



COURSE NAME

Recruitment and Selection

COURSE CODE

12140/10978

LEARNER GUIDE

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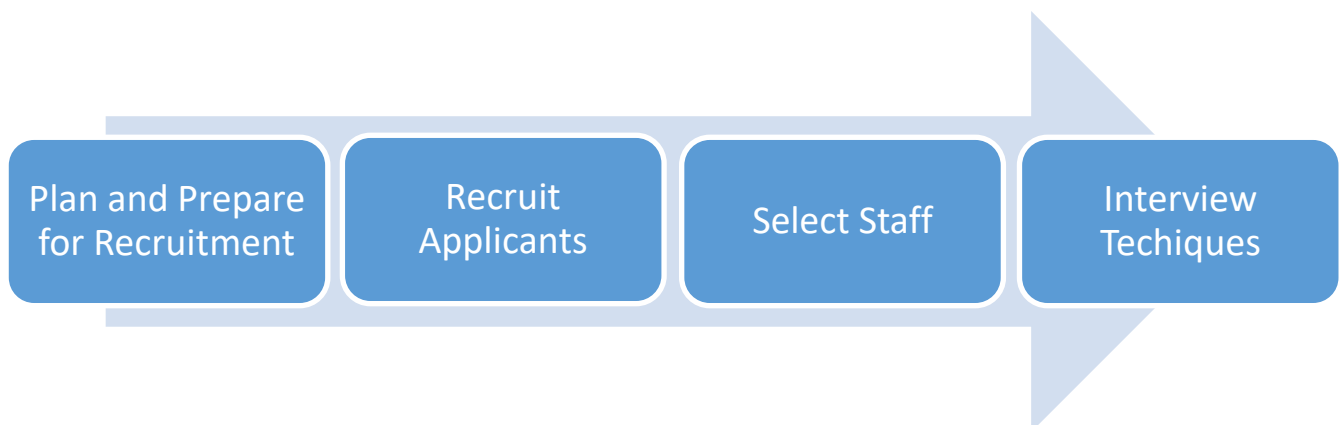
Course Overview

At the end of this training course you will be able to prepare, recruit and select suitable candidates according to ability and potential within an organisation and through the personnel recruitment industry.

Course Outcomes

After you have completed this course you will be able to:

1. Plan and prepare for recruitment and selection
2. Recruit applicants
3. Select staff
4. Apply interviewing techniques



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Chapter 1

Plan and Prepare for Recruitment

People are an organisations most valuable and costly resource. The effectiveness of an organisation depends on its staff. Good quality work requires good quality people. An organisation which uses a fair and effective recruitment process is more likely to employ the right person for each job. An organisation that has a poor recruitment process is unlikely to recruit the right people. This may lead to low performance, low quality projects and possible risks in areas.

History of the Interviewing Process

The idea of conducting interviews is not new. The process has been around for more than a century. In 1919, Alfred Binet, the father of intelligence testing, first tried interviews.

He had three schoolteachers assess the same five children to assess their intelligence. When Binet asked the teachers whether they were confident of their assessments, they responded that they were. There was only one problem: they disagreed widely about the students' intelligence levels. Binet then abandoned the interview in favor of more rigorous testing.

During World War II, large-scale decisions had to be made about who to put where.

The time-honored military solution of saying, “Hey you, go there” did not work any longer. However, when the same applicants were interviewed by several classification officers, they could not agree on where to rank the applicant. In one case, an applicant was ranked first by one officer and fifty-seventh by another. When several interviewers cannot agree on ranking, we have to assume that some of them err in judgment.

The stress interview got the spotlight because of a certain Admiral Rickenbacker, who had a number of interesting little tests for applicants. He would have the interviewee’s chair nailed to the floor, and then watch the applicant try to obey his command to move the chair a little closer. He also would direct them to a closed door when the interview was over. The door opened into a closet and he would evaluate their reaction.

Of course we know today that stress interviews really only tell us how a candidate would react under a certain kind of stress, not how proficient they are in their day-to-day work performance.

As early as 1942, intelligence testers were advocating using a structured set of interview questions so that each candidate is taken over the same ground. However, the traditional fly by the seat of your pants type of interview kept coming to the fore, even though it had an accuracy rating of anywhere from 14% to about 50% .

Over the years, structured interviews have been gaining more and more favor with organizations. Structure improves accuracy and validity and makes the selection process more defensible.

It is important to note that today's research indicates that structured interviews based on job requirements, that combine competency based questions, behavioral type questions and critical incidents, give organizations an accuracy rating that is far, far higher than ever before.

We know that the structured interview, where every candidate has the opportunity to answer the same questions, is more objective and defensible.

We recognize the validity of behavior-based questions because the best predictor of future performance is past performance.

Well-prepared critical incidents (stories of real events that ask for specific behaviors) identify performance behaviors and have about an 85% accuracy rating.

However, interviewing is not a science. Our job is to eliminate as many opportunities for error as possible. Know what the job entails, follow these recommendations for interviewing, and combine the interview with other testing for the best shot at getting a good candidate.

What is Recruitment

Recruitment refers to the process of attracting, screening, and selecting qualified people for a job. For some components of the recruitment process, mid- and large-size organizations often retain professional recruiters or outsource some of the process to recruitment agencies.

The recruitment industry has four main types of agencies: employment agencies, recruitment websites and job search engines, "head hunters" for executive and professional recruitment, and niche agencies which specialize in a particular area of staffing. Some organizations use employer branding strategy and in-house recruitment instead of agencies. Recruitment-related functions are generally carried out by an organization's human resources staff.

The stages in recruitment include sourcing candidates by advertising or other methods, screening potential candidates using tests and/or interviews, selecting candidates based on the results of the tests and/or interviews, and on-boarding to ensure the candidate is able to fulfil their new role effectively.

Recruitment Agencies

The recruitment industry is based on the goal of providing a candidate to a client for a price. On one end of the spectrum there are agencies that are paid only if they deliver a candidate that successfully stays with the client beyond the agreed probationary period.

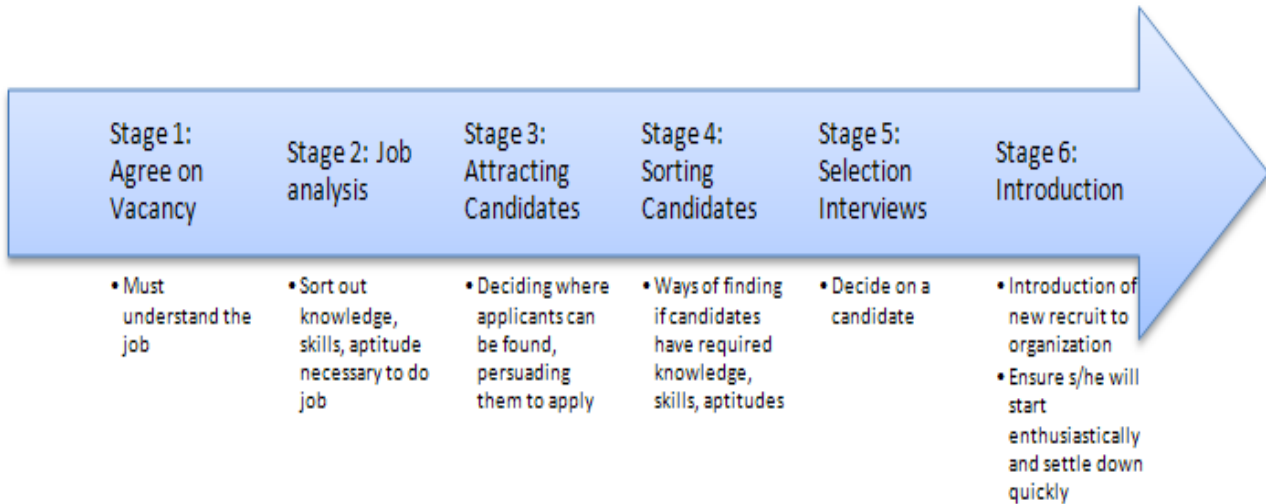
On the other end of the spectrum there are agencies that are paid a retainer to focus on a client's needs and achieve milestones in the search for the right candidate, and then again are paid a percentage of the candidate's salary when a candidate is placed and stays with the organization beyond the probationary period.

Definition of key terms

- I. **Recruitment:** is the process of identifying and hiring the best-qualified candidate (from within or outside of an organisation) for a job vacancy, in a most timely and cost effective manner.
- II. **Selection:** Employee selection is the process of putting right men on the right job. It is a procedure of matching organisational requirements with the skills and qualifications of people. Effective selection can be done only when there is effective matching.
- III. **Information:** It is data that is processed in such a way that it can be used by the person receiving this information. Information should have a purpose or reason, otherwise it is useless and of no value. Information can be physical (for instance, books) or electronic (for instance, computer database).

The Recruitment & Selection Process

There are six stages to the recruitment and selection process.



Identify the need for Recruitment

The recruitment process starts when a vacancy arises. This may be a new position or as a result of a staff member leaving the organization. For each vacancy it is important that someone with an overview of the organization considers:

- Does the role fit with the organisation's mission, values and purpose? Does it fit with the organisation's strategy and existing organizational structure?
- Does the role add value to the organization? Organisations should invest funds where the impact will be the greatest.
- How will the role be funded? Organisations should always consider the cost of employing staff in the annual budget. Cost includes: cost of recruitment; salary; benefits; desk space; equipment such as computer and other services.

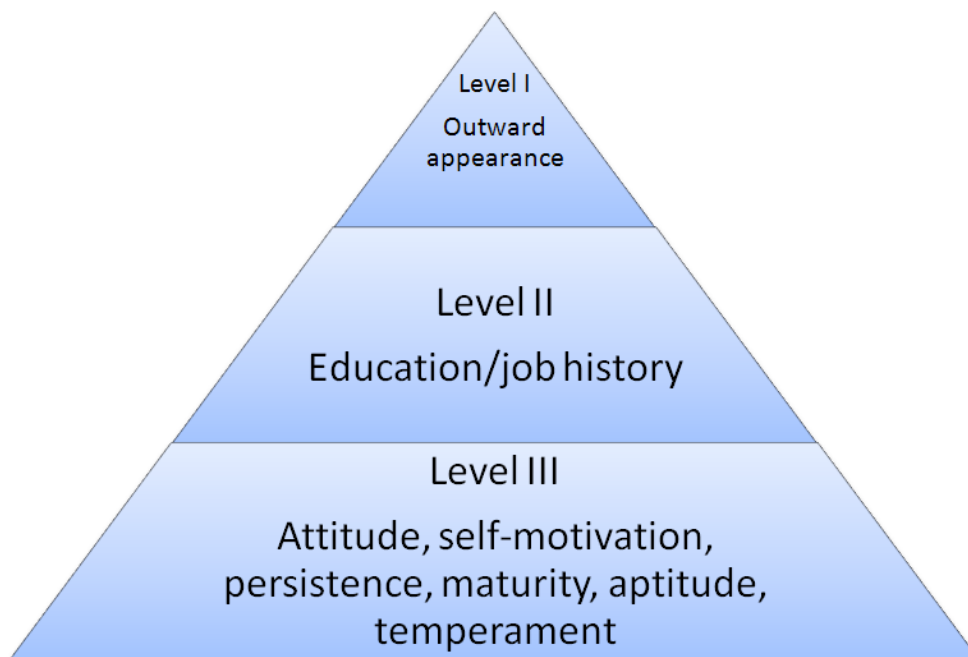
The line manager would usually identify the vacancy within their own team or department.

They should describe the job by writing a job profile.

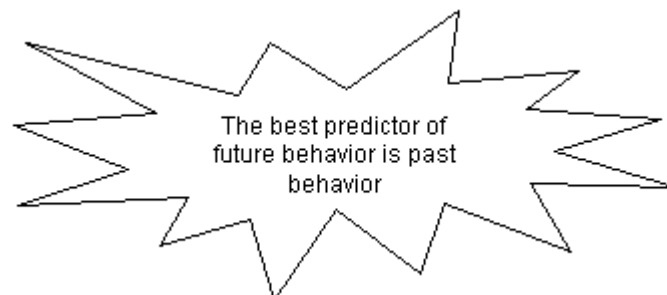
A job profile should be developed for a job whether it is to be filled by someone on an employment contract or by casual staff and volunteers.

Factors in the Hiring Process

The Three Levels of Factors



Level III traits tend to be highly stable. Your goal is to predict future performance by getting a deeper understanding of how someone has displayed level III qualities in the past.



Principles for Exploring Past Actions

- The best predictor of future performance is past performance in similar circumstances.
- The more varied the situations in which behavior is demonstrated, the more deeply-rooted the behavior.
- The more recent the behavior, the more predictive of future performance.
- The more long-standing the behavior, the more deeply-rooted it is.
- People reveal past patterns of behavior most vividly in instances where they experience greatest successes or setbacks.
- Look for patterns. If done once, it is a clue; twice, it is a pattern; if done three times it is a well-established characteristic.

Three Areas to Explore

- Work
- School/Education
- Outside Activities

Job Analysis and Position Profiles

Research is very conclusive that managers who understand what a job involves do a much better job of hiring. They also have a much lower rate of hiring error than those who run in at the last minute and begin the interviewing process.

An occasional job analysis can serve a very useful purpose. Sometimes we don't really stop long enough to take stock of a position. Hiring the right person the first time takes more than a gut feel. It takes planning and preparation, both of which begin with:

- Understanding the job and what it involves

- Understanding the technical skills the job requires
- Understanding the performance skills the job requires
- Describing those skills in objective, behavioral terms

If your organization does not have job descriptions or if your job descriptions are out of date, the first task is to conduct a job analysis.

Job analysis is a process for systematically collecting information to help you fully understand and describe the duties and responsibilities of a position as well as the knowledge, skills and abilities required to do the job. The aim is to have a complete picture of the position - what is actually done and how.

The purpose of job analysis is to provide the information necessary for writing job descriptions. Job descriptions are used as the basis of most other HR management practices from selection to training to performance management. Job analysis information can also be used in the job evaluation process, which is the process for assigning value to a job for the purpose of setting compensation.

The types of information collected during job analysis will be specific to each organization.

However, typical kinds of information that are gathered are:

- Summary of duties
- Details of most common duties
- Supervisory responsibilities
- Educational requirements
- Special qualification
- Experience

- Equipment/tools used
- Frequency of supervision
- Others the incumbent must be in contact with
- Authority for decision making
- Responsibility for records/reports/files
- Working conditions
- Physical demand of the job
- Mental demands of the job

Information about jobs can be gathered using qualitative or narrative techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, observations and activity logs.

Interviews

- The employee and/or manager are asked a series of questions about the job, the essential tasks of the job, and the abilities required to perform it well

Questionnaires

- Ask the employee to fill out a standard questionnaire about the essential tasks of the job.

Observation

- The person collecting the data observes the activities of the employee and records these on a standardized form
- Direct observation of the employee at work is a useful technique if the activities are easily observable

Activity Logs

- The employee is asked to keep a log of every activity and the time spent on it for a set period of time

Good practice

Job analysis can also be done using a combination of the above techniques. For example: staff may be asked to complete a Job Analysis Questionnaire and then it could be discussed during an informal interview to clarify information and to provide the supervisor's observations on the work done.

