to report and any other details that are specific to the offer. Give the candidate a signature line and send it out.

Don't waste any time. Remember you have competition. Now that you have identified this person as the ideal candidate, you can be certain that others have, too.

It helps to have a job offer ready to go before you start the process. Use an offer letter template to make this a speedy and consistent process. Include your company logo, standard text and merge fields where you can easily add the details for the specific offer. Create the template in advance and have it ready to go for this and your next hire. Applicant tracking systems (ATS) have job offer letter templates. Once you've created a template for each job position, you can store and manage them in your ATS.

Hire

Congratulations! You have crossed the goal line and have successfully filled the job. But just as in football, there is still work to do after the touchdown. Time to go for the extra point—onboarding your new hire now, before they report to work.

You can learn how to onboard in today's employment environment in our eBook, *16 Tips to Quickly and Efficiently Onboarding Employees Remotely*.

THANK YOU

To learn how to optimize the entire hiring workflow,
see our companion eBooks:

Creating the Position - Your Step-by-Step Guide to Exemplary Recruiting & Hiring Practices

1. How to Create a Job Requisition Approval Process
2. How to Create a Job Description
3. How to Advertise Your Job

The Interview - Your Step-by-Step Guide to Exemplary Recruiting & Hiring Practices

1. Candidate Prescreening
2. Schedule Interviews
3. Structured Interviewing Scripts
4. Avoid Hiring Bias



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