accountests

Hiring Fast With Confidence

The Guide

Accounting and Finance Roles

2023

Contents

Introduction

Finding and hiring quality accounting and bookkeeping talent has never been more critical

Competition, economic uncertainty, and high costs mean that you've got to make sure you recruit the right people for business success. It is estimated that the cost of recovering from a bad hire is 143% of the annual salary of the job.

Hiring is therefore, a critical activity, not just for the hiring manager but also for line managers who are increasingly involved in the selection process. All those involved in recruitment activities should be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Keeping up to date with the latest recruitment practices can be difficult as it is constantly evolving, but your success as an organization is directly linked to your ability to hire the right people, fast. And yet, you don't pick talent. Talent picks you. It's a candidate's marketplace, where talent has more access to information, more channels to find opportunities, and the luxury of being in high demand even for low-skill roles.

Traditional recruiting tactics don't work anymore. This guide is designed to assist you in hiring the best talent possible. It reviews best practices in recruitment and selection which assists in reducing your time to hire and the cost to hire, while improving your efficiency to find the right person for the job. Please do use this guide in conjunction with the additional links and template resources, which provide the necessary forms and documentation required for running a successful hiring campaign.

Hiring Overview

The hiring process is the first step towards creating a competitive strength and strategic advantage for your organisation.

1

VACANCY ARISES

When a position vacancy arises, it provides an opportunity for you to review the needs and resources of the business and align staff skill sets to initiatives and goals. As part of the review process, an evaluation should take place to determine whether a replacement is needed or if duties and responsibilities can be allocated amongst the wider team.

2

ROLE ANALYSIS

If the decision is made to recruit, job analysis of the position will greatly assist in defining the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the role. This information can then be used to construct a job description and person specification by which candidates can be assessed for suitability.

3

SOURCE TALENT

Sourcing or attracting potential candidates can be done by various means such as external advertising, or internal promotion. The basis of selection will be done by comparing and contrasting applicants against competency based tools such as structured interviews, testing and assessments and reference checking.

4

HIRE

Once a selection decision is made, implementing an effective induction plan will ensure the successful integration of the new employee and help them to become productive faster.

Follow the key steps outlined in the recruitment flowchart to ensure you are running a fair, consistent and robust recruitment and selection process.

Recruitment Process Flowchart

This flowchart is intended to help hiring managers by providing a quick reference guide to the key activities involved in a best practice recruitment and selection process.

Defining the Job

The employees you hire can make or break your business. While you may be tempted to hire the first person who walks in the door--"just to get it over with"- doing so can be a fatal error. A small company cannot afford to carry unproductive employees.

> Start smart by taking time to figure out your staffing needs before you even begin looking for candidates

Newly Created Positions

When it is determined a new position is needed, it is important to:

- Understand and take into consideration strategic goals for the business and/or team. Are there any upcoming changes that may impact this role?
- Conduct a quick analysis of the team's competencies. Are there any gaps? What core skills are missing from the team? Evaluate the core skills required now and those which may be needed in the future.
- Conduct a Job Analysis if this position will be new to the business. This will also help to identify skill gaps.

Replacement

When attrition occurs, replacing the role is typically the logical step to take. Before advertising the position, consider the following:

- As with a newly created position, it may be helpful to conduct job analysis in order to tailor the position to what is currently required and to ensure future needs are met.
- Review the role and decide if there are any changes required as certain tasks and responsibilities performed by the previous person may not or should not be performed by the new person.

Carefully evaluate any changes needed for the following:

- Tasks carried out by the previous employee
- Tasks to be removed or added if any of the work will be transferred within the business
- Supervisory or lead responsibility
- Budget responsibility (if any)
- Work hours
- Is there still a requirement for this role at all?

Job Analysis

Once you have determined your staffing needs, the next step is to define the job in detail. Job analysis does just this – it is a process of gathering, examining and interpreting data about the job's tasks and responsibilities so that you have an in depth understanding of the skills, behaviours & knowledge – or competencies – required to perform in the position.

There are many ways to perform job analysis, but all require the cooperation of the employee in the position, his or her manager(s) and others the employee works closely with while performing his or her job duties.

The following steps will help provide the best analysis of a particular job:

1. Review existing job descriptions and person specifications (if available)

2. Interview employees, asking them specific questions about their job duties and responsibilities.

3. Obtain timesheets from employees with information about each of their tasks and the time spent on each task for at least one full work week.

4. Complete desk audits where you observe employees doing their jobs at different times of the day and days of the week and track what they do and for how long.

5. Interview supervisors and managers, and other employees, and clients the employee may interact with while performing the job.

6. Compare the job to other jobs in the team to show where it falls on the pay scale

If there is more than one person doing the same job, make sure to observe and obtain feedback and information from more than one person. You will want to review your findings with the employees who do the job as well as their supervisors and managers to tweak your findings until you have an accurate reflection of the job duties and responsibilities.

An important concept of job analysis is that the analysis is conducted of the Job, not the person. While job analysis data may be collected from incumbents through interviews or questionnaires, the product of the analysis is the Job description or specifications of the job, not a description of the person.

For a newly created position, it's useful to carefully think about what you want in the role – now and in the future.

1. First, try think of the knowledge, skills and/or abilities (competencies) that might be useful for someone to have in the job. Think about the results of your previous staffing planning
2. Consider if the role will require a CPA . Or someone with enough experience to perform the requirements of the role.
3. Consider interviewing someone - in or outside of your firm - who already has some of those competencies. Share your staffing plan. Ask them to suggest competencies.
4. Observe an employee or employees in similar jobs as they as the perform a task or conduct the role. What areas of knowledge do you see the employees using? What skills do you see the employees performing?
5. Consider administering a questionnaire to the employee or employees. On the questionnaire, ask them to describe certain practices and procedures to carry out the task or perform the role in the best way possible.
6. Ideally, get advice from clients about what knowledge and skills are useful in delivering the best quality services to them.
7. A generic list of competencies may already exist for a role. For example, professional accounting bodies sometimes provide generic lists.

You may find this Job Analysis Template useful in completing your assessment of the position.

Job Description, Competency Framework and Person Specification

The job description is basically an outline of how the job fits in to the company. It should point out in broad terms the job's purpose, scope, responsibilities and competencies.