Designing satisfying and motivating jobs

Job design is the process of combining responsibilities and duties into jobs that enhance organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

When designing jobs some of the issues to consider are:

- How will the job contribute to the goals of the organization?
- Do the duties that are grouped together require a similar or complimentary skill set?
- Will grouping certain tasks together be efficient?
- Do the tasks that are grouped together make sense for workflow at the individual and organizational level?
- Are there ergonomic factors that should be taken into account when grouping tasks?

One of the well-known theories on job design looks at jobs from the employee's perspective.

Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham link employee motivation and job satisfaction to the following characteristics of a job:

Skill Variety

- The degree to which the job involves different tasks and uses different skills

Task Identity

- The degree to which the job requires the completion of a whole/complete piece of work - doing the task from beginning to end

Task Significance

- The degree to which the job has importance to the organization and/or others

Autonomy

- The amount of independence and discretion the employee has in completing her/his work

Feedback

- The degree to which the employee is given direct information about the effectiveness of his/her performance

Keep these five characteristics in mind when designing jobs for your organization. Jobs that are interesting, motivating and satisfying usually lead to enhanced retention.

How is a job description developed?

The jobs appropriate for an organization come directly from the organization's mission and structure. Based on an analysis of the organization's mission, goals and programs or activities:

- Identify the values that should be reflected by all staff
- Establish the tasks or functions that need to be done

- Group the tasks into meaningful and challenging jobs
- Determine the experience, knowledge, skills and other characteristics that are required
- Consider any special working conditions or physical requirements
- Consider the internal equity and external recognition implications of job titles
- Write or update the job description

Use this form to analyze a job prior to an interview by completing it yourself or use it as a guide when gathering job information from others.

Job Analysis Worksheet

Job Title:	
Grade/Salary Level:	
Position Reports to (Title):	
Job Information	
List the most important duties and responsibilities.	
Describe key involvement with others; superiors, subordinates, peers, vendors, customers or other contacts.	
What are the potential sources of satisfaction?	
What are the potential sources of dissatisfaction?	
What jobs or career opportunities might be available (indicate even if limited)?	

Putting Job Information To Use (Defining “Can Do,” “Will Do,” and “Fit”)	
Can Do Factors	
Can they do the job?	
What specific experiences, skills, equipment knowledge, abilities, prior training or education, physical requirements, etc., are required or desired for successful job performance?	
Will Do Factors	
Will they do the job?	
What specific behaviors are required or desired in order to be sure that individuals will apply themselves and behave in ways that are associated with success on the job?	
Fit Factors	
Will the person fit into the specific environmental circumstances of the job? Include information about the type of industry or business, atmosphere of your organization, circumstances of work at department or area level, and the circumstances of the specific job.	
Knockout Items	
What specific situational factors such as long hours, overtime, shift work, weekend work, travel, relocation, or physical demands are required on this job?	
What circumstances would eliminate the person from consideration?	

Position Profiles

Then we come to position profiles. People don't always like preparing position profiles. They feel they have just given their employee the perfect excuse to say, "That's not in my job description." On the other hand, we have organizations that take to position profiles or job descriptions with a vengeance; they have pages of descriptions.

The position profile we suggest is somewhere between these two. The profile can be expanded, perhaps even contracted, but it gives the recruiter something that tells them what kind of person they are looking for, without too many restrictions.

One of the biggest problems identified in the workplace right now, in this age of change, is the employee who doesn't know what his role is, doesn't know what he is to do, and doesn't know what others expect of him. Even if the position profile never gets into the employee's hands, it is a very good exercise for supervisors. Then at least they know what they want their employees to do, and they can tell them in that first meeting after the hire.

There are three important categories in a job description:

- Purpose: Not what they do, but why they are there, the reason the job was created.
- Key Responsibilities: What you are paying them to accomplish.
- Typical Activities: Those things they are expected to do in order to accomplish these responsibilities.

Determining the Skills You Need

Technical Skills

Technical skills are those skills that call upon specific technical knowledge or experience.

You need to ask yourself, what do you really need? You'll have to decide if previous experience in these technical skills is important, or if you will train the successful candidate.

Though technical skills are often more easily learned than performance skills, many jobs demand that a person arrive with their technical skills already in place. As you review the position description you can decide what is really needed.

Performance Skills

Performance skills are those are the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the position. They are closely tied to work habits that reflect the way a person gets a job done. They may relate to managing other people, making decisions, following guidelines, or dealing with the public.

A customer service supervisor, for example, might need to supervise three customer service representatives, apply established guidelines to specific customer inquiries, and solve work unit problems.

Describe the Job – The Job Profile

The job profile usually consists of two parts – a job description and a person specification. To describe a job, two questions need to be asked:

What are the main roles and responsibilities of the job? The answer to this question forms the job description. The job description outlines the job and the expectations of the person in the job and how the job fits within the rest of the organization.

What skills and qualities will the person need to carry out the job? The answer to this question forms the person specification. The person specification defines the type of person required and plays a big part in the process of selecting people to interview. It is important that the requirements in the person specification are directly related to the needs of the job.

If the requirements are more than are actually needed for the job, someone might be disappointed and unhappy in a new job when they find they are not fully able to use their gifts.

Sometimes we do not really stop long enough to take stock of a position. Hiring the right person the first time takes more than a gut feel. It takes planning and preparation, both of which begin with:

- Understanding the job and what it involves
- Understanding the technical skills the job requires
- Understanding the performance skills the job requires
- Describing those skills in objective, behavioral terms

Job Description

The first thing to do before recruiting and selecting candidates for a particular position is to obtain information on the position that is relevant and complete.

Information about the position can be obtained from sources like:

- job description
- job specification
- job profile, or
- job order

Job descriptions are written statements that describe the:

- duties
- responsibilities
- most important contributions and outcomes needed from a position
- required qualifications of candidates, and
- reporting relationship and co-workers of a particular job.

The job description outlines the role, in terms of both the day to day tasks and responsibilities.

It helps potential applicants to decide whether they want to apply for the job, and can be a useful aid for employers when devising job advertisements and employment contracts.

A job description provides essential information to potential recruits and the recruiting team so that they can determine the right kind of person to do the job.

Why are job descriptions important?

A job description is a basic HR management tool that can help to increase individual and organizational effectiveness.

For each employee, a good job description helps the incumbent to understand:

- Their duties and responsibilities
- The relative importance of their duties
- How their position contributes to the mission, goals and objectives of the organization

For the organization, good job descriptions contribute to organizational effectiveness by:

- Ensuring that the work carried out by staff is aligned with the organization's mission
- Helping management clearly identify the most appropriate employee for new duties and realigning work loads

Job descriptions are also the foundation for most HR management activities:

Recruitment

- Job descriptions are used to develop a recruitment campaign that clearly articulates the duties to be performed and qualifications required by the organization for the position

Selection

- Interview questions, hiring criteria and the screening process are based on the duties and qualification outlined in the job description

Orientation

- The job description helps the employee see how their position relates to other positions in the organization

Training

- The job description can be used to identify areas where the employee does not adequately meet the qualifications of the position and therefore needs training

Supervision

- The job description can be used by the employee and the supervisor to help establish a work plan

Compensation

- Job descriptions can be used to develop a consistent salary structure, which is based on relative level of duties, responsibility and qualifications of each position in the organization

Performance Management

- The job description and the work plan are used to monitor performance

Legal Defense

- If an employee is terminated for poor performance, an accurate, complete and up-to-date job description will help the organization defend its decision

Designing the Job Description

Consider the main roles and responsibilities involved in the job. Then write a job description based on them. We suggest a structure for a job description below.

Main Purpose of Job:

Up to two sentences stating why the job exists. For example, a job purpose for an administrator might be 'To provide administrative support to the Finance Director'.

Line Management / Position in the organization:

This indicates how the job fits into the organization. In which department will the job be based? Who line manages the person in the job? Does the job involve management of other staff? If so, which staff? Who will the person in the job work with closely? This section should also mention the decisions that the person in the job can make without asking their line manager, such as:

- Can they recruit and dismiss staff?
- How much can they spend or allow other staff to spend?
- Can they be entrusted with funds? If so, what level of funds are they responsible for?

For example, for an administrator role, this section may state:

'This role is based in the Finance Department and will be managed by the Finance Director. The main aspect of the role is to carry out administrative duties for the Finance Director. It also involves providing administrative support to the Payroll Officer during the last week of every month.'

Scope of job:

This section is used to identify the major activities of the job. A maximum of eight major activities should be given. They should be prioritized in order of the time the person in the job will spend on each activity, starting with the activity requiring the most time. This section may not be necessary where there is only one major activity. For example, for an Administrator role there may be two key activities: Providing administrative support to the Finance Director; and assisting the Payroll Officer with the payment of staff.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Underneath or next to each major activity, list the specific duties and responsibilities. Start each duty or responsibility with a verb. The box of verbs below may be helpful. There is no need to give a description of how the work is to be done – but may be useful.

For example, the duties and responsibilities of an administrator may include:

- Maintain a calendar for the Finance Director
- Take accurate minutes at team meetings and distribute them
- Make travel bookings for team members

Examples of verbs to use when writing duties and responsibilities:

Advise	Coordinate	Inspect	Participate	Research
Approve	Create	Issue	Perform	Select
Arrange	Design	Lead	Plan	Set up
Assist	Develop	Liaise	Prepare	Submit
Carry out	Direct	Look After	Produce	Supervise
Check	Ensure	Maintain	Provide	Support
Compile	Establish	Manage	Receive	Train
Complete	Evaluate	Monitor	Recruit	Update
Conduct	Implement	Own	Represent	

Person Specification

This part of the job profile is used to assess whether someone has the right qualities and experience for the job. The table on this page can be used for the person specification.

The essential column contains the minimum qualities and experience needed for the job. All applicants should be judged against these. If there are any that are not met by the applicant, they may not be considered for the job.

The desirable column lists qualities and experience that are not necessary for the job, but would be useful. If there are many applicants who meet all the essential requirements, the desirable column can be used to identify a smaller number of candidates who can be invited for interview.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications The level of formal education that would enable someone to carry out the role effectively	Insert essential qualification for the job here	Insert qualifications that would be helpful to the job here
Experience The amount of relevant experience that will enable someone to perform the role well. Be as specific as possible. For example, a water sanitation coordinator might need experience as a water and sanitation engineer working on hand-dug wells in a community context	Insert essential experience for the job here	Insert experience that would be helpful for the job here
Skills and Abilities Skills such as communication, presentation and computer skills, languages, skills in prioritizing work and organisation and administrative skills. Abilities such as coping with pressure, team working, initiative and ability to work with other people.	Insert essential skills and abilities for the job here	Insert skills and abilities that would be helpful for the job here

Personal Qualities Aspects of a person's character, such as maturity, whether they are approachable, and whether they are flexible.	Insert essential personal qualities for the job here	Insert personal qualities that would be helpful for the job here
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Once the job description and person specification have been drafted, look through the job profile and ask the following questions:

Is it realistic?

- Consider whether it is possible for one person to carry out the tasks and responsibilities
- Ensure that there is not too much or too little to do
- Consider whether it will be possible to find someone to carry out the job. If the range of tasks is too wide, it might be very difficult to find someone with the right set of skills.

Is it clear?

- Consider whether someone who does not know the organization will be able to understand what the job involves.
- A clear job description should attract the right people to the job.

Is there equal opportunity for all?

- Ensure that what is asked for in the person specification can be applied equally to all groups, where possible. For example, check that the person specification does not discriminate on the basis of gender or disability.

What information is included in the job profiles?

Job title

- The title of the position and some alternative titles for the same position (some organizations will have another title for the same set of duties)

Job purpose

- A brief overview of why the job exists

Primary duties and responsibilities

- Examples of the common duties performed by individuals in the position
- The duties listed cover most of the tasks that would be performed by an individual in the position (the list of duties is not exhaustive - some of the duties may not be appropriate for every organization, additional duties may be required by an organization)

Qualifications

- The minimum qualifications necessary to successfully perform the job
- Minimum qualifications are used to ensure that qualifications are not inflated and therefore potentially discriminatory and to ensure that capable individuals are not screened out during the recruitment process
- The qualifications described are: education, professional designation, knowledge, skills and abilities plus personal characteristics

Experience

- The number of years of experience to be successful in the position

Working conditions

- Common working conditions

Benchmark

- Each position is linked to the appropriate occupational description in the (Canadian) National Occupational Classification as a comparison
- The National Occupational Classification provides a standardized framework for describing occupations and can be used to make a link to labour market information

Completing the Recruitment Request

Once the job profile is written it is important to have a process where line managers make an official request for the new position to the Human Resource Department or the Leadership of the organization. A suggested template for a recruitment request is given below.

Recruitment Request			
Job Title			
Location			
Line Manger			
Needed from	Start date	End date (if not permanent contract)	
Reason needed (give justification in relevant box)	Replacement for current position	New position, with reasons	
Funding (Tick as appropriate)	General Funds	Specific donor funds (give details)	
Job Profile		Attached?	
Advertisement		Suggestions op appropriate places to advertise the job	
Requested By	Name	Signature	Date
Approved By	Name	Signature	Date

Candidate Selection Process

Different types of positions require different kinds of selection techniques. Choosing the right techniques will help you to recruit the best person for the position. The selection techniques you choose will depend on the particular skills, attributes and knowledge required for the position. You must be able to match the selection method with the selection criteria that are key to the position.

The most commonly used selection techniques include assessing written applications, conducting panel interviews and checking referee reports. The interview's value is greatly increased when it is well structured, incorporates behaviour-based questions and is used in conjunction with other selection techniques.

Recruitment decisions should not be based on the results of one selection method alone. Very often you need to combine two or more techniques to assess a range of skills, knowledge and qualities in candidates. For example, work samples are an excellent way to assess what a candidate is capable of (that is, their maximum performance), but they do not provide information on what the candidate does daily (that is, their typical performance). Reference checks must also be used to obtain this information.

A variety of selection methods are available and consideration needs to be given as to which are suitable for a particular post. **The methods described here are:**

- Application forms and CVs
- Online screening and short listing
- Interviews
- Psychometric testing
- Ability and aptitude tests

- Personality profiling
- Presentations
- Group exercises
- Assessment centres
- References

Application forms and CVs

The traditional approach to applying for jobs in the public sector is to complete a fairly lengthy application form. This may be off-putting for some candidates. Therefore, application forms, if used, should only address the really important areas to allow short listing to take place. The benefit of using an application form from the organisation's perspective is that it ensures that the same information is gained from candidates which help to achieve a level of consistency in the short-listing process. The use of CVs is more common in the private sector than the public sector. The benefit to the applicant is clear: an existing CV can be updated and tailored in a fraction of the time that it takes to fill out a traditional application form. The problem for the employer though, is that information will be presented how the applicant sees fit and may make short-listing less consistent and certainly more difficult if information is presented in a variety of ways through different CV formats. There are also equal opportunities considerations as the consistency produced by the use of application forms is more likely to engender fairness in the recruitment process.

Online screening and short listing

Initial screening of applications is usually based on an assessment of a candidate's experience and qualifications against the job's requirements. On-line systems are now available which can filter applications automatically.

An on-line selection facility screens applications against set criteria through key word searches. It may also provide a scoring mechanism. The use of online screening may be a useful way of filtering quickly through a huge volume of applications or sorting applications, if there are a number of jobs that have been advertised at the same time (for example through selecting applications with the same job reference number). This approach requires that all applications are received online and therefore links with the use of the Internet as a recruitment tool.

