

Ten Tips to Improve Interviewing Accuracy

1. **Control emotions to overcome first impressions.** First impressions (made in less than one second) account for 70 percent of hiring decisions. Wait 30 minutes to ask performance-based questions, then determine whether the first impression was good or bad.
2. **Create demand then control the interview.** Hiring great people starts with challenging opportunities and 100 percent control. Start with a statement regarding the position's importance, then ask how the applicant's background fits.
3. **Focus on change and impact by the second question.** Your second question should ask applicants what they have achieved over and above the needs of their previous jobs. This immediately indicates that the primary selection criteria are initiative, impact and change.
4. **Measure three trait groups in this order:** First, measure **performance** traits (initiative, competence) objectively. Then, determine if **character** (integrity, responsibility) and **personality** (appearance, affability, poise) enhance or detract from performance indicators.
5. **Build job specs on where you're going, not where you've been.** Don't build job specs based on experience, duties and responsibilities. Rather, measure applicants against the position's key performance objectives. Ask how they could improve, change or accomplish these tasks.
6. **Use objective, pre-planned questions.** Pre-plan questions so you can listen rather than think of what to ask next. Write down answers, wait to judge them. Ask all applicants for the same position similar performance-based questions.
7. **Use take-home case studies and panel interviews to add a touch of reality.** Using an interview panel allows the hiring manager to listen more and minimize emotions of all participants. Even better, have applicants prepare a take-home case study to present. This will reflect actual ability.
8. **Listen more than you talk.** Allow applicants to talk at least four times as much as the interviewer. Ask for examples to keep the conversation going. Don't be too descriptive when talking about the job or the company.
9. **Match the needs of the job to the applicant's skills.** Categorize the position's objectives into one of four basic groups. Compare the applicant's major accomplishments along the same lines.
 10. Strategic-Creative
 11. Entrepreneurial-Builder
 12. Organizer-Improver
 13. Technical-Sustainer
14. **Never make an offer until you're 100 percent sure it will be accepted.** Use the offer to maintain open communications. First, uncover objections by asking applicants how they feel about an offer. Get a start date before giving it. Probe if they hesitate.

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