Writing the job description and person specification will help you determine whether you need a part- or full-time employee, whether the person should be permanent or temporary, and whether you could use an independent contractor to fill the position.

Job descriptions and person specifications are used for a variety of reasons. They are a tool for recruiting and selecting, determining a competency framework, salary range, establishing job titles, creating employee's job goals and objectives, and conducting performance reviews. They can also be used for career planning, creating reasonable accommodations and meeting legal requirements for compliance purposes. Because of this, it is very important to have written job descriptions that accurately reflect the employees' current job duties and responsibilities.

Competency Framework

Job competencies are the integrated knowledge, skills and attributes that people need to perform a job effectively. By having a defined set of competencies for each role in your business, it shows employees the kind of behaviors the organisation values, and which it requires to help achieve its objectives.

Defining which competencies are necessary for each role will also help you to recruit and select new staff more effectively, identify skill gaps and evaluate performance.

To develop a competency framework, you need to have an in-depth understanding of the role being recruited for. Once you have defined the job responsibilities in the job description, you can begin to apply competencies to match. To do this, you can use our pre-set list of common, standard competencies or competencies that already exist within your organisation. If you use the set we provide, please note that you will need to select the appropriate level of competency depending on the seniority and rank of the position.

Person Specification

A person specification more fully describes the type of person who is most likely to be able to do the job well. It includes a profile of the skills, knowledge, qualifications and competencies you will look for during the recruitment and selection process.

It is essential that the person specification is as detailed as possible. This allows:

- a starting point for creating the job advert
- a set of selection criteria that everyone who applies for the job can be measured against fairly
- a structured and consistent way of assessing each person who has applied; and
- a document to allow them to make recruitment decisions clearly and openly

Prior Experience

You may want candidates to have prior experience, but it's worth asking if you really need a specific number of years of experience? Being too specific about the number of years of experience you want could rule out a very able candidate who has gained experience in a wide variety of tasks in six months in favor of someone who may have more years' experience but in a limited capacity.

Qualifications, Education and Training

Consider whether the role will require someone with the level of skill of a CPA. You need to determine whether a specific qualification is the only way that a candidate could demonstrate that they are able to do the job. Someone who is not CPA qualified may have firsthand experience and developed the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the role. If it is determined that you need a CPA, be mindful of the ongoing costs (CPE, membership fees) and the need to maintain standards and have ethical requirements in place.

Personal Qualities and Discrimination

Be objective and ask whether these personal qualities characteristics are directly relevant to the job. If not, they could possibly be discriminatory. Indirect discrimination is not illegal, provided it can be objectively justified. To avoid discrimination in this area, try to describe the tasks that are involved and allow the reader to judge for themselves.

Essential or Desirable

Also, remember to split your person specification into 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria. 'Essential' criteria are those attributes or qualifications which the candidate must have in order to do the job – and anyone who does not meet these can be ruled out. 'Desirable' criteria are not essential to carry out the job but a candidate who meets these criteria is likely to perform the job better and these can help you choose between good candidates who meet the specifications.

Writing the Job Advertisement/Job Posting

Writing a job ad or posting is just like writing any advertisement. If you take the analogy that the job is your product and the job seekers are your customers, you need to make a compelling case for why they should take time to apply for the vacancy.

An effective job ad is not just a description of the job and it is more complex than just sending out a message that your company is hiring. A good job ad will weed out unqualified applicants and make sure that the best candidates come to you for the job.

You need to express some creativity and ideally, tell a story about the culture of the company as well as the requirements of the position. Dull ads will not attract strong, vibrant candidates.

First things first, you need to know your target audience, address them in the language they understand and offer them what they want.

Here is a list of key questions to assist you in developing a captivating job ad:

- What is the employee value proposition? Ask the hiring manager:
    - “Why would a top, fully employed person want this job?”
    - “What are the 2-3 things this person must accomplish over the course of the first 6-12 months in order to be considered successful?”
- Where can these people be found?
- When should the recruitment campaign begin?
- How can the targeted individuals best be reached?
- What recruitment message should be communicated?
- What should a job offer entail?

Lou Adler, a reputable Influencer on Linkedin and founder of The Adler Group, believes that by writing job ads to attract people in rather than weed them out, you will have more luck finding top people. He lists a compelling example below of two short descriptions for the same job. Which one do you think a top person who is thinking of leaving his or her current job would consider more interesting?

Business Unit Controller

Must have a CPA from a Big 4 accounting firm. Must have 10+ years direct industry experience. Must be results-driven, possess solid internal reporting skills, have strong interpersonal skills and exceptional verbal and written communications skills.

Oscar Winning Controller

For a CPA, this is the stuff of dreams: getting out of the numbers and making a difference. Our accounting systems are in shambles. We need them rebuilt. Our creative types are running amuck, spending money wildly. Can you tame them? If you can create some order out of chaos, we need to talk. If you pull this off, the CEO will be thanking you when he gets his Oscar.

Here are 9 simple steps to writing a compelling job advertisement that will sharpen the focus and only draw the most qualified candidates.

For further insight into what the workforce is thinking, take a look at Linkedin's Global Recruitment Trends.