If such a method is the only one used, organisations should be aware of the implications of the Data Protection Act. The Employment Practices Data Protection Code recommends that, if an automated short-listing system is used as the sole basis for making a decision, applicants should be informed. An employer should make provisions to consider representations from applicants about this and to take these into account before making the final decision.

As with the use of the Internet for advertising jobs, there is an initial cost in implementing online screening and short listing, such as the cost of software and training. These costs need to be balanced against potential benefits, such as improving the speed of the recruitment and selection process.

1. Interviews

Structured interviews are the most effective type of interview. The interview process is formed through identification of the key requirements of the job and a list of questions is drawn up. A panel of interviewers works through each set of questions with each candidate and scores them on their answers. At the end of the interview process the overall scores are considered and the best candidate chosen. If additional selection methods are chosen this is fed into the overall process at the end and again the best-fit candidate is offered the appointment.

Even where the interview is structured, this does not mean that follow up questions cannot be asked to probe more deeply into a candidate's skills and experience.

An interview which does not do this, but instead sticks to a rigid list of questions, will not allow the interviewer to obtain the information required to make a proper decision. Members involved in the interview process should be trained in interviewing skills and the sorts of questions they should or should not ask.

2. Psychometric testing

A range of attributes are best tested through psychometric testing. This term is often confusing but in essence, means that a 'mental measure is used. Therefore, psychometric testing covers ability testing, aptitude testing and personality profiling. Proper psychometric testing can only be carried out by appropriately qualified staff. Organisations should always check qualifications when using external consultants to carry out this type of testing. It is essential that applicants are offered feedback on their performance and that applicants understand how the test information is used during decision-making processes.

Personality tests are usually considered in conjunction with other information, as the results can be unreliable. Ability tests can also be used in this way, but many organisations use cut-off marks so that all candidates who achieve less than a certain mark are rejected while the rest progress to the next stage. Candidates should be advised before attending for interview that testing/profiling will be used as part of the selection process. They should also be provided in advance with a sample of the type of test that they are going to encounter.

3. Ability and aptitude tests

The term "ability tests" is used broadly and in this context will encompass aptitude tests too. Ability tests may cover a range of areas including:

- General intelligence
- Verbal ability

- Numerical ability
- Spatial ability
- Clerical ability
- Diagrammatical ability
- Mechanical ability
- Sensory and motor abilities.

4. Personality profiling

An individual's personality may affect their suitability for some posts. However, personality profiling does not have a 'right' or 'wrong' answer and individuals may be sifted through identifying particular behaviours that are better suited to the job than others. It is therefore important for those undertaking the selection process to be clear on the characteristics required to perform well in the job.

5. Presentations

Presentations are frequently used as a selection tool, particularly in senior jobs. The applicant is provided with a topic and given a timeframe to deliver a presentation on that topic. In some organisations the presentation topic is sent with the interview letter. It is now often given to applicants on the day of the interview and the applicant has a set period to prepare the presentation before the interview.

6. Group exercises

Candidates are given a topic or a role-play exercise and are invited to discuss the topic or role-play in a group. During the discussion/role play, observers who are looking for specific attributes award marks to each candidate. This of course means that you may need four or more candidates to make this a meaningful exercise and enough people to mark the candidates properly.

7. Assessment centers

Assessment methods are based on the principle of multiple testing processes. This may include ability and aptitude testing, group exercises, in-tray exercises, presentations as well as personality profiling. The important issue for all testing is to ensure that there is clarity about what is to be tested and that the test is appropriate. An assessment centre should be devised to specifically examine important aspects of the job and measure how well individuals are likely to perform in the job. An assessment centre should be fair and unbiased. It should also give individuals without a 'traditional' academic background the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities. Good practice indicates that individuals attending assessment centers should have practical equalities support. For example, assessors should be of mixed gender and where possible of mixed ethnic origins if this is appropriate.

8. References

References are also used as a selection method. Occasionally, unsatisfactory references may affect decisions to appoint individuals.

Deciding which Methods to Use

A significant amount of research has been done on how reliable various methods are. A summary of research on how well methods predict future job performance shows that, where perfect prediction is 1.0, the following selection methods score as follows:

- Assessment centres promotion (0.68)
- Work samples (0.54)
- Ability tests (0.54)
- Structured interviews (0.44)
- Integrity tests (0.41)
- Assessment centres performance (0.41)
- Personality tests (0.38)
- Unstructured interviews (0.33)
- References (0.13)

When determining which selection method is most appropriate, it is necessary to consider the requirements of the job, through analysis of the job/role description and person specification, and what skills, experience and aptitudes are being sought. Some organisations make reference on the person specification as to how they will assess that requirement during the selection process, so that potential candidates are aware of the methods the organisation will use. Of course, more than one selection method may be appropriate for a particular job.

It is also important to evaluate the success of the selection method to ensure that it is effective. This can be done through seeking the views of candidates who have undertaken the selection process or analysing recruitment statistics and turnover rates.

It is also helpful to review the selection methods that were used the last time that the job was vacant and check that they are still relevant and useful to the current selection process, particularly if there have been changes to the job or a requirement for new skills.

What to consider when choosing

- the seniority/level of position
- the degree to which managerial/leadership ability is critical to success
- the degree to which technical competence is critical to success
- the time and effort required to use the technique, in proportion to the risk of poor selection
- available resources
- the budget
- the skills, knowledge and qualifications of assessors

Equity issues, that is, does the chosen technique directly or indirectly discriminate against EEO groups?

An organisation should select procedures best suited to its needs. Most organisations use application forms and CVs, interviews and references to select candidates. Whichever method an organisation selects, it should enable the organisation to select the best candidate for the job. If the organisation is going to interview candidates for example, proper planning will ensure that:

- The interview panel is selected and well prepared before the interview
- The questions for the interview are prepared before the interview
- The time and dates for the interview are set

The HR team should work together to choose or design the best selection procedure and ensure that everyone participating in the recruitment and selected process is aware of the procedures. Employee selection is the process of putting right men on right job. It is a procedure of matching organisational requirements with the skills and qualifications of people. Effective selection can be done only when there is effective matching. It is therefore important to ensure that the selection procedure to be used will enable the HR team to properly screen and select the right candidate to fill a position in the organisation

Defining your Organisational Requirements

Once you have taken into consideration the job analysis and person specification, you can then decide if it is necessary to take on another full-time member of staff. It may be that there is an alternative to this. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Can you redistribute the tasks to your current workforce?

Take into account the welfare of your employees; will they be taking on too much? Remember, using this method may still mean extra cost in terms of overtime and may take away time from other projects.

2. Do you have an existing employee who may be suitable for the job?

Promoting staff from within has its advantages; the employee is already familiar with the firm and will most likely need less training. You too will be familiar with the employee and therefore will know their skills and qualities. Keep in mind that you may ignore strong candidates in favour of existing employees and that staff morale may be affected by your choice of existing employee to fill the role.

3. Could you outsource the tasks?

Hiring an external business to carry out the work could be more expensive but is ideal for work on a project-by-project basis.

4. Could you manage with temporary or part-time staff?

Bear in mind that although part-time staff are less expensive they will most likely need the same training as full-time employees. When taking on temporary staff, ensure their contracts state the length of employment (if fixed), any extensions and the possibility of the position becoming permanent.

5. Could the job be shared between two or more employees?

Consider the workload and changes in employment costs. The benefit of incorporating job share is having available cover for employee sickness or holiday leave.

Usually organisations have different policies regarding internal and external applicants. This should be put into consideration when planning and preparing for recruitment and selection to fill a particular position.

Resources and Methods of Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment process starts with the recruitment budget. Recruitment and selection is not a cheap activity, and it consumes a large proportion of the human resources budget in an organisation. The recruitment budget has to be properly planned as the finance department love to stretch and cut it. The recruitment budget has to be prepared in a high detail, and it cannot be prepared quickly. It needs many meetings to reach the consensus about the recruitment initiatives to be run during the following year.

The Recruitment Budget

The recruitment and selection budget is always connected with the number of planned and unplanned vacancies in the next year. A strong HR function can predict the planned vacancies based on the corporate strategy and feedback from managers. The HR team should sit together with managers, and they should plan the development of units in the organisation.

- The HR team should be able to set the expected costs of the recruitment and selection process to fill positions in the organisation. The recruitment budget also covers other costs like the background check. It has to be included for all vacancies.
- The recruitment budget planning is not hard. The experienced HR team can provide the necessary inputs to set the recruitment budget correctly. Different departments should provide information about the positions to be filled and the HR team should identify the right recruitment sources to be used.
- The HR team should also consider the recruitment method to be used when preparing the budget. Some recruitment methods are more expensive than others. Always choose the method within the company's budget.

Conduct a Cost Analysis

Do you have any idea of what it costs to hire a new employee? Employee turnover costs money, usually a lot more than we realize. Costs include everything from the cost of running an ad to screening and interviewing the candidates, to the time and money to train these new people. Some companies have identified costs ranging from 35% to as much as 100% of an employee's annual salary. We can do a lot to minimize employee turnover by doing as much as we can to make sure we hire the right person in the first place.

Item	Estimate
Lost productivity	
Recruiting costs	
Screening costs	
Interviewing costs	
Testing costs	
Evaluating costs	
Training costs	
Other costs	
TOTAL	

Recruitment Methods

Human resources recruitment methods vary according to staffing needs, company size, recruiting staff expertise and budget for advertising, cost-per-hire and other employment expenses. Depending on the jobs for which your company is recruiting workers, some methods are more effective than others. Often, the way to determine the most effective recruitment method is by experimenting with several methods until you find one that uses your company's resources and time wisely. Recruitment methods include the following:

1. Internet Job Boards

Internet job boards that direct applicants to a company's website are a popular recruitment method. Online job boards reach a wide audience and the company's applicant tracking system makes recruiting a fast and efficient process. When an applicant spots a job posting in which she is interested, the job board redirects her to the company's website where she completes an

online application. Recruiters monitor the systems and review applications with qualifications that match those required for the vacancy.

2. Employee Referral

Many employers realize the value of recruiting via employee referrals, and even offer referral bonuses to encourage employees to recommend friends, colleagues and family members for jobs. If your company has a high-performing work force, this could be a very effective recruiting method. Employees who are conscientious about their job duties and responsibilities generally know other people who demonstrate the same work ethic. Using this type of recruitment method minimizes the expense of online advertising and recruiters' time expended sourcing qualified applicants.

3. College Recruiting

Large organisations seeking new entrants to the work force have recruiters who travel to college and university campuses looking for graduating students. This recruiting method serves the interests of future employees and the employer. Campus recruiting enables companies to attract students with impressive academic credentials and train them to model the employer's philosophy and practices. In addition, the company's presence on campus demonstrates a willingness to invest in young professionals through mentoring and professional development. Private industry as well as military recruiters often uses this recruiting method.

4. Job Fairs

Job fairs can be conducted by one employer seeking applicants for a variety of positions, or a group of employers who want to attract large numbers of qualified applicants.

Some job fairs provide on-the-spot interviews, which encourages prospective candidates to come prepared to spend the day exploring employment opportunities with several employers. Job fairs are an effective recruiting method, particularly for new companies that need to staff their organisation quickly or employers who want to expedite the recruitment and selection process by offering same-day interviews.

5. Professional Associations and Networking

Recruiters and other human resources staff who belong to professional associations use seminars, luncheon meetings and similar networking opportunities to attract applicants. Industry-specific organisations and trade associations use online job postings, newsletters and simple word-of-mouth advertising to publicize openings. For instance, the Society for Human Resource Management has a national database for job seekers who are interested in HR positions. Likewise, professional associations for engineers, accountants and lawyers also have listings for employment opportunities within certain regions as well as jobs across the country.

1. Recruitment by Advertisements

They can be found in many places such as:

- Newspaper
- Job posting on job sites
- Ads on websites related to positions recruited.

2. Contract staffing

Company can buy staffing contract from HR outsourcing.

3. Internal recruitment

Internal recruitment can conduct by types of:

- Present permanent employees (based on programs of career development).
- Present temporary / casual employees
- Retired employees.
- Dependents of deceased disabled, retired and present employees.

Recruitment methods that a company may implement depend on the available resources. If a company does not have enough resources they may consider internal recruitment instead of external resources.

Advertising the Vacant Position

There are three important considerations when you are looking for candidates. Your methods must be:

- Timely
- Cost-effective
- Promote positive employee relations

There are several options to consider. What are the benefits and the drawbacks of each method?

File Searches

Advantages	Disadvantages

Internal Searches

Advantages	Disadvantages

Placement Services

Advantages	Disadvantages

Referral Programs

Advantages	Disadvantages

Third Party Recruiters

Advantages	Disadvantages

Head-hunters

Advantages	Disadvantages

Internet

Advantages	Disadvantages

Advertise

Advantages	Disadvantages

The point is: Don't just rush to your nearest newspaper and put in an advertisement. There may be a better way of finding the people you want. Track your efforts so you will know for sure.

If your help-wanted sign or advertisement just isn't attracting the kind of people you need, try the following sources:

Competitors	If they've been turning away applicants, they might send you their extras.
Persons with disabilities	These are the people who are most often overlooked at hiring time. If these people can keep up with the job, you might end up with a dedicated worker who'll be looking for a chance to make a positive impact on your organization.
Military retirees/veterans	Because of the military's structure, a lot of these men and women retire in their mid forties. They're generally hard-working, in excellent physical condition, and very disciplined. They're equally good as leaders and followers, and they generally stick to a job until they get it done.
Retired seniors	Again, there are a lot of experienced retirees out there who have a lifetime of skill and experience behind them. They can be a real asset, especially in a new business.
Outplacement firms	These people get paid for placing good applicants, and going this route could save you expensive advertising.
Companies that have announced cutbacks	Executives at downsizing companies are usually more than happy to send you their soon-to-be-unemployed people, as most upper management folks actually do care about the welfare of their employees.
Educational institutions	Professors you've made friends with will give you the inside track to their best performers, and those top performers could be yours.
Employees	Ask established employees for people they know who can do the job. Because your employees will have to work with those people, they'll usually make a good choice.

Five Key Points

If you do think advertising is the way to go, don't just send off to the newspaper what you sent off last time. Here are some key parts of your ad.

Information about the company.

Who are you? What do you do? Particularly for internal postings and for local newspapers, we forget to sell ourselves. Remember that employees and other members of the community will read this. They'd like to see you boost your company image.

What position is being advertised?

If you read employment ads enough, you'll see companies that forget to mention what the candidate would be doing if they were hired.

What qualifications do they need?

Sometimes we think the way to discourage a lot of resumes is to list miles of qualifications. That isn't so; all this will do is discourage the ones you really want to apply. Analyze the job. What technical and performance skills do you need? What would be nice to have? Hiring a receptionist who has a degree in secretarial sciences may mean you will be hiring for that position again in a few months.

- What are the responsibilities and challenges for this position?
- What will this person do? Is there challenge or a chance to grow? The best candidates will be looking for something more than a paycheck.

Performance clause.

This is a sentence included near the end of the advertisement which instructs applicants to provide customized information when applying for the position. This may be the most important feature of the ad. It is also the most controversial because it doesn't mince words, and it requires applicants to do extra work when applying for the job.

An example of a performance clause: "Applicants will not be considered unless they include a one to three page point form attachment with their resume, demonstrating how their skills and experience corresponds to each of the listed qualifications."

Ten Tests for Advertising

Does your advertisement pass these tests?

