

Interviewing Dos and Don'ts

Dos

- Prepare—learn as much as you can about the job; read any materials (such as candidate applications and resumes) you're given ahead of time
- Establish rapport with the candidates—be open and friendly and help them get through their initial nervousness
- Ask the same questions of each candidate. You want to find out the same sorts of things. Using a structured set of questions and consistent types of follow-up questions will ensure that you do.
- Watch for nonverbal cues or responses that might signal evasiveness
- Listen carefully to what they have to say—ask follow up questions but fight the urge to talk extensively about yourself
- Take notes—if there are more than a few candidates, the interviews can easily run together. You want to be sure your impressions are based on information you've gleaned on past
- Tell the candidates what will happen next and within what time frame. If it takes several days to conduct interviews or process results, they need to know
- Be sure that there is follow-up. Candidates deserve the courtesy of knowing where they are in the process. If they are ranked, eliminated, or selected to move to a next step, they need to know as soon as possible.

Don'ts

- Avoid stereotyping or jumping to conclusions. Base your impressions on what you hear and what the candidate can tell you about what he/she has done in past positions.
- Don't make snap judgments. More hiring mistakes are made in the first 30 minutes of an interview than at any other time—because if our initial impression is favorable, we'll begin selling the job, magnifying the positives we hear and minimizing any negatives that come up. Conversely, if our initial impression is negative, we dismiss the candidate before we've even heard much about his/her accomplishments in other jobs.
- Be wary of the halo/horn effect—being influenced by the last positive or negative thing we heard or, the last job activity. All information should be taken as a whole, with no one piece carrying a disproportionate weight.
- Avoid contrasting the candidate in front of you with ones you have seen previously. Take in information on each candidate and then make comparisons at the end of the interview day, after you've seen and heard them all
- Avoid telegraphing answers to candidates, verbally or through your own body language. Be friendly and open but don't coach or lead the interviewee.