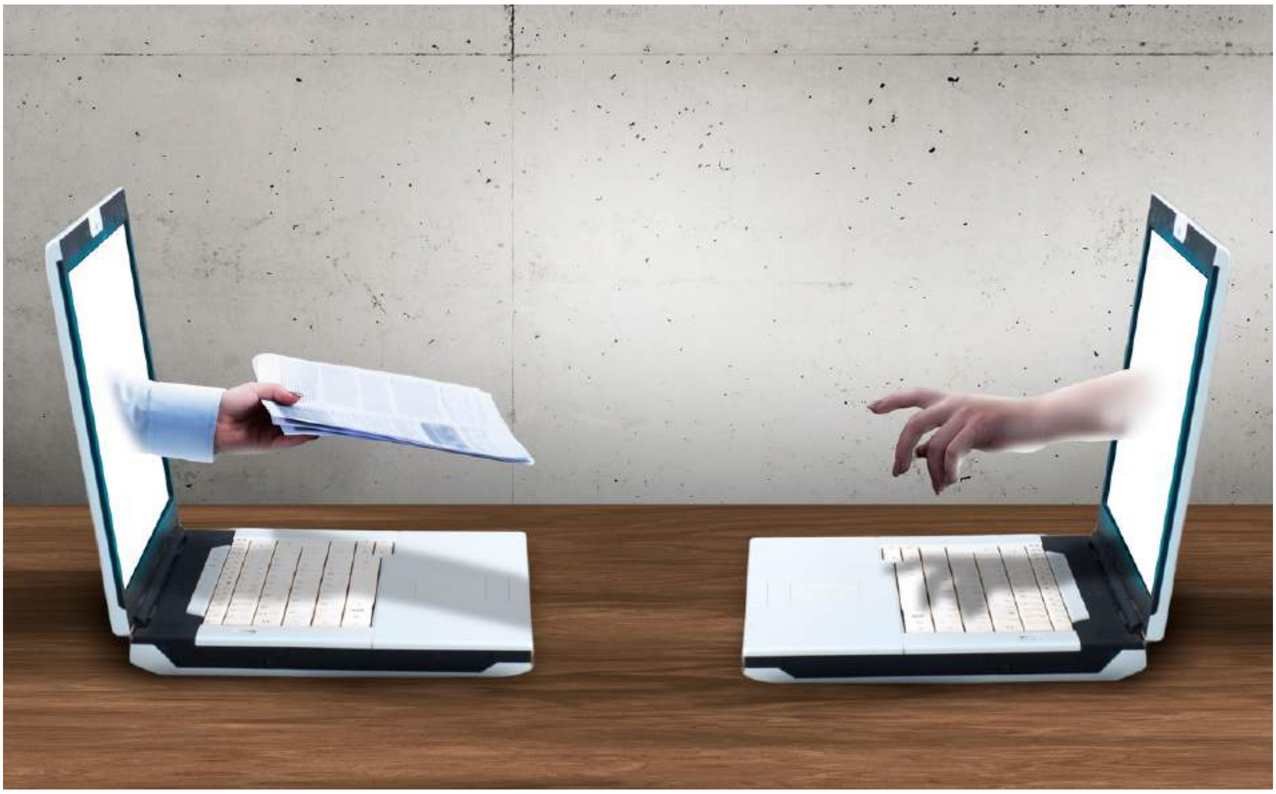
It is important to note that job advertisements must comply with the anti-discrimination laws. These restrict an employer from discriminating on the grounds of:

- sex
- disability
- marital status
- age
- religious belief
- ethnic or national origins
- race
- political opinion
- ethical belief
- employment status
- color
- family status
- sexual orientation
- gender identification

Selecting Advertising Media/Sourcing Candidates

After putting the ad together, it's time to start thinking about where to place it. Where you specifically place the ad will depend on who your ideal candidate is, so keep it in mind that you may need to use a variety of sources.

We suggest you focus your effort on the advertising mediums that will give you most bang for your buck. Newspaper classified ads used to be the traditional method for advertising a job, but with the global decline of newspapers and increased uptake in the internet and associated social networking sites, this method of advertising is no longer as effective as it once was. In 2016, Linkedin surveyed 3,894 talent acquisition decision makers who worked in corporate HR departments. When asked the question “Out of the quality hires your organization made in the past 12 months, which of the following were the most important sources?” The top three sources of quality hires are listed below and as such, we recommend you focus your hiring efforts to these areas:



Social Media and Professional Networks

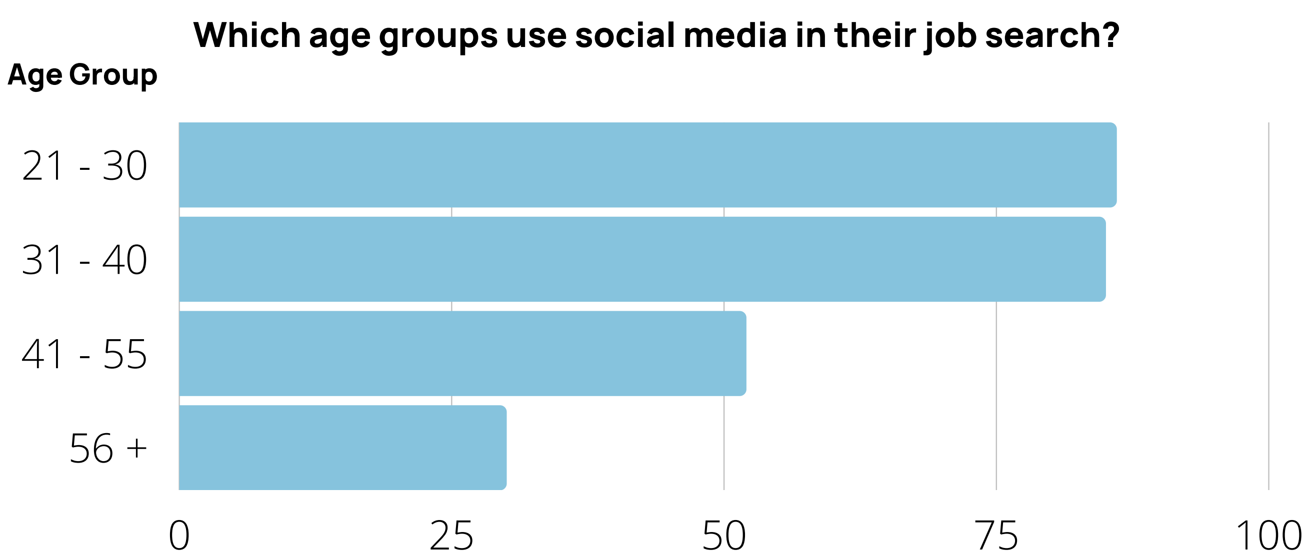
Social media has dramatically changed recruitment approaches to the ever-growing talent pool. Companies are now stepping away from traditional recruitment advertising venues and have found better value and exposure from promoting their jobs socially. This means getting both the company, and employees, to advertise open jobs through their social networks on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, etc. Some companies have a social media accounts dedicated solely to recruitment. Check out what KPMG UK is doing with their careers page on Twitter

The best social recruiters are using image based Twitter posts with hashtags to drive traffic to their Facebook Page or Website where they can then share full length job ads alongside recruitment videos, and even create a career site where candidates can apply. They share job ads to LinkedIn to capitalize on the high level of views they'll receive, but also share a shorter version of their ads to Twitter. They mix up their content, ask questions, and share more than just job ads. (Jobcast)

For more information on utilizing social media in your recruitment strategy, check out these tips from Paul Keijzer on Talent Culture's website.