	Yes	No
1) Does the ad concentrate on the job?		
2) Does it sort out and emphasize important details?		
3) Does it highlight unique opportunities?		
4) Is the ad specific?		
5) Is the ad realistic?		
6) Does the ad avoid clichés?		
7) Does the ad speak to the reader?		
8) Does the look of the ad portray the company image? The position's importance to the company?		
9) Would a stranger understand the job opportunities?		

10) Does the ad have sell?		
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Other Tips

Position is important.

Don't overlook the classified ads. The right candidate for some positions would never think of looking in the business section for a position. Similarly, those who look on the business page for their next job may never look in the classified section. When a fast food company was looking for part-time moms to work over the school lunch hour, they put their ad in the women's section. A stereotype? Maybe, but it worked.

Position on the page is good fodder for an argument.

However, most researchers agree that the right hand page of any newspaper or magazine is seen slightly more often than an advertisement on the left.

Graphics should be clean and easy to read.

Often a sans serif font for the heading and a serif font for the ad will make it look friendlier. Try not to rely on your newspaper to choose the graphics. They will choose the one the used for everybody else's ad, and yours will not stand out.

Call to action.

Remember to include information about applying right now. In today's fast world, faxes or e-mail are quite acceptable for many companies. If they are for yours, include your fax and e-mail address. Including your Web site lets people do some research ahead of time.

Use white space.

Ads cost money and we hate to waste space. But cramming too many words into an ad makes you look cheap, and is often so unattractive people don't read it. Generous white space and words that have been carefully chosen to say what must be said is much more effective.

Selection Criteria and Control Procedures

Selection criteria are the important elements or requirements of a role that employers consider when they are recruiting for that position. Selection criteria describe the level of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience required to perform a particular role well and are often listed in job advertisements and related documentation. So when you apply for a job, your application is measured against the selection criteria for that job. Examples of selection criteria include

- effective teamwork skills
- highly-developed time management proficiency
- a high level of computer literacy, and
- awareness of Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

Selection criteria are particularly obvious in advertisements for government jobs, but you will also see them in advertisements for private sector roles.

Some of the many selection criteria encountered in advertisements include:

- Effective communication skills, both verbal and written
- Ability to work as a team member and team leader
- Demonstrated proficiency in the Microsoft Office suite
- The ability to manage conflicting priorities and meet deadlines
- A high degree of customer focus for both internal and external customers

The use of selection criteria helps employers to compare job applications for the same role in as equitable a manner as possible because the requirements of the role and the way candidates will be assessed have been set out. Addressing selection criteria effectively will give an employer an idea of your past and present performance, and how well you might perform in the advertised role. Selection criteria also help employers compare an applicant's application with those of other applicants and to choose which applicants will be interviewed.

Things to consider when developing selection criteria and control procedures

Employers must use selection criteria which are not discriminatory on the following grounds:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Maternity or pregnancy
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex, or
- Sexual orientation

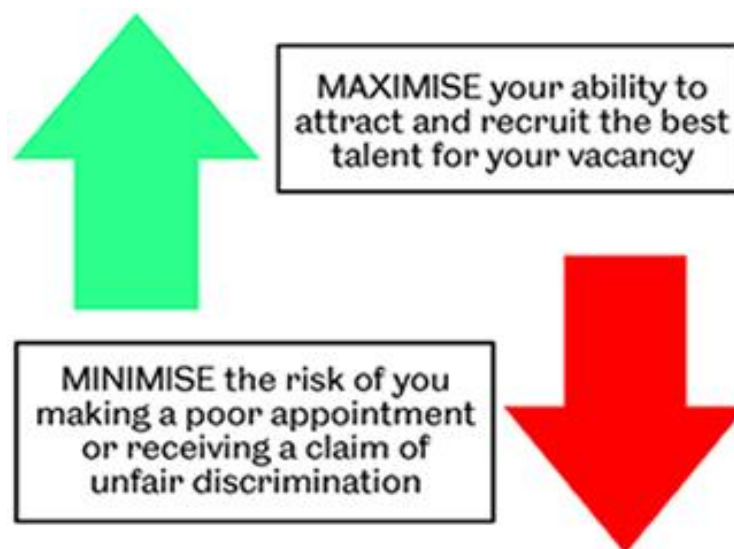
Equality of opportunity is an integral part of the recruitment and selection process, and to this end employers may offer training and encouragement to any under-represented groups. Examples include pre-application assistance for those who do not have English as their first language, or management development training for women where they are under-represented in management grades. Job advertisements may also state that the employer encourages applications from those groups that are under-represented in the organisation.

Control procedures must be in place to ensure that not only employees who “know someone” in the organisation gets the job.

For example, employees who have an association with an applicant should not participate in any stage of the recruitment and selection process to avoid partiality or bias. The employee may declare such a relationship to the HR manager if it is reasonably foreseeable that they may be involved in the process. If the employee's involvement in the recruitment and selection process is deemed essential, the manager concerned should seek the agreement of management for the employee to participate. Permission will normally be granted if it can be shown that the employee's involvement is in the interests of the organisation.

Recruitment and Selection Plan

Proactive planning is key to effective recruitment and selection process. Every step in your recruitment and selection action should:



To achieve this:

- Take a planned and proactive approach to recruitment and selection
- Consider the maximise opportunity/minimise risk principle every time you make a decision
- Invest time and effort into the process
- Create an about the job and advert which are fit for purpose and encourage a diverse range of relevant, talented applicants to apply
- Use a range of selection techniques to assess candidates fairly and thoroughly
- Value all applicants and treat them with respect at every stage in the process

The Importance of a Recruitment and Selection Plan

Recruitment and selection processes affect the organisation's image as an employer and, in turn, its ability to attract qualified people. It can also enhance the presentation of the organisation as an "employer of choice" so it is important to ensure that all candidates experience the process as professional, well planned and efficient.

A recruitment and selection plan ensures a proactive, strategic approach and ensures a transparent and objective process.

A well planned process increases the quality of the recruitment process and can minimise the risk of potential delays.

Recruitment planning enables the HT team to consider a process and strategy to:

- Market the benefits of becoming an employee of the organisation to potential applicants.
- Identify and communicate the organisation's uniqueness to potential applicants.
- Create an "ideal" employee profile.
- Utilise innovative talent sourcing methods for example, creative advertising strategies.
- Recruit internationally.
- Maintain consistency and fair treatment of all applicants.
- Highlight the work areas strengths
- Use appropriate applicant assessment methods.
- Evaluate the selection practices in an effort to ensure continuous improvement of the recruitment and selection practices.

The Elements of a Recruitment and Selection Plan

The foundation of a highly effective process for recruiting, selecting, hiring and orientating new employees is the recruitment and selection plan. Knowing how many new employees and when they will be required to fill existing or new positions is essential. An organisation must develop a plan that will ensure effective and efficient recruitment and selection. The plan must cover the following:

- **Timing:** recruitment has to be timed such that candidates are available to go through selection, hiring and orientation without being rushed. Planning allows you to complete selection, hiring and orientation without rushing and consequently hiring the wrong person. The recruitment and select plan will ensure that the process is well timed to ensure that the organisation has right workforce at the right time.

- **Resource allocation:** a plan will help the management team to allocate/distribute resources for example, human resources, financial resources and time effectively. Spending a lot of time and money on advertisement for example, will strain the budget. There won't be enough resources for the selection process. It is therefore important to develop a plan before the recruitment and selection process. It will help the team to distribute resources accordingly to ensure the success of the process.
- **Contingencies:** sometimes things do not work out as expected even with careful planning and preparation. It is always wise to come up with "plan B" to ensure that a competent candidate is selected at the end of the day. Contingencies will help the HR team to come up with the best alternatives to fill the position if the original plan or strategy does not yield positive results.

For example, the organisation may consider using different recruitment methods if the ones they are using are not producing positive results.

- **Methods for recruitment:** there are a lot of recruitment methods. These include printed or electronic media, networking or executive search (see section 1.5). A recruitment plan will enable to HR team to select effective methods that are within the company's budget.
- **Verification of information:** background checks and verifying CV information are an important part of the selection process. Some jobs will require criminal background checks, while others will require credit checks. Nearly all jobs will check references and ensure that the information provided on applications is accurate.
- The plan will detail the process to be followed in order to ensure that the information provided by the applicant is correct. For example, the organisation may call references or ask for original copies of applicant's certificates.
- **Selection:** planning will ensure that the HR team has effective procedures and methods in place to fill a defined position.

For example, an effective selection process requires skilled interviewing. Anyone conducting an interview needs to be well-versed in what is legal and not legal to ask. They should also be trained in questioning techniques and encouraged to ask open-ended questions that probe into an applicant's work philosophy, knowledge and commitment. Many businesses will have a standard list of questions to ensure that all applicants receive equal treatment and opportunity. Therefore planning is important before recruitment and selection processes. Selection planning also helps to answer the following questions:

- Who receive CVs and when do they receive the CVs?
 - Who review CVs and when do they review the CVs?
 - Who organize to check professional and skills of candidate and when do they do that?
 - Who interview and when do they interview candidates?
 - Who make final decision and when do they do that?
-
- **Nature and medium of communication and feedback:** it is very important to communicate and provide feedback to candidates before and after the interview. Planning will ensure that the right channels of communication are used to reach the candidates during the recruitment and selection processes. After the selection, it is important to provide feedback to successful and unsuccessful candidates. The organisation may call or email the candidate to inform him/her about the outcome of the interview. Planning will ensure that the correct medium is used to reach the candidate. Feedback should be effective. Planning will help the team to come up with ways of providing feedback that will benefit both the organisation and the applicant.

It is important to develop a recruitment and selection plan that you will use when recruiting and selecting candidates to fill defined positions in an organisation.

Chapter 2 – Recruitment of Applicants

Dealing with the Responses

After the advertisement the HR department:

- Receives CVs of all respondents (Via email, hand delivery or post)
- Sorts CVs
- Collates CVs
- Do presentation of CVs received in alphabetical order
- Pack CV's neatly for example, in pigeon holes

These CV's will be ready for screening after the closing date. The closing date of all applicants will be indicated on the job advert. It is the duty of every applicant to submit his/ her application before the closing date. Some companies give 2-3 days grace period after the closing date while others do not. To be on safe side applicants must therefore send their job applications on time.

- *CV control procedures include the closing dates of applications. Some companies are very strict when it comes to this. Applicants must therefore stick to the closing dates on the job advertisement.*

- *During CV collation incomplete CV's may be thrown away. It is always advisable to be neat and attach all the required information when applying for a post. Remember, there will be a lot other people applying for the same job.*

The Screening Process

Once you have your pool of candidates the filtering process can begin. If you attracted 80 or 90 applicants, you could filter by having them telephone and answer pertinent questions about their experience or educational qualifications. Of course, you can also screen after short listing if you have sufficient good candidates, by asking them to telephone for a brief chat.

Other screening processes could include using the type of information you already have as part of the selection process. If, for instance, you already have a group of good workers doing the same job, you could construct a profile looking at education, experience, etc and exclude anyone who didn't fit. There are large companies that sell these sorts of profiles based on information from several organisations. This is called bio data and seems to be a good predictor of candidate performance.

The selection process often begins with an initial screening of applicants to remove individuals who obviously do not meet the position requirements. At this stage, a few straightforward questions are asked. An applicant may obviously be unqualified to fill the advertised position, but be well qualified to work in other open positions. The purpose of screening is to decrease the number of applicants being considered for selection.

Sources utilised in the screening effort

Personal resume presented with the job application is considered as source of information that can be used for the initial screening process. It mainly includes information in the following areas:

- Employment and education history
- Evaluation of character
- Evaluation of job performance

Screening Interviews

Screening interviews are used to:

- To verify information provided on resume or application blank.
- They are usually very short (approximately 30 minutes or so).

Advantages of Successful Screening

If the screening effort is successful, those applicants that do not meet minimum required qualifications will not move to the next stage in the selection process. Companies utilising expensive selection procedures put more effort in screening to reduce costs.

The Implementation of Corrective Action

The HR department must evaluate their initial recruitment plan. During the evaluation stage, you will think about what went well and what could have been improved. You will use this information if you have to re-advertise, or when your organisation next needs to recruit new employees.

Evaluation

- At the end of the initial screening, you will either have made an appointment or decided that you need to re-advertise the post.
- Take the time to evaluate the process. If you need to re-advertise, an evaluation will identify any aspects of the process you need to change. If you have made a successful appointment, a record of your experience will be valuable for the governing body in the future.
- If you have experienced difficulties in recruiting, it may be wise to obtain objective external advice before re-advertising to prevent you from repeating costly mistakes.

What to evaluate

You will want to think through each of the stages of the initial screening and decide what went well and what could have been better. Evaluation is used to track to keep track of:

- how many requests you received for an application pack
- how many completed applications you received
- how many candidates you shortlisted for interview

If you advertised the job in more than one place, note the level of interest generated in different media so that you know which was most successful.

Things to consider

- If you need to re-advertise the post, take some time to evaluate your previous process and decide if anything needs changing.

- Seek objective external advice before re-advertising.
- Speak to candidates who decided not to apply after receiving an application pack or who dropped out during the process.
- If the recruitment was successful, you should still evaluate what went well and what could be improved. Store this information for future reference.

Preparing a List of Potential Candidates

When you have the replies to your advertisement:

- compare applications against a job description and person specification outlining the skills and experience you need
- eliminate applicants who do not have the basic requirements for the job
- draw up a shortlist - a list of candidates to interview - based on the applicants who most closely match your needs
- consider notifying candidates who you will not be inviting for interview

Short-listing applicants

What is involved?

This part involves slimming down the applications received to a shortlist of candidates you wish to take forward to interview.

Why do it?

Short-listing is a very important part of the recruitment process. Although it can be time-consuming it is worth conducting it with care and consideration. You don't want to miss an excellent candidate or waste your time with someone who doesn't meet your requirements.

It's possible that you will only receive a small number of applications for a job, but the same process should take place regardless of the number of applications you receive.

Steps to short-listing

- Using the job description and person specification, list all the requirements of the job on a short-listing grid. It may be helpful to use headings. You should have two sections – one for 'essential' criteria and one for "desirable" criteria.
- Design a points or rating system to score candidates against the criteria. For example: **3=exceeds criteria, 2=meets criteria, 1=partly meets criteria, 0=fails to meet criteria.** You could add more ratings if you wish.
- Using a separate grid for each candidate, go through the application forms and score them against the requirements. It is best practice to have more than one person carry out this procedure, so each person should complete the grid for every candidate; you can then all come together at the end and compare results.
- Once scoring is complete you can immediately discard any applicants that score a '0' on one or more of the 'essential' criteria.
- You can then rank those remaining candidates in priority order, highest score first. If you still have a large number of candidates you may want to consider the scoring of the 'desirable' criteria.
- You have then arrived at your list of candidates to invite for interview – you should avoid interviewing more than six people for any one job. If you only have one job to fill, interviewing more than 6 people isn't likely to improve your chances of finding someone suitable.

When short-listing candidates:

- Include only the number of applicants you will have time to interview - usually no more than three to four people a day. Allow time for preparation and discussion before and after the interview.
- Draw up a table listing each candidate against the essential requirements of the job. Those that meet all the essential personal criteria could form your shortlist.
- If there are too many possible candidates, then you could weigh them up against the desirable qualities you are also looking for.
- Don't discriminate against applicants on the grounds of sex, race, age or disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- Ensure you are consistent in the way you use personal data to draw up the shortlist.
- Get more than one person to compile the shortlist to avoid possible bias.

Setting up an Applicant Database

Companies may design databases for the purposes of storing and keeping track of applicant's data. They may develop the database using Microsoft Access or SQL. The database may include some of the following features:

- Store general applicants details
- Keep a record of qualifications if required per applicant;
- Record visa/work permit expiry dates if applicable;
- Keep a list of websites which you find useful;
- Embed an applicant's CV into the database;
- Includes several reports/correspondence to print.
- Use the My Notes option to make notes such as things to be done.

To run this database you must have your own copy of Microsoft Access 2003, 2007, 2010 or 2008 installed with macros/VBA enabled. Some databases have formal support package others do not have. Companies usually assist applicant via email should the need arise when there is no formal support package.

Storage of applicant's data

Database system helps to store all contact information about applicant, including his/her profile and evaluation, storage of document in the form of CV or connected files. All data about applicant are accessible from one location, without the need to search in several sheets, databases, file system

Advanced search

The application offers various ways how to search the most appropriate applicants for vacancy. It is possible to search appropriate applicants using AND/OR criteria, comprising complete applicant profile including content of attached documents. The system sorts search results based on applicant relevance to search criteria.

Features and tools

- Various criteria for applicants search
- Search based on personal data
- Search based on skills and other connected criteria for example, salary, preferred location, skills, education, language skills
- Search based on keywords in the CV (supports MS Word, Open Office, RTF, HTML, TXT)
- Tracking of job enquiry status history
- Tracking of communication history

With an applicant database management system, the organisation can store and retrieve a lot of information easily and quickly. The applicant can receive emails or text messages about post that matches his/her search criteria and apply for such positions. Applicant database must be managed in accordance with legislation and organisational requirements. Some companies do not employ foreigners and legislations helps to protect the rights of people with disabilities, women or foreigners (amongst others).

Dealing with Unplanned Events

Contingency planning is a systematic approach to identifying what can go wrong in a situation. Rather than hoping that everything will turn out OK or that "fate will be on your side", a planner should try to identify contingency events and be prepared with plans, strategies and approaches for avoiding, coping or even exploiting them.

Contingencies are relevant events anticipated by a planner, including low-probability events that would have major impacts. Contingency planning is a "What if?" skill important in all types of planning domains, but especially in contested and competitive domains. The objective of contingency planning is not to identify and develop a plan for every possible contingency. That would be impossible and a terrible waste of time. Rather, the objective is to encourage one to think about major contingencies and possible responses. Few situations actually unfold according to the assumptions of a plan. However, people who have given thought to contingencies and possible responses are more likely to meet major goals and targets successfully.

The following questions can help develop contingency plans:

1. What events may occur that require a response?
2. What disasters might happen during execution of the plan?
3. What is the worst case scenario of events for the situation?
4. What scenarios are possible for the situation?
5. What event would cause the greatest disruption of current activities and plans?
6. What happens if costs of the plan are excessive? What happens if delays occur?
7. What if key people leave the organisation?
8. What are the expected moves of antagonists and competitors?
9. Who or what might impede implementation of the plan?

No matter how the recruitment process is well planned, unplanned events are sometimes inevitable. The organisation particularly the HR department must put in place a contingency plan to deal with unplanned events. Examples of unplanned events during the recruitment process include:

- When the recommended shortlisted candidates do not turn up for interviews. The organisation may put in place a plan to shortlist at least the recommended and possible candidates. If the recommended candidates do not show up, the hr department may consider interviewing the possible candidates.
- When the interviewed candidate can not join the organisation as promised. The organisation may put in place a plan to interview at least 6 candidates for one position. If the candidate who was offered the job does not show up the organisation can still have 5 candidates to select from.

- When the selected candidate gets a better offer somewhere. It is common that people may attend more than 4 interviews in a row. Candidates will usually compare the offers from different companies and choose to work with the company that will be offering them more in terms of benefits and salary. Companies must have a plan to deal with this.
- Some unplanned events may include death, sickness, injuries and when these occur the organisation must have a plan to deal with the events.

Organisation may adapt to a strategy of not “putting their eggs in one basket”.

This way they will be able to deal with any unplanned event that may arise during the recruitment and selection processes without much pressure.

Some of the unplanned events and the contingency plan to solve the situation that happen during recruitment and selection may include the following:

Recruitment

- The advertiser fails to run the job advert in the agreed period - Have another advertiser on standby
- The job fails to draw interest - target another labour market.

Selection

- Some or one of the selection panel members/ assessor absent themselves
- The incumbent/candidate calls in sick or just drops out.

The contingency plan should be implemented immediately in order to complete the recruitment process on time.

Below is an example of a contingency plan

Contingency plans should be developed for every critical process or function for example HR. You should first review all alternatives and identify the best plan or alternative process for your situation. These plans will vary with each system, process, and intended purpose. This generic outline will help you visualize what a contingency plan should include and can serve as an outline for almost any process. Contingency plans can range from very simple to very complex; design each plan based on your organisational needs.

1. Contingency Plan Title. Use a fully descriptive title for the system or process that the contingency plan addresses. It should be clear in an emergency exactly what the plan covers.

a. System Mission Description. Describe the basic functions and outputs of the system or process. Differentiate from complete or partial systems such as "human resources", "recruitment" or "payroll".

b. System Specifics. Describe in detail of the system or process specifics. This can be as detailed as you like; it may not be necessary to go into great detail if it is not needed for the particular plan.

- **Current Platform or Technology.** Describe what technology the current system uses. Include hardware, software, and networking information.
- **Interfaces with Other Systems.** List all known interfaces. Information on data formats and bridge programs should be included if applicable.
- **Critical Processes and Outputs.** Describe exactly what the system does in terms of specific processes and outputs. Include reports and other outputs that may be relied on by the business unit.
- **Key Contact Information.** List key personnel that have responsibility for the system or process. Include those personnel that have a good working knowledge of the system.

2. Objectives of the Contingency Plan

a. Risks of Failure. What was determined to be the risk of failure? Include a copy of the risk rating form or other risk evaluation documentation. Describe the risk and how would it impact the business.

b. Risk of Contingency Plan. Describe what the risks are involved with using the chosen contingency plan alternative. How might it impact the business?

c. Desired Outcomes. What are the desired outcomes in terms of output and level of service? How long do you intend to operate under the contingency mode?

- d. Potential Impact.** What is the anticipated impact on the business or organisational unit in lower service or functional levels? This should include descriptions of potential impact in terms of financial, market share, and good will costs.

3. Resource Requirements

- a. Time Estimates.** Describe the estimated time required to implement the plan. Remember the approval processing time for necessary spending authorization and procurement processing.
- b. Cost Estimates.** This is the plan's budget for the cost of equipment, supplies, services, staff overtime.
- c. Source of Funding.** Where will the money come from?

4. Implementing the Plan

- a. Implementation Criteria.** Describe the basic criteria for implementing the plan. What will be the situation that prompts the decision to implement?
- b. Trigger Events.** Describe the date or specific failure that will trigger implementation of the plan. You may want to describe the various scenarios that could lead to a trigger event.
- b. Responsibilities.** Who is responsible for making implementation decisions? If you have a clearly documented trigger event this could be whoever is on duty at the time the event happens.
- c. Duration.** What is the estimated length of time that contingency operations will cover?

5. Operation and Management

- a. Management Structure.** To the degree necessary, describe the management structure that will be used to ensure smooth operations under the contingency plan.
- **Decision Makers.** Who will be making the decisions to implement, change, and discontinue the contingent operations?
 - **Support Personnel.** What support personnel will be used to implement and operate processes under the plan?
- b. Assigned Roles and Responsibilities.** Provide details on who will do what under the plan.
- **Contingency Operations Team.** Detailed information on the team that will run the process or system

c. Personnel Notification Procedures. Describe how you plan to notify staff that the plan is being implemented. Given the possibility of telecommunication disruptions, you may want to have an automatic response (in the event the phones go dead or the power goes out) or have teams standing by at critical times and dates.

- **Records Management Procedures.** Describe how you plan to manage records issues. Consider reports and data dumps that will be useful in the recovery phase.
- **Data Security Procedures.** Describe the processes to be employed to ensure data security, recovery, integrity, and confidentiality. Contingency plans may open the door to significant security issues. Review systems security and access rights, data integrity assurance procedures, and records confidentiality procedures.

6. Criteria for Returning to Normal. Here you will describe how you will determine that it is time to discontinue the contingency mode and return to the normal operation mode.

- a. Criteria.** Describe the conditions or events that would lead to returning to normal operating mode. This should include certification that the system or process is functioning normally.
- b. Procedures.** Describe the detailed procedures required to return to normal operating mode.
- c. Points of Contact/Notifications.** List key personnel that have responsibility for returning the system or process to its normal operating mode.
 - **Decision-Makers.** Who will be making the decisions to discontinue the contingent operations and begin the recovery process?
 - **Operational Personnel.** List the key operational resource personnel that will be needed to return to normal operations.
 - **Business Recovery Team.** Detailed information on the team that will run the process of resuming normal operations after the contingency period.
 - **Business Partners.** List any business partner relationships (internal and external) that will be involved in resuming normal operations.

7. Training and Testing Requirements. Describe the training and testing requirements that are required to prepare for implementing the contingency plan. Training may include desktop exercises and rehearsals to ensure smooth implementation of the plan. Testing is used to validate the plans capabilities.

- a. **Contingency Team Training.** What training will be required for the contingency operations team? Will they need to be trained on new or different processes? Will they need to practice manual operation scripts? Will you include a drill?
 - b. **Recovery Team Training.** What training is required for the team that will bring processes back on line?
 - c. **Testing Requirements and Procedures.** Here you will describe the plans and requirements for testing the contingency plan. Testing is required to validate the plan and ensure its completeness. Include test scripts and other detailed testing procedures.
 - d. **Training and Testing Schedules.** Document the timeline for training and testing that will ensure readiness of both staff and the plan prior to the implementation of the system or process.
8. **Recovery Process Requirements.** Describe the process and requirements for returning to normal operations. What steps must be taken to recover data or otherwise bring processes back to normal. Be as specific as necessary for the given process.

Chapter 3

Selecting Staff

Employee selection is the process of putting right men on right job. It is a procedure of matching organisational requirements with the skills and qualifications of people. Effective selection can be done only when there is effective matching. By selecting best candidate for the required job, the organisation will get quality performance of employees. Moreover, organisation will face less of absenteeism and employee turnover problems. By selecting right candidate for the required job, organisation will also save time and money. Proper screening of candidates takes place during selection procedure. All the potential candidates who apply for the given job are tested.

Selection must be differentiated from recruitment, though these are two phases of employment process. Recruitment is considered to be a positive process as it motivates more of candidates to apply for the job. It creates a pool of applicants. It is just sourcing of data. While selection is a negative process as the inappropriate candidates are rejected here. Recruitment precedes selection in staffing process. Selection involves choosing the best candidate with best abilities, skills and knowledge for the required job.

The Selection process



Validating Backgrounds and Qualifications

The practice of conducting effective background and qualifications checks for prospective employees has exploded in the workforce. The need to hire the most qualified candidate, and the inherent risk in hiring the wrong candidate, has never been greater. Workplace crime, unethical business practices and misleading resume information are on the rise. The costs of not performing proper background checks- fraud, embezzlement, theft and violence are a multi-billion drain on our economy, bleeding organisations both large and small.

Furthermore, negative publicity associated with negligent hiring- especially as the result of a less than thorough background check can devastate the very foundation of a trusted organisation. Organisations owe it to themselves, their customers and their employees to know everything they can about their applicants, and the most effective method to accomplish this is by conducting comprehensive background checks.

- The next stage after short listing candidates is to carry out a selection process so you can establish which of the shortlisted candidates is most suitable for the role. The HR department will have to authenticate the backgrounds and qualifications of the applicants using appropriate verification methods.
- Background checks give employers an opportunity to verify information about employees. Often, prospective employees sign background check authorisations when they complete their job applications.
- A background check may review an applicant's criminal history, verify the Tax return information, provide residential history about where an applicant has lived, disclose any lawsuits as well as liens placed against the applicant.
- The best methods to conduct background checks based on accurate, extensive information involve using online businesses.

The best methods to conduct a background and qualification check involve:**1. Searching:**

- a. court records
- b. department of corrections records
- c. police records
- d. social websites such as Facebook / LinkedIn/Twitter
- e. databases such as PNet.com
- f. Online search engines like Google.

2. Contact:

- a. private investigators
- b. previous employers
- c. references provided
- d. Academic institutions

The best methods in each particular case depend on the relevant factors and information needed. For example, some employers conduct background checks only to verify tax return information while others want to learn more about criminal problems. The charge for each method varies from free to high hourly rates.

In general, the best methods involve utilizing Investigative businesses, which provide employers with a range of background check services. Online investigative businesses allow employers to outsource research about potential new hires in order to minimize the use of internal resources. Furthermore, investigative companies specialize in conducting backgrounds and generally can gather extensive information faster than employers.

While different companies may submit similar or identical information, the respective costs of conducting the background checks vary widely.

Assessing Candidates against Position Requirements

The goal of effective hiring is to maximize the return from your organisation's human-capital investment and minimize the corresponding financial risks. And as the hiring department (hr), your task is to assess the potential of job candidates accordingly - in an astute, consistent, legal, fair, and humane manner. The first task of the hr department is to determine how closely the candidate's technical or "hard" skills relate to the technical requirements of the specific position you are trying to fill. Afterwards, the hr department must also assess the "soft" skills of the applicants.

Things to consider

In getting ready to assess applicants employers need to be clear about:

- What the job qualifications are
- How to get information about whether individuals possess them.

The list of functions, duties and responsibilities on a job description states what the position incumbent will have to do.

- What would the employer need to know about applicants to decide whether they are capable of performing the job?
- What knowledge, abilities and other characteristics would a person have to possess to be suited for the job?

Answering these questions translates the job description into job specification or a list of qualification which usually becomes a section of the description document.

Having the right people on staff is crucial to the success of an organisation. Various selection devices help employers predict which applicants will be successful if hired. These devices aim to be not only valid, but also reliable. Validity is proof that the relationship between the selection device and some relevant job criterion exists. Reliability is an indicator that the device measures the same thing consistently.

For example, it would be appropriate to give a keyboarding test to a candidate applying for a job as an administrative assistant. However, it would not be valid to give a keyboarding test to a candidate for a job as a physical education teacher. If a keyboarding test is given to the same individual on two separate occasions, the results should be similar. To be effective predictors, a selection device must possess an acceptable level of consistency.

When Assessing the Candidate

"The best person you interview isn't necessarily the best person for the job"

To make your assessment, you should measure the candidates against the job - NOT each other. You are NOT after the "best" candidate, but the most appropriate for your particular job.

To help you with this assessment, here are six areas to examine:

1. Industriousness

Examine achievements, responsibilities and progress to date.

2. Intelligence

- How considered are the candidate's answers?
- How relevant are the candidate's questions?

3. Temperament

- Is the candidate pleasant and courteous?
- How does the candidate respond to probing questions?
- What is the candidate's preference for leisure activities (social or solitary)?

4. Creativity

- Evidence of problem solving?
- What changes/improvements has the candidate initiated?

5. Self confidence

- How relaxed is the candidate at the interview?
- Firmness of voice and handshake?
- Degree of eye contact?
- Does the candidate fidget?