Another useful e-book worth reading is Linkedin's Modern Recruiters Guide which covers how you can find, prioritize and engage the right talent at the right time.

Remember, social media recruiting is just as relevant to mid-size/smaller firms as it is to larger ones. Some demographics may still prefer to use internet job boards as an alternative to social media and professional networking sites, but the overall trend is moving towards social promotion methods. If you have concerns about the "reach" of your social marketing efforts, which may overlook a specific demographic, we recommend you use a range of strategies to close this gap.



Online Job Boards

The overall trend of job advertising is moving away from traditional Job boards, but they are still a big part of a successful recruiting strategy. When using this strategy, it is important to utilize job boards that reach a diverse audience have a high amount of web traffic. They allow you to target your audience, build a brand among the people you're trying to reach, and are cost efficient. However, there is one clear disadvantage to using job boards - the combination of quick and easy online applications and resulting increase in the number of applicants has led to a large amount of resumes flooding your inbox.

The key to successfully using job boards is to:

Be Specific

Writing specific posting requirements takes a little longer, but by helping job seekers understand your needs, you'll reduce the number of applications from unqualified candidates and ultimately save more time than you spend. If your Directors will only hire CPAs, state that requirement clearly.

Be Clear

Make sure the job requirements and job duties are easy to understand by someone who does not already work for your company. Some job descriptions include so much corporate jargon that it's difficult for job seekers to tell if they are qualified, leading many to simply press a button to submit a resume.

Be Compelling

see section on how to write the job advert/posting

Be Up Front

Dissuade potential job seekers from speculative applications by adding a statement explaining that your requirements are firm. For example: "Please read the qualifications for this position carefully. The successful applicant will have to get up to speed quickly and therefore, we will only consider those who meet all the criteria listed above." This won't stop everyone, but it will help deter people who are unsure whether you're serious about your stated requirements.

You can maximize the effectiveness of your job advert by using niche job boards: those catering either to your industry or your location. This gives you a much more specialized pool of candidates to choose from, who are more likely to have the skills and experience you seek.

Employee Referrals

According to Linkedin's report on Global Recruitment Trends, employee referrals has grasped the attention of talent leaders worldwide. It's likely because referred employees have a longer tenure and higher job performance. As a result, more leaders consider employee referrals to be an essential trend.

The first step to creating any great referral program, is having a clear vision of what it should accomplish. Your aim should be to bring in as many high quality referrals as possible. Referrals can come from your employees, business associates, client and friends. Chances are these people will refer their friends and family, so they know the referred person has the qualities and experience needed to be successful within the organization. They also know the performance of the person referred could reflect back on them, so some pre-screening is already done for you.

The less work an employee, business associate or client has to do to refer a candidate, the more successful the program will be. The best-case scenario is that the hiring manager is provided a name, a bit of background and some way to contact the referred candidate. It can be as simple as passing on a business card of a great accountant they ran into in their personal life!

If a successful placement is made, the person who made the referral will need to be recognized for their effort. The most common way companies reward a referral is through money via a referral bonus.

Once your program is set up, you need to consistently remind your employees, business associates and clients about open positions. Once the referrals start coming in, try to contact the referred person within a couple days – and always manage your communications with them, even if you need to reject them.

Internal Promotion

When you promote from within, you send a clear message to your entire company: you are invested in each employee's success and career growth. Internal recruitment is one of the most powerful ways to create a welcoming and caring company culture—a daunting task for any company. When employees see others given the opportunity to progress, it results in an overall happier and dedicated workforce.

As a rule, you should place internal ads in conjunction with your external ads. All internal candidates should be given a face to face interview with the hiring manager and if they are deemed to be unsuitable for the role, they need to receive constructive feedback to understand where their skill gaps lie and how they can increase their suitability for future vacancies.

Assessing Suitability, Shortlisting & Candidate Communications

Once you start receiving resumes, you need to start working on the shortlist. The purpose of shortlisting is to assess candidate's suitability and identify those who best meet the selection criteria and who are most likely to be capable of carrying out the duties of the job.

Selection for the shortlist needs to be done by reviewing resumes and covering letters in relation to the essential and desirable criteria as detailed in the person specification. Candidates should be assessed against the selection criteria and not against each other. New selection criteria should not be introduced at the shortlisting stage to ensure that the process used is consistent and fair and that the decisions made comply with legal requirements.

Each member of the shortlisting panel (ideally made up of 3 people with an in depth understanding of the role and required competencies) should assess the resumes and covering letters on his or her own to help prevent bias, following which they should meet to agree the final shortlist.

A shortlisting grid is the most effective and easiest way to produce a shortlist. A list of the names of candidates together with the essential and desirable criteria and a rating system next to each criteria allows for a clear way to distinguish the candidates you wish to short-list.

Review our shortlisting grid if you do not already have this tool available to you. You should aim to shortlist between 3-5 applicants to take forward for interview.

Managing Candidate Communications

It is critical to manage candidate communications well during this phase of the recruitment process. Unsuccessful candidates should be notified by email or phone as soon as the decision is made not to proceed with them as part of the shortlisting process. This rejection email template will provide sufficient notification. If you have the time, it is a good idea to provide some constructive feedback to the candidate. A bad candidate experience can damage the employer brand and may lead to a lowered view of the firm especially if the candidate shares their experience on social media or posts a low rating on a job board.

If the shortlisting panel concludes there are no suitable applicants for interview, it is best to revisit the job advertisement and recruitment marketing channels and make the necessary adjustments.

Shortlisted applicants can be notified by email or phone and scheduled to attend an interview. They will need to complete and return an employment application form prior to this meeting. The employment application provides a regular format with the same questions that must be answered by each person who applies for the open position. This allows the selection panel to compare applicant credentials that are listed in the same order on a form, impartially and without regard for formatting and presentation.

An application form is fundamental in obtaining specific information about the candidate. Namely, it provides reference checking contact details, relevant disclosures, verification of the right to work in USA, work availability and the applicants signature declaring the information provided is correct.

Written consent must be obtained from applicants prior to carrying out reference checks, so the hiring manager must ensure a signature is obtained on the declaration page.

Interviewing

Traditional interviews are still being conducted and research has consistently shown that the typical unstructured interview is pretty unreliable (Robertson & Smith, 2001). It does not consistently ensure that the most qualified person gets the job or that the person will perform any better than another candidate chosen with less care. It does not take into account that some people are good/bad at being interviewed and most often interviewers are not adequately training in effective interviewing techniques. It also relies heavily on comparing the candidates against the previous job incumbent rather than the competencies required for a role that may have changed.

Interviews can be either formal or informal, depending on the culture of the organization and role being recruited for. For example, a small business hiring a bookkeeper might choose to have their interview in a café setting as opposed to formal boardroom. Regardless of the venue, all interview formats are enhanced through using a structured, competency based approach and applying the same degree of diligence to planning & preparation.

Before you interview the shortlisted candidates, you will need to choose which type of interview format you will run and construct the relevant questions to ask.

Interviewing

Traditional Interviews

Typically conducted by people untrained in interview techniques. Focus on reviewing resume/CV contents. Interviewer does 80% of the talking

Competency / Behavioral Interviews

Typically conducted by people trained in effective interview techniques. Focus on specific examples of candidate experiences. Interviewer does 20% of the talking

Panel Interviews

Any interview with more than one interviewer. May include a mix of technical and competency based questions and different interview styles

Robo - Interviews

Candidates are interviewed through pre-recorded questions, with their responses recorded for review. Typically used as initial screening interviews for higher volumes of candidates

Phone & Video Interviews

Candidates are interviewed remotely by panels or individual interviewers via phone call or video services such as zoom, teams or google hangouts. Effective when hiring offshore or distant candidates without travel, time and accommodation costs for both parties

We recommend a panel interview with a competency based approach in which questions are based upon the behaviors required for the role and information is gathered about actual situations that candidates have been in. It is widely accepted that the best way of predicting how someone will work in the future is to understand how they have worked in the past.

Some of the benefits of competency based interviewing are:

1. Demonstrates “how” someone works is as important as the results they achieve
2. Clearly describes what the business expects
3. Helps reduce subjectivity in assessment
4. Offers legal protection for the employer
5. Improved consensus on hires across multiple stakeholders
6. Consistency in hiring decisions

Key Competency Questions

Constructing competency based interview questions is not as difficult as it sounds. The first step is to review the job description and person specification with and associated competencies. Each competency question is designed to test one or more defined skills. Candidates are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific circumstances, which they need to back up with examples.

Recruitment experts Michael Page know the value of competency based interviews and have worked out a list of key competency questions, grouping them into five bite-size areas, illustrating a wide range of skills. Feel free to use these as a guide or experiment with constructing some of your own:

Individual Competencies

These refer to a candidate's: flexibility, decisiveness, tenacity, knowledge, independence, risk taking and personal integrity. A typical question might be: Tell me about a time when your work or your idea was challenged.

Managerial Competencies

These refer to a candidate's: ability to take charge of other people, leadership, empowerment, strategic thinking, corporate sensitivity, project management and managerial control. A typical question might be: Tell me about a time you led a group to achieve an objective.

Analytical Competencies

These refer to a candidate's: decision making abilities, innovation, analytical skills, problem solving, practical learning and attention to detail. A typical question might be: Tell me about a time when you identified a new approach to a problem.

Interpersonal Competencies

These refer to a candidate's: social competencies, leadership and ability to work as part of a team. A typical question might be: Describe a situation where you got people to work together.

Motivational Competencies

These refer to a candidate's: drive, resilience, energy, motivation, result orientation, initiative and quality focus. A typical question might be: When did you work the hardest and feel the greatest sense of achievement?

It is important to note that competency based questions should be followed up with funneling questions to further probe into the details of the example or evidence given by a candidate. An example of a competency based question and follow up questioning (funneling) is as follows:

Tell us about a time when you have worked within a successful team

- What was your role?
- What contribution did you make?
- How effective were you?
- What made the team successful?
- How did you contribute to that success?
- What was the outcome?
- What would you do differently?

You should be able to gauge on a scale of 0-3 whether a candidate has "no skills/evidence" or has "excellent skills/evidence" once you have received their answer to the question.

It is also possible to gauge a candidate's strengths and weaknesses through their answers by assessing whether they demonstrate a willingness to learn, an ability to perform or if they show a negative approach toward a task.

Here is a competency based interview template that you can use to outline your questions and rate answers. It's ok to give candidates advance notice of the types of questions you will be asking at the interview (i.e. Behavioral event questions) but not the actual questions, after all, you want them to perform well and be prepared.

Conducting Interviews

When conducting interviews, it is critical that the individuals involved know what they are looking for and are well prepared. Before the interview, you should agree as to what role each person will take and ensure everyone is fully briefed on the process – an interview timetable can assist in keeping on track. A typical interview timetable follows this general outline:

- Introduction of interviewers
- Overview of the role and organization
- Competency based questioning – including follow-up questions
- Questions from the Candidate
- Completing summary notes and ratings
- Panel Review before next interview

An interview format in which all job candidates are asked the same specific questions further ensures that information obtained from candidates is relevant and comprehensive. This method also helps avoid irrelevant content and makes candidate responses more directly comparable.

You should also prepare to be flexible and probe deeper: What if the candidate doesn't provide enough information? Interviews that simply move on to the next question, without leaving room for follow-up questions often do not collect enough information from candidates.

Ensure the interview isn't too short or too long, since it is important that all candidates get the same opportunity to answer the same questions — without feeling rushed — it is generally best to limit the number of interview questions. A good rule of thumb is to ask no more than four to six questions in a 30- minute interview, and no more than eight to 12 questions in a one-hour interview.

Try not to solicit candidates to ask questions too soon as this greatly reduces the interview's reliability. Candidates should only be solicited to ask questions after the conclusion of the interview, allowing engagement on a more personal level.

It is also important to be realistic with the timing of interviews, if you allow one hour per interview, then you should look to complete no more than 6 per day. Never go into the next interview session without summarizing the one you've just finished.

For more do's and don'ts of interviewing, we have a helpful article posted on our website which highlights how to host an effective interview.

Making Notes and Assigning a Rating

When conducting a competency based interview, the interview panel should be looking for authentic answers where candidates are being themselves by providing real life examples which relate to their actual life and work experiences. Remember, these are not trick questions; they are designed to create the best match between an individual and an organization.