6. Motivation/drive

- Ambitions expressed at interview.
- Evidence of career progress to date.
- How much preparation did the candidate do for the interview?
- How eager is the candidate for the job?

Remember, when making the decision, avoid:

The over-influence of first impressions - research has shown that interviewers typically reach a decision within the first four minutes of the interview.

The “cloning” trap - recruiting in one's own image or replicating a “company type”.

Commonly held prejudices - whilst there is legislation prohibiting both sexual and racial discrimination, you must beware other myths such as “fat = lazy” or “older people are less adaptable”

Instead, focus upon:

- Accomplishments
- Motivation
- Enthusiasm

Developing a Resume Screening Guide

This is where you have to start thinking about how you make decisions and how you can defend those decisions, should you be taken to task for not hiring Jim's brother or giving little Thomas an interview. This is where you take the time to develop a resume screening guide that you use for evaluating that pile of resumes.

Resume Rating Guide

Knockout Factors

Area	Yes	No
Grade 12 or equivalent	Rate	Send letter of rejection
Bilingual (Zulu-English)	Rate	Send letter of rejection

Rating Guide

Area	Breakdown	Possible Points	Points Awarded
Application	Complete	5	
	Legible	5	
	Resume attached	5	
Education	Post-Secondary	5	
	Post-Secondary in related field	5	
	Bachelor Degree	5	
Experience	Multiple Phone Lines	5	
	6 months-3 years	5	
	3+ years	10	
Computer Experience	IBM experience	5	
	Macintosh experience	15	

	Reports	5	
	Spreadsheets	5	
Keyboarding	40-59 WPM	5	
	60+ WPM	10	
Human Resources	Target Group Member	5	
TOTAL		100	

This is a rating form developed for a receptionist who would be expected to do some typing as part of their job responsibilities. Let's go through this as a group.

First of all, the company had decided grade 12 or the equivalent was a must. They did decide what they considered the equivalent: Grade 11 and vocational school or successful completion of a high school equivalency. If the candidate didn't meet these criteria, he/she wasn't accepted.

Since they had a number of Hispanic customers who couldn't speak English, they felt they had to have a bilingual person answering phones. This was another knockout factor.

They also felt it was important that they had a completed application, signed by the candidate, as a legal document. (Resumes are not legal documents.) They wanted the application to be complete and legible as they felt that said a great deal about how much effort the person was putting into applying for the position. Of course, they wanted a resume as well. They awarded points on all three counts, for a total of 15 points.

While grade 12 was a necessity, they felt there were opportunities attached to this position, so they would like to see that the successful candidate had additional education or training.

The marketing secretary was leaving at the end of the year to go back to university, and if the candidate worked out well in this position he/she could move on.

Therefore, post secondary education such as college was worth 5 points. If the education was in a related field (secretarial for example) they would get another 5 points. If they applicant has a degree they can get another 5 points, for a total of 15.

Since the most critical part of the job was answering phone lines, they were looking for somebody who had experience with multiple phone lines and could hit the ground running.

This was worth 5 points.

They were looking for somebody with experience since they didn't think they had time to do a lot of training on the basics. So, the candidate got 5 points for less than three years or 10 points for more than three years.

They were using Macintosh computers and it had been their experience that IBM trained people never fully adjusted to Macs. They were prepared to give 15 points to those who had experience on Macintosh, and 5 points to those who were IBM-trained. Next, the ability to do reports and spreadsheets were worth 5 points each for a total of 10 points.

Keyboarding skills were important too. They would test for accuracy, but they were looking for basic speed. The candidate could get up to 10 points, depending on skill.

The company had also applied for funding for a target group that included minorities, women and those with disabilities, but this was only given 5 points. They would hire a good candidate whether they met this criterion or not.

Using the Screening Guide

When you use a screening guide, you can decide on a pass mark and then go through the resumes (or have someone else go through them) to short list candidates. In the example above, you may decide that only applicants with a score of 75 or higher will be shortlisted.

Probably the most important feature of a resume guide is that it is defensible. It must be a test that everybody had to pass.

When people call to see whether they were considered, or ask why they didn't get an interview, you have a defensible answer for them: they didn't pass the test. Most people understand tests, pass mark, and failing. You need to say no more.

Developing A Guide

Knockout Factors

Area	Yes	No
	Rate	Send letter of rejection
	Rate	Send letter of rejection
	Rate	Send letter of rejection

Rating Guide

Area	Breakdown	Possible Points	Points Awarded

TOTAL			

Performance Assessments

One of the greatest challenges during the selection process is administering the process in a timely manner so that you don't lose top performers to the competition, or to jobs in other organizations. It is also important to make efficient use of your time so that time away from regular duties during the selection process is kept to a minimum.

These challenges can be overcome through the use of performance-based assessments. Assessments completely evaluate an applicant's skills/abilities and personal suitability for the job, using a series of written performance-based exercises and questions. In a sense, it's like a written interview but much more.

Technical Exercises

Performance-based assessments include written exercises that help to evaluate short-listed applicants before they proceed to the interview. Develop them by collecting a sample of the key duties and challenges unique to the actual job vacancy.

The range of activities an incumbent would typically perform on the job over six to twelve months is translated into a set of paper based or computer based questions and exercises that take the applicants approximately one to three hours to complete.

Advantages

More than one applicant can perform an assessment at the same time.

They can be completed and submitted electronically, either on-site or around the globe.

Some of the exercises and questions compiled during development of assessments will be better suited to and subsequently used as performance-based interview questions.

Performance-Based Exercises

In addition to technical exercises, applicants must also solve a set of work-related problems that demonstrate their ability to perform well within the confines of a certain department or company culture. Performance-based exercises and questions are easy to develop, as they are derived from the job. Furthermore, they can be developed to simulate any type of corporate culture, work environment, or job problems. Even teamwork, management skills, and interpersonal interactions with co-workers or customers can be assessed.

You can identify possible performance-based exercises by:

- Reviewing the detailed, job-specific, or technically essential qualifications for examples of work, including duties, activities, documents produced, services provided, and assignments. You want situations where the employee is involved in gathering or processing information, products, and/or services; making decisions; or taking actions.
- Describing the type of information needed, including typical instructions or requests, real background information employees need to complete assignments, or summarized files to review for action.
- Gathering background information for each performance-based exercise, including files, instructions, and requests. This information should be summarized in a narrative or

point-form format. It should typically only be one to two pages in length, plus actual documents or printouts from the job (if they are also only a few pages in length).

To create performance-based exercises, include background information and include two to four of the following statements for each:

- Describe what actions you would take.
- Describe any risks associated with your actions or steps and alternatives you would suggest to minimize risks.
- List the key elements you would include and provide reasons why.
- List the information you would collect and how or where you would collect it.
- Describe the steps you would take including time frames.
- Outline the process you would recommend.
- List the issues or items that should be considered.
- List who you would involve, what their roles would be and indicate why.
- Describe how you would prevent this type of situation from occurring in the future.
- Outline three to five options you would consider and provide reasons why.
- Indicate three to five significant changes that occurred over the past year.
- Indicate three to five significant changes or challenges you are expecting the next three years and outline your strategies.

Compiling the Assessment

Once the exercises are complete, title them, and add a suggested completion time.

(Completion time can range from 10 to 45 minutes for each exercise, depending on the number of questions asked and amount of work required.) Make sure you have also included expected answers and a method for scoring.

The Interviewing Process

There are a variety of types of interviews that employers may conduct, including behavioural interviews, group interviews, phone and video interviews, second interviews, and even interviews held during a meal. Candidates are usually interviewed using best practice techniques appropriate to the defined post. Interviewing a pilot for example, will be different from interviewing an office administrator. Different types of interview techniques will be discussed below.

Types of interview may include:

- Screening: In Person or via Telephone
- Directed Traditional (One-on-One)
- Panel or Committee
- Behavioural
- Lunch or Breakfast
- Group (of applicants)
- Audition (Working Interview) dental offices use this one; movie reviewers
- Stress

- Serial or Follow-up
- Informational

1. Screening: In Person or via Telephone

Job applicant screening is done by written application/resume, online application (read by humans and computers) or some sort of employment testing, followed by a telephone call. Screening is used to screen out and reject applicants that do not meet the qualifications of the job. Computer software can weed out the resumes of those least likely to succeed, very quickly. Human screeners will spend just 20-30 seconds scanning your resume and if keywords matching the advertised job description do not appear, they will discard it on the first cut. Screeners will also scan for gaps in work history and apparent inconsistencies. They can also determine whether your salary requirement is over the company's budget.

In-person screening is usually done nowadays when there is a Job Fair or an Employment Open House in which a company is taking applications on the spot.

They will have interviewers that will speak very briefly with all applicants and invite the ones who are qualified to the company office for a full interview.

2. Directed Traditional (One-on-One)

The interviewers have a definite plan for the interaction and you must follow it. They likely ask the same questions of every applicant so candidates must follow their lead listen carefully and answer questions fully. At the end of the interview, candidates may supply information they think is important but that the interviewers did not ask for. Candidates may ask their own questions about the company, and when the selection process will be completed.

3. Behavioural Interviews

Here, interviewers use a set of questions related to specific job skills. You will be asked about problem-solving skills, leadership, conflicts or initiative.

4. Panel or Committee Interviews

These interviews are good for companies that require teamwork. Candidates may be interviewed by the head of HR, the department head where you will work, your future co-workers, or other important people. Candidates must treat them all with the same respect and sense of importance.

5. Lunch or Breakfast Interviews

Candidates must not let food lull them into a false sense of security. This is still a business interview. Candidates must therefore use good table manners as well as all your other etiquette. The presence of food sometimes makes an applicant relax and reveal all their negative points, so one has to be careful.

6. Group Interviews

These interviews set one job applicant against two or more others in a group. It will show your style, professionalism, and leadership skills. Candidates will be actively competing against other job applicants. There may have multiple interviewers as well. This type of interview is usually used in Call Centre jobs.

7. Auditions

Dancers, singers, graphic artists, sales people, computer programmers, and others must often audition by showing their skills firsthand, or by presenting their portfolios of work to a potential employer. Dental assistants and technicians also often work one full day at standard pay to see how they perform and how they get along with the rest of the office staff. If a presentation is required, they are usually 10 -15 minutes long and involve charts and graphs, likely in PowerPoint.

8. Stress Interviews

Fraternity-style hazing seems to be occurring in some job interviews, so candidates must be on the lookout for this and enter every job interview fully rested, alert and calm. If you encounter a seemingly rude or abusive type of interview, think a lot about it before accepting a job with this company. Was the interview a real snapshot of what it is like to work for that company, or did the interviewer somehow seem to take a perverse pleasure in treating you poorly? If you are an officially protected minority class, this may be illegal, so check with legal counsel if you encounter such a situation.

In a stress interview, perhaps you'll wait an hour for the interviewer to ever show up. They may sit silently staring at you during the interview and act disgusted with you for no reason you can determine. They will challenge you strongly and try to insult you. Your reaction to all this shows how you will stand up to the management and staff, clients, vendors, and others associated with this organisation.

9. Serial or Follow-up Interviews

You may be called back for a second, third, or fourth interview. In a company that had 1,000s of job applicants, the resume scanning and interviewing process goes through many weeding "cuts", so one has to be patient and be ready for a series of interviews. If you meet the same interviewer again, use this time to restate your qualifications, then to build rapport and more firmly establish that you will be an asset to the company and also fit their operational culture. You may meet with the interviewer's supervisor, a department head, or even the vice president or president of the company.

10. The Final Selection Interview

There is usually one final decision maker in the hiring process and after your first, second, or third interview with the company, you will meet this decision maker. With each additional interview, you have survived the list of applicants that have been examined and cut, so this is a good thing. Continue to have patience and continue the interviewing process to its natural end. All of the interviewers' opinions will be considered by the final decision maker. This person may even ask the janitor and the receptionist what they think of you. Be friendly, polite, and professional to everyone and give them all equal respect while selling your qualifications to each one.

Shortlist Results of Candidate Assessments

Having held the interviews and carried out any testing, the final stage is for the panel to evaluate the information gathered on each candidate and compare this to the requirements in the person specification defined at the start of the recruitment process. One method which you may find helpful is to rate each candidate against each of the criterion you are measuring, for instance:

1 = Weak, fails to meet the criterion

2= Marginal, meets some of the criterion

3= Meets the criterion

4= Strength, provided clear evidence of meeting the criterion

5= Outstanding, provided multiple evidence of meeting the criterion

It is important to make sure that every selection decision can be justified on objective grounds unrelated to:

- Disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- Race

This includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and prevailing legislation and that the decision is supported by the evidence gathered during the selection process.

The recruitment team will have to draw up a shortlist to reflect the results of the assessment of candidates. The shortlist must be justified in terms of the match between candidate profile and job requirements.

Making Selections

Selections must be made according to planned strategy and must be justified in terms of best match between candidate's profile and job and organisation requirements. The selection must also meet legislative requirements.

Selection strategies differ from company to company. Other companies consider the level of experience in their candidates before the selection process, others choose the best qualified individuals yet others consider both. It is important for organisations to stick to their recruitment and selection strategies. The selection of individuals must also be justified in terms of best match between candidate profile and job and organisation requirements and meeting legislative requirements.

Using the criterion explained above, it will not be justifiable if the recruitment and selection panel offer a job to someone with 3 scores when there is someone with 5 scores. Another example is when the recruitment panel select someone who does not have experience in HR to be the Head of the company's HR department.

Legislative Requirements

It is an employer's prerogative to choose whom to hire and in what capacity. Employers have good reason and the right to discriminate among workers or candidates on the basis of job-relevant knowledge, ability and skill. People possess different sets of attributes and the law

recognises organisation need to assess them in efforts to identify those most likely to perform well.

The South African Constitution however, prohibits employment discrimination based on several personal attributes that have no bearing on performance in most jobs. These include race, colour, sex orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disabilities.

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback to all interviewees sets you apart as an organisation to work for. It is some of the best free PR you can get.

Feedback to successful candidate

Below are some of the tips you can follow when giving feedback to successful candidates.

- Sometimes via the telephone or after the interview
- Explain why they got the job
- Confirm start date, salary and any other relevant information
- Confirm their acceptance
- Follow-up with written contract promptly

Feedback to un-successful candidate

An area of recruitment that some often find difficult to manage is giving practical and positive feedback to job applicants who have been unsuccessful. This can be a tricky task, especially if the candidate has not performed very well in the interview or the recruitment process. It is common practice for employers to send out a standard response letter to an unsuccessful applicant or interviewee, but this does not normally provide any specific detail. Some employers don't even make contact with unsuccessful candidates!

It's not surprising then, that requests for feedback are becoming more and more common. Candidates often find feedback useful and use the information in order to improve their skills and interview technique. When you are told the reasons for your failure, you can then use this information to improve for next time.

Giving Fair and Useful Feedback

- **Keep it constructive.** It helps if the feedback is given by one of the people who carried out the interview. This will help make the call personal and by giving the candidate the chance to speak to someone they have already met, allows room for constructive dialogue. This is much better than hearing the news from a stranger who wasn't involved in the recruitment process and doesn't know you.
- **Give examples.** Try and give specific examples of responses made by the candidate that you felt weren't strong enough and explain your decision.
- **Stick to the facts.** Keep the job specification in your mind and try and tie in any feedback to this.
- **Give results.** If the candidate has taken part in any tests or assessments during the interview, make sure you provide them with the results so they can see where they went wrong and what they did well.
- **Think about your approach.** If you are delivering feedback over the phone (probably the best form of communication), then think about your tone of voice and the words you use. Be prepared for the candidate to disagree with what you are saying, and should this happen stay calm and polite and stick to the facts. You want to make sure that the candidate is left with a clear understanding of why they have not been selected.