It is critical that each interviewer makes comprehensive notes during the interview - you can never write too much! Note what was actually said e.g. “I always made sure that I offered help to my team mates if I didn’t have a lot of work”. Remember, your notes will form the basis of your assessment of the candidate and the basis of any feedback to the candidate.

At the end of each interview session, award a rating for each competency based on the examples and evidence in answers.

Review the interview question template for a better understanding of how this process is carried out.

3	Evidence exceeds benchmark
2	Evidence meets benchmark
1	Partial evidence, falls short of benchmark
0	No evidence
-1	negative evidence

Remember, selection is not a precise science, so try and avoid the following:

- Introduction of evidence from outside the interview (unless using wider assessments)
- Introduction of subjective judgements rather than evidence
- Not referring to the agreed Competencies
- Problems with use of rating scales (differences of opinion within a panel)
- Notes not reflecting the ratings given
- Comparing candidates to one another not the competencies
- Over reliance on one piece of information

For further support, contact HR/People Management training providers in your locality to get trained in effective interviewing.

Testing & Assessment

Selection as part of the hiring process aims to predict which candidates will perform best in the job. Selection instruments like interviews, reference checking and testing or assessments have what's called predictive validity – a measure on a scale of 0 to 1 indicating the quality of prediction of that instrument which is correlated to job performance. The higher the predictive validity, the better. The overall predictive validity can be incrementally improved by using several additional instruments together in the selection process which is what we recommend in this guide.

There are a number of different tests and assessments available online these days – each instrument offers specific insight into the individual. See the list below of commonly used testing and assessment instruments:

Personality Questionnaires

Identifies personal characteristics and preferences

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Tests the ability to recognize, evaluate and regulate a person's own emotions, emotions of those around them and groups of people

Ability Testing

Tests a person's competency and ability to perform a specific activity such as numeracy or abstract reasoning

Aptitude Tests

Test a person's cognitive ability (intelligence)

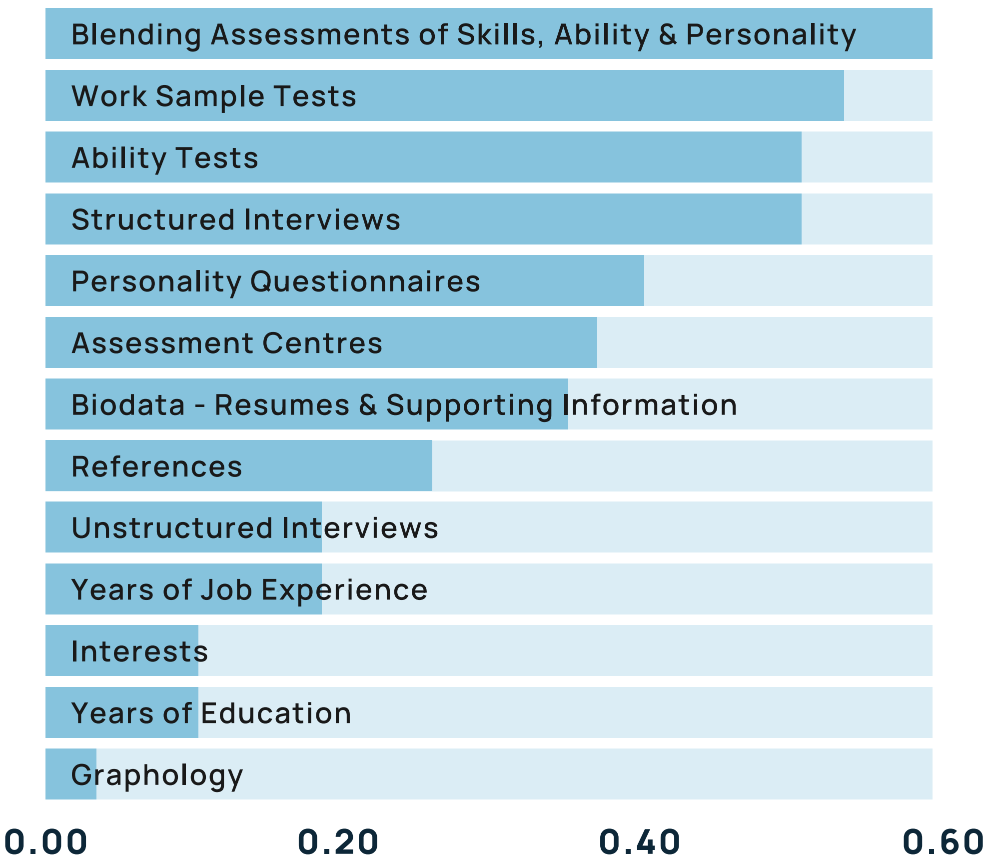
Work Sample Tests

Test the person's ability to perform tasks similar to those performed on the job.

The graph below demonstrates widely accepted research into the likelihood of a selection method to predict success in a job.

Predictive Validity of Selection Measures and Job Performance

(Robinson & Smith 2001)



We suggest you use work sample tests, such as Accountests products as they provide the highest predictive validity of all selection methods. When they are combined with structured interviews and assessments of ability and personality, they really strengthen selection decisions of competent candidates and reduce the risks of poor selection.

Depending on the type of role you are recruiting for, we have listed our suggestions for testing below:

Tests	Price (approx.)	CPA	Non-CPA Accountant	Bookkeeper
Verbal & Numeral Reasoning	$200-$300	✓	✓	✓
Accountant Personality Test	$250	✓	✓	✓
Excel Test	$100	✓	✓	✓
CPA Accountest	$250	✓		
Non-CPA Accountest	$250		✓	
Bookkeeper Accountests	$175			✓

Who should you test?

The next step in selecting which candidates will progress to the testing and assessment stage, will be to determine the top 2-3 candidates based on their overall score during the interview. We suggest you phone or email as soon as you have this list narrowed down and arrange a time and date to meet. Try to conduct the testing and assessments on the same day for all candidates if possible as this will speed up your process considerably.

Assigning Ratings

Once you have the results of the work sample tests review the overall score and assign a rating between 1 and 100 for each candidate. Assigning a rating to the results of each personality test is a bit more challenging as the candidates do not receive an overall score. Instead, you should think about the culture of the organization and the type of personality that would fit well in the team.