- **Don't sugar-coat the situation too much.** Even though you should stick to giving positive feedback, do not be afraid of telling the truth if you feel that the candidate did not have enough experience or the relevant skills necessary for the job.

Often in selection processes a good deal of emphasis is placed on getting the process done right in order to ensure compliance with the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Standard. Meeting the Standard is an admirable pursuit; however there is another part of the process, which often gets overlooked, and that is the provision of feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Who provides feedback?

The panel chair, a panel member or nominated person, usually provides feedback.

Why is feedback important?

Feedback is important to ensure that applicants, especially those not selected, understand the process used by the panel to assess their application. Feedback also assists the unsuccessful applicant to understand the panel's assessment of their strengths and weaknesses against the job related requirements, and may further assist them to identify areas for further development or areas to improve on for future applications. Poor feedback may lead a person to question the panel's abilities to have made an assessment in accordance with the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Standard.

So what is meant by feedback?

In a few words feedback refers to the process whereby a panel member or nominated person provides information to an applicant about the process used to assess their skills, knowledge and abilities and how the panel made the decision about suitability for a position.

Giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates

Example Letter to Unsuccessful Applicants

Dear Susan

Senior Analyst Programmer Position

Thank you for considering us as a potential employer in your recent application for the above position. We do appreciate the time and effort you spent in applying for the position.

We had many applications and unfortunately you have not been successful on this occasion. We would encourage you to apply for any suitable roles we may advertise in the future.

We wish you well in your future job search activities.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Green

Director

ABCD Solutions

Document Records

The interviewer must document the records of the successful candidate. These may include the candidate's CV, application letter, medical results, police clearance details, the applicant's personal details (including ID or passport and work permit in case of a foreign applicant), education certificates and any other required information.

The interviewer usually discusses the salary with the candidate and this must also be recorded. The Recruitment officer will then take the records to his/her manager who will authorise and forward these to the designated personnel. The manager will also send the candidate's contract/ details to the Finance department so they can have the candidate's information for payment.

Below is an example of an offer letter

This can be done in a brief letter form and should include:

- **The new employee's name**
- **The nature of the job**
- **The remuneration as a total package**
- **Other benefits, such as a bonus and non-packaged items (for example, company car)**
- **Annual leave, sick leave, maternity/paternity leave**
- **The terms and conditions of resignation/termination, including notice period**

Other things may be included depending on the position, such as confidentiality agreements covering sensitive information (for example, their intellectual property and that of their customers)

Example Letter of Offer

Dear _____

Offer of employment as **(insert position title)**

We are delighted to offer you employment in the above position.

The terms and conditions, as we briefly discussed, are set out in the attached contract of employment. If you have any queries about these please do not hesitate to contact ... If you have specific queries you may wish to seek your own legal advice.

Please review this offer of employment, sign the note of acceptance at and return to myself. An additional copy of the contract is enclosed for your retention.

We look forward to welcoming you on date.

Yours sincerely

Name

Position

Chapter 4

Interviewing Techniques

Interviewing Barriers

There are a few other factors we should be aware of as well—human factors that we all can fall victim to, but which we can usually control if we are aware of them.

Leniency or Stringency

This is a tendency to rate candidates too harshly (so that none of them meet your exacting criteria) or being too easy on them (so that all of them pass with flying colors).

Halo/Horn Effect

This tendency has been researched extensively. Attractive candidates are viewed more favorably than unattractive candidates. Tall candidates are seen as more competent than short candidates. (Have you ever noticed how many presidents are tall, over 6 feet?) Candidates who have family or friends we approve of may rate higher than those who have family or friends we don't approve of.

Error of Central Tendency

This is our tendency to give average marks to most candidates. Have you ever watched figure skating competitions? You have seen many of the judges cluster their marks toward the centre or average. Nobody wants to go out on a limb. (Of course, you have also seen all the other tendencies as well from these judges.)

Stereotyping

A male who applies for what is predominantly considered a female position has to be one whiz bang to stand a chance! Similarly, a female would have to be twice as good as most males to get a job in a male-oriented position.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-Verbal Communication	Interpretation
Facial Expressions	
Frown	Displeasure, unhappiness
Smile	Friendliness, happiness
Raised eyebrows	Disbelief, amazement
Narrowed eyes	Anger
Blushing	Embarrassment
Eye Contact	
Glancing	Lack of interest
Steady	Active listening, interest, seduction
Hand Arm Gestures	
Pointing finger	Authority, displeasure, lecturing
Folded arms	Not open to change, preparing to speak
Arms at side	Open to suggestions, relaxed
Hands uplifted outward	Disbelief, puzzlement, uncertainty
Body Postures	
Fidgeting, doodling	Boredom

Hands on hips	Anger, defensiveness
Shrugging shoulders	Indifference
Squared stance or shoulders	Problem-solving, concern, listening
Biting lip, shifting, jingling money	Nervousness
Sitting on edge of chair	Listening, great concern
Slouching in chair	Boredom, lack of interest
Clothing	
Business dress	Authoritative, conservative
Sloppy attire	Disrespect, lack of responsibility
Casual clothes	Relaxation

Types of Questions

Open Questions vs. Closed Questions

There are two kinds of questions: open and closed.

Closed questions are those that can be answered by either yes or no or with a specific bit of data, such as your name, date of birth, or occupation. These questions restrict our responses and give us little opportunity to develop our thoughts. As a result, they require little effort and can even close down a conversation.

This type of question tends to get overused, partially because they require very little effort on the questioner's part as well. They are easy to phrase and we get quick answers.

Unfortunately such questions also can lead us to assume and assumptions can be big barriers to good communication.

Open questions, on the other hand, encourage people to talk. These questions are phrased so they cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Open questions often begin with a variation of the five W's (who, what, when, where, why), or can ask "how."

Questions are used to:

- Get information
- Focus conversations
- Solicit opinions
- Gain consensus

Closed questions begin the closing process. The unintentional use of a closed question can often be overcome by the simple expedient of following it with a simple open question. For example:

"Do you feel that was the right thing to do?"

"Yes, I do."

"Can you help me understand why you feel that way?"

There are several different types of open-ended questions. The most useful are probing questions that search for more information, and investigate in more detail.

Probing

Your role in gathering information from others to draw out information from the individual that is critical to your understanding. Most of us are better at presenting our own point of view than we are at drawing out information from others.

A good name for this skill of gathering information from others is probing.

When you probe, you:

- Get others involved and participating. Since probes are designed to produce a response, it's unlikely the other person will remain passive.
- Get important information on the table. People may not volunteer information, or the information they present may not be clear. Your probes help people open up and present or clarify their information.
- Force yourself to listen. Since probes are most effective in a sequence, you have to listen to a person's response.
- Help improve communication on both sides of the table.

There are five ways to probe other people. One of the most common ways of probing is to ask an open question, such as:

- "Can you describe that more clearly?"
- "Would you give me a specific example of what you mean?"
- "What do you think we should do?"

The difficulty here is that if you ask too many of these the other person begins to feel like they are under interrogation.

A second, very effective way of probing is a pause. Stop talking. Let the other person speak; let them fill the silence.

A third way is to ask a reflective or mirroring question. For example, the person has just said, "What I really want is more variety in my work," and you may respond by just reflecting back to them, "Variety?" The reflective question usually provides you with an expanded answer without you appearing to ask more questions. Of course, it is best used in conjunction with a pause.

Reflective questions or statements focus on clarifying and summarizing without interrupting the

flow of the conversation. They indicate your intent to understand the sender's thoughts and feelings.

A fourth method that is particularly useful to make certain you are clear about what the individual has said is paraphrasing what has just been said, in your own words. For example, "So if I understand you correctly, you..."

You can use this response to show that you want to increase the accuracy of your understanding of what has just been said. You may also want to use it to ensure the sender hears what he has just said. Finally, paraphrasing reassures the sender that you are trying to understand what he/she is saying.

The last method, most often used as a conversation is winding down, is the summary question. For example, "You have tried ignoring the scent of your colleague's cologne, you have talked with him about how it affects your allergies, and you have tried shutting your door to keep the scent from your workspace. None of these has worked and now you are asking me to intervene. Have I got it right?"

Traditional vs. Behavioural Interviews

In traditional interviews, we ask questions like:

- Where do you want to be in 5 years?
- What kind of supervisor do you like?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

However, since 1986 there has been a real move toward behavioral interviewing techniques or behavioral descriptive techniques, based on our belief that the best indication of future behavior is past behavior.

Behavioral interviewing is based on this model:



A behavioral interview is a structured interview that is created after a thorough analysis of the job skills needed for a successful job performance. The competencies are then selected that define the knowledge, skills, and abilities which must be assessed during the interview process. This paves the way to develop interview questions designed to identify the presence of these competencies. The goal of the interview process is to predict future job performance based on examples of previous specific behaviors, which illustrate the desired competencies through tactful probing. The interviewers are looking for behaviors in situations similar to those that will be encountered in the new job.

By relating a candidate's answers to specific past experiences, you'll develop much more reliable indicators of how the individual will most likely act in the future.

Behavioral questions ensure spontaneity since candidates can't prepare for them in advance. This means you're assured of more accurate answers in the selection process, and you're provided with specific ammunition to use later down the line in the reference-checking process.

Purpose of Behavioral Interviewing

The behavioral interviewing tools will ensure that the selection process is:

- Objective
- Consistent and transparent
- Based on the competencies and proficiency level of the job
- A good predictor of performance

Past behavior in specific situations will more accurately indicate a candidate's personal preferences, attitudes, and behaviors. A person can have the skills and knowledge to do the job, but they may not have the inclination to do it.

The behavior-based interview incorporates structured questions on the candidate's past behavior in situations similar to those that will be encountered in the new position. It goes beyond determining whether a person can do the job. It better determines if a person will do a good job: how it will be done and to what extent.

The behavior-based approach to interviewing has an accuracy rating of around 70 percent. The results will be a better match between the employee and the job, lower turnover and greater job performance and satisfaction for the employee.

The Behavioral Based Interview (BBI) or Behavioral Description Interview (BDI) process also indirectly communicates some of the job expectations and minimizes first day surprises. This process provides a safe approach to conducting legal interviews because it is based strictly on performance. Candidates also feel the process is fair and equitable.

Other Types of Questions

In the long run, you are looking for people who can do the job (technical skills or competencies) will do the job (performance skills or competencies) and the fit.

Two other types of questions will help you here: achievement oriented questions that ask your candidates to quantify what they have done in the past, and holistic questions that reach beyond performance to values.

Achievement-Oriented Questions

Achievement-oriented questions need to be linked to the individual's track record of increasing revenue (for line positions like sales), decreasing expenses (for staff jobs like HR and accounting), and assuming responsibilities beyond the written job descriptions (a valuable attribute in a business environment that demands flexibility).

Some examples:

- How did you increase sale in your department?
- How did you meet your productivity goals?
- I understand your department had very high technology expenses. How did you reduce those?

Holistic Questions

To complement behavioral and achievement-oriented questions, holistic questioning focuses on gauging candidates' understanding of how they fit into an overall corporate plan. Holistic questions attempt to measure the whole person: the individual's work patterns, goals, and ability to see the big picture.

They often are very broad, open-ended queries that interviewees find difficult to master on the spot. For that reason, they ensure spontaneity in response and successfully measure people's broad perceptions of their self-worth, self-esteem, and abilities to contribute to the firm.

Here are the five most effective holistic questions and a brief interpretation of their applications.

What are the broad responsibilities of a (job title)?

In other words, "Tell me how your function contributes to the big picture and relates to the overall goals of your department or company." If candidates properly present themselves on a problem-to-solution level, then their responses will go beyond a mere rehash of generic duties. Ask candidates to validate their answers by citing examples of specific tasks and responsibilities.

What aspects of your job do you consider most crucial?

The key points in a candidate's response to this question should lie in that person's ability to impact profitability, enhance the boss's efficiency, make critical decisions in necessary time frames, or provide leadership as a role-model employee.

In hindsight, how could you have improved your performance?

This query functions as an excellent self-evaluation tool and provides insights into weak areas that should be further explored through the use of a reference check.

How many hours a week do you need to work to get your job done?

The response provides critical information regarding the individual's work ethic, outside time commitments and willingness to put career needs over personal needs.

What areas of your skills do you want to improve upon in the next year?

This serves as an excellent strategy to uncover any exaggerations or misrepresentations on the resume. It also provides insight into the individual's ability to balance short-term tactical goals with long-term objectives.

The Critical Incident Technique

Sometimes when we are thinking of fit, the best way we can give someone a glimpse of our company is through a critical incident (also called a situational interview question).

This is a bit more complex than the traditional "What if" questions we have all asked candidates at one time or another.

Critical incidents are stories of real events that describe effective or ineffective job behavior. They are valuable for several reasons.

First of all, they are data, not opinions. The data provided in a carefully gathered critical incident depends only on the memory and the observation skills of the person describing the incident.

Second, they can be gathered from a number of sources (including supervisors, team colleagues, and customers) to provide a different perspective of the position or of effective performance.

Third, critical incidents lead directly to behavior description questions for applicants with related job experience.

For applicants without job related experience, these critical incidents provide the material to create other situations similar to those describe in a job-related incident, but they are more likely to draw on general situations candidates have experienced.

Situational or critical incident interview questions can also help communicate job expectations. They also rely on goal-setting theory. (In simple terms, goal-setting theory suggests that a person's future behaviors are strongly influenced by his or her behavioral intentions or goals.)

Using this assumption, the purpose of the situational interview questions is to identify job candidates' work-related behavioral intentions by presenting them with a series of incidents which might occur on the job, and for each one asking, "What would you do in this situation?"

Clearly a critical feature of situational interview question is their focus on tapping meaningful samples of behavior. In other words, situational questions will be valid to the extent that they parallel events which actually occur on the job. The closer they reflect real life situations, the more likely these questions will predict future job performance.

Good critical incidents describe the situation as exactly and objectively as possible. They are not evaluative. They should not reveal the names of the people involved.

Here is an example of an effective critical incident or situation interview question, for selecting a bookkeeper in a busy residential care facility.

"You are trying to do a cost analysis from all the various sections of the facility, but people are very busy and don't see the importance of this information, so they aren't cooperating. What would you do?"

Listening for Answers

The ability to really listen is an important skill for any interviewer to have. Listening allows you to understand where the other person is coming from, and shows you're interested in what he/she has to say.

Unfortunately, we all experience common listening problems.

- We let our attention wander.
- We miss the real point of what is being said.
- We let our emotions interfere with our judgment.
- We interrupt and “step on” the statements of the candidates being interviewed.
- We think ahead to what we want to say next and miss what’s being said right now.

To improve your listening skills, use the three steps of active listening.

- Non-Verbal Messages. Eye contact, an alert expression, head nodding, and a forward lean to the body expresses listening.
- Cues or Invitations. These are the phrases like uh-huh, OK, yes, or go on that signal our attention and invite an individual to continue talking.
- Clarification of what has been said. We can do this in one of several ways: by asking questions, summarizing what has been said, or paraphrasing the message in your own words.