Reference Checking

Reference checks allow the hiring manager to get independent insight about a candidate's previous on the-job performance. It verifies the information provided by the candidate on their resume, during the interview as part of the testing and assessment process. It also allows for any red flags to be debunked or confirmed.

In this section we discuss the ideal Reference Checking process. In different States and Countries there are restrictions on your ability to undertake reference checks, and limitations on what referees are able to say – so check what you can do in your own jurisdiction.

It is important that during the interview process, you obtain consent from the applicants to contact their references and ask employment-related questions. A common mistake managers often make is asking candidates to choose their references. Instead, you should tell the candidates that you wish to speak to the people who actually supervised or managed them. It is good practice to speak to two or three work related references. If the candidates' current employers do not know they are seeking work elsewhere, then go to the previous employers.

Before calling referees, it is good practice to make a list of questions so that you are asking the same set of competency based questions, giving you a consistent frame on which to base your decisions. All questions should be job-related and legal. You cannot ask questions during a reference check that you are prohibited from asking during an interview.

If you do not already have a standard reference checking form, you can customize this template to suit your business needs.

Remember to assign a rating for each of the competency based questions you ask the referee. The overall score will assist in determining who is selected as the preferred candidate.

For more tips on conducting a thorough reference check, read this article by RecruitLoop.

At this stage of the recruitment process, it is also a good idea to confirm the candidate's professional memberships and verify any qualifications they may have.

Selecting the Preferred Candidate

You have laid the groundwork and should now be ready to select your preferred candidate. We recommend you stick with a competency-based approach to your selection as it improves your objectivity which leads to truer talent acquisition and provides substantial justification for the hiring decision.

The interview panel will need to get together and review all the information collected on the shortlisted candidates (Interview notes, testing and assessment results, reference checking forms) and discuss their findings. By drawing upon multiple sources of information and contributors, the outcome ceases to be a hiring manager's choice and instead becomes a consensus. This means that new hires will have the buy-in of all stakeholders, improving prospects for their successful induction into the company.

Utilize our competency based selection template to assign overall scores to each candidate in the relevant area.

"This means that new hires will have the buy-in of all stakeholders, improving prospects for their successful induction into the company."

Making Offers & Administering Rejections

Now that you’ve found the right candidate for your job opening, you need to make an offer. Jorg Stegemann, a recruiter and Director of Executive Search at Experis Executive (a division of ManPower Group), clearly lists 8 steps to a successful job offer.

1

Move Fast

If you've made a decision, why wait? Time is always your enemy in your recruiting, even in a down economy exceptional talent is rare.
Whenever possible contact the selected candidate later the same day of their final interview. If not, make contact within a day or two at most. Not only can you ease the candidate's stress during the post-interview waiting period but you also show how thrilled you are to make them a part of your team.

2

Always Call

Some companies send emails or letters. Don't. Make a phone call; not only can you convey your excitement, but you can gauge the level of enthusiasm of the selected candidate, too.

3

Be Enthusiastic

Be professional but be enthusiastic. Tell the candidate he/she was your first choice. Explain how impressed others are with his/her background and skills. It's natural to play your cards close to your chest during the interview and selection process, but once you've made a decision, drop your reserve. Don't worry—conveying your excitement won't affect the salary negotiation process.
Remember, the employer-employee relationship doesn't start the first day on the job. It officially starts with the job offer. Make that moment memorable for the candidate

4

Apply the 10% Rule

Generally speaking, candidates expect a pay increase of at least 10% when they change jobs. Few candidates will change jobs for the same or lower salary (barring unusual circumstances, of course.) And if they do, they'll feel some level of resentment every time they get paid. Never offer a salary below their current salary unless there are concrete, objective reasons to do so— and even then, think hard about it.

5

Show the Money

Explain pay and benefits as thoroughly and accurately as possible. Describe the base salary, how any bonus plans work, provide a fairly thorough overview of any other benefits, and describe any other perks. Then follow through with a written breakdown of all salary and benefits terms. Never give an employee any reason to feel they were the victim of a salary bait and switch—and never make bonus or perk promises you cannot keep

6

Get Commitment - Even if it is Tentative

Many candidates will ask for time to consider the offer. That's natural—but that doesn't mean you can't ask questions. Say, "I completely understand... but can I ask what you think about our offer?" Any hesitation the candidate feels indicates they may turn you down, so ask questions, without being pushy, and see if you can overcome any objections or provide additional information that will make acceptance more likely.

7

Follow up in Writing

Then put everything in an email or letter. Include all elements of the offer: job title, base salary, benefits, annual vacation, leave entitlements, etc. And make sure to set a deadline on acceptance; three days is typical.

8

Ask The "Killer" Question

If you can't get a good read on the candidate's level of interest, if the decision-making period is dragging on, or if you just want to make absolutely sure the candidate will show up on their first day, ask this question: "I interviewed two other good candidates for this job. Can I tell them the job has been filled?" Few people will lie about their intentions, especially when lying might affect another person that really wanted the job.

Administering Rejection

All too often, when candidates apply for roles, they are never contacted if they are unsuccessful. This can leave them feeling annoyed, especially if they have devoted their time and energy to attend interviews and undertake testing. It’s only polite to let them know the outcome and it may even save you time in the long run, as you won’t have to field calls or emails from candidates following up.

TPP, a specialist recruitment company outlines the important factors to consider when administering rejections to unsuccessful candidates: When employers do send out rejections, they tend to be impersonal and non-specific, either through a lack of time or from fear of causing offence. Failing to give feedback is one of the most common mistakes employers make.

Candidates might not be right for one role, but could be a good match for a future vacancy, or could be a potential employee after they have gained skills and experience elsewhere. Turning them off your employer brand means you’ll lose them as a potential candidate forever.

When Should You Do it?

Best practice is to give a candidate feedback as soon as you are absolutely sure they are not right for the role, and to let them move on as soon as possible. You don’t need to wait until you have filled the post if you are sure the candidate isn’t right.

Many employers already know at the end of interview if a candidate is a definite rejection, and it can be a good idea to let them know right there and then. Candidates usually have an idea if an interview has not gone well, and most appreciate candor and honest feedback.

What Should You Say?

The rule of thumb is to make feedback as constructive and personalized as possible. A standard email may be acceptable for candidates rejected prior to the interview process, but more detailed feedback is important for interviewees.