Difficult Applicants

Sample BDI Questions

These are questions that can be used to gather information about a candidate’s leadership skills. Both behavioral and situational questions have been included. To assist the interviewer in obtaining sufficiently detailed responses, a set of probes is provided for each behavior description question, along with some pointers to help you gather sufficient information from a situational question.

Introduce questions by saying: “Now we would like to ask you some questions concerning your background experiences. We would like you to provide as much detail as possible, so please feel free to take the time to reflect upon your answer.”

- 1) Describe a time when you coordinated a group in order to complete a task or project.
 - i) What was the task or project?
 - ii) What people were involved?
 - iii) How did you get the group members to work together?
 - iv) What was the result of your involvement?

- 2) Sometimes when working with others on a project, the group experiences the frustration of stalling or not making much progress towards completing the task. Can you describe a time when you decided to take a more active role in a group project because you thought the group was not progressing quickly enough to meet the goal?
 - i) What was the task to be accomplished?
 - ii) Why was the group stalled or not making much progress?
 - iii) What did you do to help the group become more focused/
 - iv) What was the result of your more active involvement?

- 3) Give an example of a time when a group that you were working in was frustrated with a task or project, but you found a way to make the experience positive and still get the job done.
 - i) What was the task or project?
 - ii) Why was the group frustrated?
 - iii) What did you do to help the group?

- iv) What was the outcome of the group's effort?
 - v) How were you able to turn the experience into a positive one?
- 4) Describe a time when your contribution helped a group meet its goal.
- i) What was the goal of the group?
 - ii) Where was the group heading?
 - iii) What was your contribution to the group and how did it help?
 - iv) Was the group able to meet its goal?
- 5) Give an example of a time when you gained the commitment of other people to accomplish a particular assignment or project.
- i) What was the task or goal?
 - ii) Who was involved?
 - iii) Where was the group heading?
 - iv) Specifically, what did you do to motivate the group?
 - v) What was the outcome of the group's effort?
- 6) When working in a group, it's not surprising when people have major differences of opinion. Can you recall a time when you worked with a group of people who had major differences of opinion and you decided to intervene as a means to steer the group closer to a consensus?
- i) Describe the situation you were involved in.
 - ii) What were the differences of opinion?
 - iii) How did you handle the clashes that did occur?

- iv) What were the reactions of the other group members to your intervention?
 - v) What consensus was reached, if any?
- 7) Tell us about a time when you changed your approach while working with a group in order to help the group accomplish its task better.
- i) What was the task?
 - ii) How was the group going about the task?
 - iii) Why did you change your approach with the group?
 - iv) How did your new approach help the group accomplish the task?
 - v) How did the other group members respond to your new approach?
- 8) Tell us about a time when you volunteered to help a group that was having difficulty getting organized.
- i) Why did you volunteer your time?
 - ii) What did you do?
 - iii) Did the group benefit from your efforts?
 - iv) What did you learn from the experience of helping others?
- 9) There are times when we introduce new tasks to our co-workers or fellow students. Can you describe a time when you gave or introduced a completely new task to a group and tell us how you helped the group meet the goals of the task?
- i) What was the task?
 - ii) How did you prepare the group to tackle this task?
 - iii) How did you present the task to your group?

- iv) What did you do to facilitate the team to complete the task?
- v) Was your team able to accomplish the task successfully?

10) Relate an instance in which you arranged for someone to take over the leadership of something.

- i) What was the mandate of the group?
- ii) What was your role within the group?
- iii) Whom did you appoint to take over from you?
- iv) How did you prepare this person?
- v) How did the group function after your withdrawal?

11) Do you recall a teamwork situation in which one of the team members was not doing his/her share of the work and you decided to intervene? Describe what you did.

- i) What was the mandate of the team?
- ii) How had the work been distributed among the team members?
- iii) How did this person's sub-par performance affect the team's progress?
- iv) How did you intervene?
- v) What were the results of your intervention?

Difficult Applicants

Silent Sam

You opened with a handshake and a smile and learned that the applicant didn't have much trouble finding the place. You've asked him/her to outline the duties and responsibilities at the present job and now you want to ask about a particularly challenging assignment.

“What was the assignment?” you ask, and there is no response. What do you do now?

Our first reaction is often to rush in with a follow-up probe, or even to move on to the next question. Don't rush the applicant. Your first technique for handling Silent Sam is a calculated pause. A pause is very powerful. Wait 10 to 15 seconds to give the applicant a chance to process your question and choose a response. Not all of us have answers on the tip of the tongue.

If you wait too long (15 to 30 seconds), it may be such a long pause that it becomes embarrassing for both of you, but at least give the calculated pause a chance before going on to other techniques.

If the applicant begins looking uncomfortable, use the “You're OK” statement, to legitimize the applicant's silence and remove some of the pressure that may be blocking the applicant's memory. Your verbal and non-verbal messages should be in tune here. Smile and use an interested tone of voice when you deliver the “You're OK” statement. Any indication of impatience will defeat the whole purpose of the statement.

What does a “You're OK” statement look like?

“I know it can be a bit difficult to come up with a specific example of a challenging assignment (or whatever type of example you've asked for). Most applicants need a minute or two to get their thoughts together. However, we find your answers most helpful.”

If you still aren't getting results, try a question restatement. Restate the question using slightly different wording or emphasis. Try to avoid just repeating the question. An example might be, “What we are really getting at is a time when you were put to the test to complete an assignment. Can you recall a time like that?”

Betty Bluff

The interviewer says, “Sometimes we are all stumped by a customer question. Can you tell us about the last time you were stumped and what you did at that time?”

Betty Bluff responds, “Hmm. I just can’t think of a time when I was completely stumped. No, I always have something to say.”

Whereas Silent Sam says nothing when asked a behavior description question, Betty Bluff acts as if such situations happen to everyone but her.

Sometimes an applicant truly doesn’t have the experience. If, as you probe, you decide they aren’t bluffing, you can let them off the hook. However, if you feel they just aren’t prepared to reveal any times when they feel they didn’t perform well, try a question restatement.

In this case, the applicant has focused on being stumped and having nothing to say, but the intent of the question was to see how the applicant looks for advice when it is necessary. You may restate the question by saying, “I realize you always have some kind of reply, but I was interested in situations when you had to get back to a customer after you found out some additional information. None of us always has all the answers.”

Betty Bluff then may respond, “Oh yes, there have been times when I needed the support of more experienced people.”

Often interviewers find that summarizing and explaining intent before digging in to get the information they want produces the information they are seeking. The applicant feels listened to, and more willing to come up with the desired information.

At other times, you may want to use the “You’re OK” statement followed by the sympathetic persistence technique, such as, “I realize it’s a bit tough to come up with examples, but could you think of a recent time when you used that skill?”

You must politely persist on obtaining behavior description answers to the first few BDI questions you ask. If you let the applicant off the hook early on in an interview, you may never get true examples of past behavior and thus are not conducting a behavior description interview.

Neither Silent Sam nor Betty Bluff actually came up with answers to behavior description questions and as an interviewer, you want to be aware that the questions missed their mark.

Slippery Sue

Slippery Sue gives you an answer but it slips away from the question being asked. For example, you might ask, “Could you tell us about a time when you were really stumped?”

She may respond, “When you are really stumped, you look to your senior people for support, such as your boss or the more experienced installation mechanics. It’s always a good idea to let the customer know you are seeing to their problems, but you try to diagnose the problem before rushing to a solution.”

Here Slippery sue gave a response, but it described how the applicant typically handles being stumped, not a specific time when the applicant was stumped. This is an experience response to a behavior description question. You can tell because the answer is not in the past tense. The answer also contains the word always; a dead giveaway to an experience answer.

One technique for nipping Slippery Sue's experience responses in the bud is to assume responsibility. You take the rap for the applicant's mistake, so it goes down better when you point out you are not getting the information you need.

You can say, "I'm sorry. I guess I wasn't clear enough about the answer I wanted. You told me how you typically handle being stumped but what I really wanted to hear about was the last time this happened. Can you recall when that was?"

Here a combination of assumed responsibility and "You're OK" techniques brought out the specifics you were looking for.

Be careful about assuming responsibility. If you use it more than once or twice in an interview, it doesn't go down well with either interviewer or applicant. The basic format is to gently but firmly inform the applicant that you (the interviewer) are not getting the information you want and that you will persist until you do. Usually the applicant gets the message and gets on with the answers you seek.

By now you may feel like obtaining answers to behavior description questions is like pulling teeth—and sometimes it is. More often the applicants answer the questions directly, but you must be prepared to handle tough applicants when they appear.

Talkative Tom

There is another candidate that can present a problem for interviewers, and that is Talkative Tom. This is the applicant who, perhaps because of nervousness or a need to impress, talks so much the whole interview format is about to be derailed.

In interviews, it will sometimes be necessary for the interviewer to interrupt the applicant. He or she may be getting off track or stuck in reciting the details of a routine day, or perhaps just offering an opinion that has no bearing on the topic at hand.

You must briefly summarize what the applicant was saying before directing him/her back to current work experience. The order of events should be interrupt, summarize, and redirect.

Interview Preparation and Format

Interview Preparation

Employment interviews are very similar to appraisal interviews. Preparation is very important.

Here are some tips:

- Do your question guide (containing specific questions you will ask and expected answers) and your interview guide (containing the format of the interview).
- Everyone who is conducting the interview should be familiar with the guides.
- Give yourself enough time between appointments.
- Have a room conducive to an informal interview.
- Go to get the person.
- Shake hands.

The Interview Format

Here is a basic overview of the interview.

- Rapport
 - The warm and fuzzy, but be careful what you say
 - A little bit about the company
 - A little bit about the position
- Discussion
 - Technical
 - Performance
 - Fit

- Closing
- More about job and company
- What happens next?
- Permission to check references
- Conclude and shut up

Before the Interview

First, establish rapport to establish an atmosphere of comfort and trust so that applicants feel as comfortable talking about the negative aspects of their background as well as the positive.

The following are well-researched guidelines:

- Arrange to hold interview in a private room that is comfortable and has sufficient heat and light.
- A few simple courtesies such as shaking hands, asking him or her to be seated, or offering a tea or coffee, can go a long way.
- Avoid interruptions during the interview as this shows disrespect for the applicant.
- Place chairs in an optimal seating arrangement to ensure candidate feels comfortable.
- First names only, if possible! Generally, recruiters are advised to keep any mention of titles out of the introductions as it may cause a high degree of stress.

You should also set the agenda to ensure that the recruiter maintains total control throughout the interview process. It will relax applicants by letting them know how the interview will progress, when they can ask questions and how much time will be allotted for the interview.

In a friendly but firm manner outline the purpose and procedure for the interview: “The purpose of this interview is to evaluate your job qualifications for the vacant position. In the next half-hour (or whatever the time frame is), I will be asking you several questions about your skills, past experiences, and academic background. Then I will explain the specific position you are applying for in more detail and describe our organization to you. Later on in the interview I will give you an opportunity to ask questions which I may not have already covered. By the way, I’ll be jotting down notes as we go along.”

During the Interview

Gather information using behavioral and situational questions and their responses with probes as necessary.

The interview should be at least 30 to 45 minutes in length. Management and executive interviews can be two or three hours and may even involve more than one interview, especially with non-panel members, to probe their knowledge and philosophies.

The interview panel for positions below managerial level should have no less than two people and preferably three. All members of the group should be knowledgeable about the job description. The interview panel for managerial positions to executive should have no less than three people and no more than six.

Closing the Interview

There are several important steps in the closing process. The interviewer will want to summarize all that has been said so far, and then give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions.

This is also a good time to make certain the candidate is still interested, and tell them about the next steps in the process. You will also want to let the candidate know you will be checking references, and you may want to go one step further and have them sign a reference check form stating you have permission to call on former employers. As you conclude the interview, thank the candidate for coming, shake hands, and escort him/her to the door of the interview room or even to the door of the building.

DO NOT continue to ask interview questions after the interview has concluded.

Other Interview Techniques

Using Superlatives

When you ask Behavior Description Interview (BDI) questions, using superlative adjectives (those that indicate the greatest extent or degree of something) can be a key to soliciting effective answers from a candidate. These superlatives tend to stimulate specific events in the mind of the candidate, making it easier for them to respond, and also gives you the most or least of a particular quality you are looking for. This also implies that the interviewer expects that the candidate has indeed had one of these experiences.

Which of the following would get a better response from you? (Circle your answer.)

- Have you had any trouble with a co-worker? Give me an example.
- Tell me about the co-worker you get along with least.

Moving Through the Questions

Three general principles help the interviewer move through the interview questions effectively.

You want:

- Coverage
- Balance
- Tact

While you may not ask every question you have prepared, each job dimension should be probed to your satisfaction. If the first couple of questions for a competency tie it down, move on to the next topic. Spend more time on those competencies that are “must have” and less time on those that are less important.

Never move through the questions in such a way that you emphasize challenges, difficulties, disappointments, and failures. Accentuate the positive and always start with stories of successes or accomplishments. Then ease into questions on the other side of the coin.

Be persistent but know when to give in if you can't pull a response from a candidate. If the applicant is totally blank, assume any responsibility for confusion, and rephrase the question. However, if you still draw a blank, move on gracefully. You may wish to come back to it later in the interview if there is time. However, if this is a key question, no response would suggest a low assessment on interpersonal skills.

Good Note-Taking

We recommend preparing the desired answers to your questions as you develop the questions themselves, prior to the interviews taking place.

However, unless you are blessed with a perfect memory, take notes or record the interview. Don't try to record everything, just the pertinent responses, and please keep your notes limited to what the applicant said or did. Don't try to make judgments as you listen. There will be time for that after the interview is completed.

Interruptions

Sometimes getting the answers you want from behavior description interview questions will be like pulling teeth. You may have to interrupt the candidate to bring him/her back on track or to move the interview along. You will want to develop smooth and tactful interruptions that gently but firmly inform the applicant you aren't getting the information you are seeking. Three techniques can prove useful:

- A question restatement
- Sympathetic persistence
- Assumed responsibility

Calculated pauses and "You're OK" statements can also help move the interview along.

Signposts

As you work through the interview questions prepare the candidate for transitions and new topics. Here are some examples:

- "Thank you. I think we have a clear idea of your job responsibilities in your last position. Could we just take a few minutes now to zero in on your ability to work with other members of a team? Tell us about the most enjoyable team you have been a part of."

- “Sometimes teams can be frustrating to work with. Can you describe a time when you found it most frustrating to be a team member?”

Scoring Responses

Key features of performance-based rating scales:

- Performance-based rating scales are easy to use since they can be attached to any question.
- Performance-based rating scales allow responses to be evaluated on the degree of completeness and correctness.
- Performance-based rating scales can accommodate every possible applicant response from worst or completely unacceptable to the best. It is possible to rate applicant responses that are incomplete, complete responses that also include incorrect information, and even innovative responses that haven't been tried before.

Here is an example of a performance-based rating scale.

Performance – Based Rating Scale (0 to 4 points)	
	Completely unacceptable solution or response or all key points are missing
	Unacceptable solution or response which would result in problems that are difficult to solve or had a large impact or 25% of a complete response
	Acceptable solution or response which would result in easily correctable problems or 50% of a complete response.
	Acceptable solution or response which won't cause problems or 75% of a complete response
	Acceptable solution or response which is complete and won't cause any problems

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