There is really no excuse for not sending at least an email to rejected applicants – most email software will allow you to set up a mail merge or autotext that enables you to do this in seconds. At this stage, all you need to say is that there was a high level of response to the vacancy and that other candidates met the person specification more closely.

Sweeten the Pill

When you're giving constructive criticism to a candidate, whether on the phone or by mail, it's always a good idea to start off with the positives and give them some compliments before you tackle the areas where they fell down. Wherever possible, you should also end by repeating their strong points. This softens the blow of any negatives and is more likely to leave them with a positive impression of your organization to take away

Be Honest and Specific

Unsuccessful candidates who have turned up for an interview expect and deserve a clear reason for their rejection, even if it is just "we have other candidates who better matched our requirements". Wherever possible, tell them exactly which areas of the interview they could have handled better - most will already have a good idea of where they struggled. Make sure your reasons are concrete, not subjective like "I didn't feel your personality would fit with the rest of the team". You also need to avoid any comments that could be misinterpreted, like "I didn't feel you could handle the workload" that could leave you open to potential charges of discrimination.

Don't mention the person you decided to hire in any way, even as a comparison. Feedback should focus exclusively on the person you are talking to.

Finishing Up

To make the feedback process feel less one-sided and more of a conversation, why not ask the candidate to supply their own comments on the interview. This can help head off problems with your recruitment process and gives you the chance to improve your interview technique.

If you are likely to consider the candidate for future opportunities, letting them know you'll keep their details on file will help soften the blow of the rejection. If the candidate has been interviewed, thank them for their time and wish them luck with their future job hunt.

Induction & Onboarding

Now that you have hired the right person for your role, it is time to start planning their induction. Induction is an essential part of on boarding your new recruits and familiarizing them with your organization. Getting the induction process right can help you get new employees up to speed and be productive as quickly as possible.

Induction gives you the chance to welcome new employees and build on their positive attitude and enthusiasm for their new job. It's an opportunity to familiarize new members of staff with your organization and to introduce them to their immediate colleagues and other members of the wider team. It's also an ideal opportunity to familiarize new recruits with your organization's policies and procedures. Having a comprehensive, structured induction process has been shown to play a big part in improving long-term staff retention.

Induction doesn't have to be a formal process. However, it does need to properly planned and consistently delivered to ensure that all new employees are treated fairly and receive the same information. Having an induction check list can ensure that all areas are covered. The process needs to impart all the information that new employees need in a way that doesn't overwhelm them with information, or distract them from getting to grips with their job. Employing a 'buddy' system for a new employee's first week can help answer practical questions and deal with any problems in an informal way.

Here are five simple ways to ensure a new employee gets the best possible induction.

Induction Activity Checklist

If you don't already have an induction plan checklist, you can use this one and customize it to suit your business needs. Refer to the checklist on the following page for the most critical activities that need to be covered off with your new employee.

You can also see this Induction Activity Checklist here

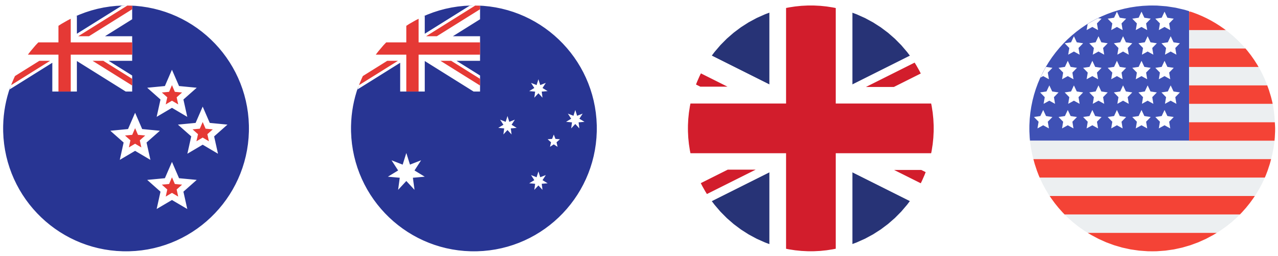
Complete On	Induction Activity Checklist	Done
Day 1	Initial meeting with manager to discuss the company values, vision, strategic direction, and culture.	
	Outline of their role, responsibilities, level of authority and work priorities.	
	Check that there are no matters outstanding from the recruitment process, e.g., all preemployment checks completed (i.e., reference checks, professional membership, Quals).	
	Outline the terms and conditions of employment and ensure that you discuss: • Information about pay & payment method • Completion of time sheets or billable hours • How to report sickness and absence giving the name and telephone number of the person to be contacted, by what time and what information will be needed • Explain leave entitlements, where this is recorded and who approves this • Any legislation that impacts their work • Disciplinary and grievance procedures, including whistle blowing, bullying and harassment – Explain work rules and codes of conduct	
	Check that all relevant personal information has been obtained. For example, who to call in an emergency.	
	Ensure that the new employee know where the basic amenities are. e.g., Toilets, tea/coffee making facilities and eating area	
	Draw the new employee's attention to any specific points about working for the setting, e.g., no smoking policy, dress code, hours of work, tea and lunch breaks	
	Explain the emergency procedures, e.g., evacuation exits and procedure, introduce them to the appointed first aider.	
	Explain the health and safety procedures and any specific hazards in their work area. Introduce them to the appointed health and safety representative	
	Tour the workplace and introduce the new employee to everyone in the office explaining who they are and what their role is	
	Set up the employee in their office or workspace. Provide them with computer, access passwords, business cards, company phone, telephone contact list, etc	
	Buddy up with existing employee for handover or shadowing exercise	
Day 5	Ensure the employee knows how to access all the equipment needed to do their job	
	Issue necessary items, like keys, ID Cards, building access codes.	
Day 30	Have an initial Performance and Development Review meeting that covers • What's going well, not so well for them? • Identify any training needs or further support • Workload and priorities • Progress and difficulties This should lead to clear work targets and a learning and development plan.	
	Plan regular meeting with the new employee to discuss workload, progress, and any difficulties.	
	Employee signs to say that they are aware of and have read all policies and procedures	
	Complete the induction plan and undertaken a probationary review with the line manager and demonstrated capability to meet the requirements of the role to the standard set.	

Final Thoughts

Visit Our Website

Interested in exploring what testing can do for your recruitment process?

For more information about tests, processes, and pricing, as well as industry leading expertise, please visit our website by choosing your location below:



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