

[HR Planning, Talent Acquisition, Retention and Reward Strategies]]



Lecture Title:

[Talent Acquisition: Selection Tools and Techniques]

Lecturer: Paul Gauci

Date: 19th May 2025 13.00-17.00hrs



**Masters in
Human Resources Management**

Learning Objectives

- To learn how to conduct face to face interviews for selection purposes.
- Understand Different Interview Formats: Gain knowledge of various types of interviews, such as structured, unstructured, panel, and behavioural interviews, and their applications.
- Develop Questioning Skills: Learn to craft open-ended and targeted questions that reveal candidates' competencies, motivations, and problem-solving skills.
- **Assess Candidate Fit:** Understand how to evaluate whether candidates align with the role requirements and organizational values.
- **Minimize Bias:** Learn techniques to conduct fair interviews and recognize unconscious biases to ensure equity in the selection process.
- Practice Interview Preparation: Acquire skills to research and plan interviews, including reviewing candidate profiles and defining evaluation criteria.
- Conduct talent acquisition interviews through online means.



Learning Method

- **Lecture focused on learning objectives and core content** as a key instructional process.
- **Formative assessment through participative learning tools and activities** will be utilised evaluating students' comprehension and academic progress throughout - with respect to understanding and applying HRM concepts.



To learn how to conduct face to face interviews for selection purposes.

- An Interview is a 2 way exchange, a conversation between participants to achieve goals.



- The key to a good interview will always lie in your ability to avoid common hiring mistakes and assess potential talent in the interview process.
- But keep in mind that more new hires fail due to personality-culture mismatch than technical skills mismatch, so keep a keen eye out for compatible styles.



Attributes for Good Interviewing

- Review the candidates resume/credentials
- Keep polite and professional
- Create a relaxed interview setting
- Extend professional courtesies, ex water..
- Allow appropriate time, setting interview days according to the number of interviews
- Welcome the candidate
- Watch those nonverbal signals
- Let the candidate do the talking
- Close on proper note



Attributes for a good interviewer

- Understand the job in detail
- Set the interview design appropriately
- Develop high interpersonal skills
- Learn how to provide feedback
- Develop high analytical skills
- Enhance your imagination and inventiveness



The Interview Process

- Helping the candidate to relax
- Greeting the candidate and establishing rapport;
- It establishes that the company cares about the candidates.
- Establishing the initial feeling of goodwill.
- Communicate the objectives of the interview

- Structure interview to obtain information
- Start with a comprehensive introduction
- Use of open questions, reinforcement questions and elaboration
- Ensure clear and unambiguous questions;
- Restricted to the subject matter
- Limited to one idea at a time



Control during the interview

- Verifying information: Handling contradictions and inconsistencies
- Knowing how and when to stop the interviewee who cannot stop talking
- Knowing how to handle emotionally upset and hostile interviewees
- Determining the right pace for the interview to maximise time
- Guiding and directing the interview



Concluding the interview

- Answering candidate's questions
- Structuring the closing
- Thank the interviewee
- Giving the way forward...what's next & by when.



After the interview

- Conduct Exercise / Prepare Report
- Carry an objective evaluation based on the set measurements
- Highlight the achievements of each candidate
- Check all references are correct
- Evaluate specific evidence which the candidate shared, be sure you are not bringing in any biases
- Re-assess behavioral traits and skills. Avoid the charisma trap
- High value on attitude, work ethic and motivation
- Learn from your personal past hiring processes
- Make clear and concise recommendations.



Understand Different Interview Formats

- Various types of interviews, such as structured, unstructured, panel, and behavioural interviews, and their applications.



Structured Interviews:

- These follow a standardized format where all candidates are asked the same set of questions in the same order. This ensures consistency and fairness, making it easier to compare responses.
- They're commonly used in job interviews and research to gather reliable, comparable data.



Unstructured Interviews:

These are more flexible and conversational, with no predefined set of questions.

The interviewer adapts based on the candidate's responses, allowing for deeper exploration of topics. They're often used in qualitative research or when assessing creativity and problem-solving skills.



Panel Interviews:

In this format, multiple interviewers (a panel) assess a candidate simultaneously.

Each panelist may focus on different aspects, such as technical skills, cultural fit, or leadership qualities.

This approach is efficient for gathering diverse perspectives and is frequently used for high-stakes roles.



Behavioral Interviews:

These focus on past experiences to predict future performance. Candidates are asked to provide examples of how they've handled specific situations, often using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

They're widely used to evaluate soft skills like teamwork, adaptability, and conflict resolution.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uM7gYuOvr4>



Group Activity

- Each format has its strengths and is chosen based on the role's requirements and the organization's goals.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method:
Structured; Unstructured; Panel; Behavioural



Develop Questioning Techniques



- Obtain the information required
- Motivate the interviewee to talk freely

- Give interviewees time to think and time to answer questions
- Move from simple questions to those that require thought
- Ask only one question at a time
- Make sure that the interviewee understands the question
- Direct and control the interview



- Moving through the various background areas; from general to specific
- Move from one question to the next in logical form
- Giving appropriate time to cover ALL questions
- Don't let other interviewers dominate the interview; `
- Don't under estimate or undermine the intelligence of the interviewee.



- A behavioral question (behavior-based interview questions) is a question that aims at learning about your past “behaviors” in specific work situations.
- How you have “behaved” in certain situations in the past will give them clues on how you’ll behave in those same situations when working for them in the future.
 - Tell me about a time.....
 - Situation
 - Behavior
 - Outcome



Common Behaviour Based Question Categories

- ✓ Teamwork oriented
 - ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Initiative/Leadership
 - ✓ Interpersonal Skills
- ✓ Challenge/stress/pressure



Behavioural Interview Questions

- ✓ “Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work.”
- ✓ “Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem.”
- ✓ “Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts.”
- ✓ “Do you feel you work well under pressure? If so, describe a time when you have done so...”
- ✓ “Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.”
- ✓ “Tell me about a time where you had to delegate tasks during a project”
- ✓ “Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.”
- ✓ “Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.”
- ✓ “Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment.”





- Have your list of questions prepared
- Use those behavioural questions !
- Avoid closed questions ...yes/no

Open ended questions

- *What career accomplishments are you most proud of?*
- *What is motivating you for this role?*
- *What were your duties?*
- *When did you decide?*
- *Why did you choose?*
- *Why do you think... ?*
- *Which area of work...?*
- *How did that come about?*
- *How do you think that?*
- *How can you add value?*



Other forms of questions

- Direct questions
- Generally prompt a yes or no answer - to be limited
- Standard revealing questions
- Reveal the personal beliefs of the interviewee
- Initiative questions
- Reveal the accomplishments of the individual



- Motivation questions
 - Reveal the interest of the interviewee
 - *What are your goals for the next two years?*
 - *What does job security mean to you?*
- Attitude questions
 - Reveal the attitude/beliefs of the interviewee
 - *What job values are important to you?*
 - *What do you think of your recent boss?*



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY — REPHRASE THESE QUESTIONS

1. *Why did you leave your last job?*
2. *Did you have trouble with your boss?*
3. *Why did you leave school before you got your degree?*
4. *You mean to say you are unemployed?*
5. *Did you get along with your co-workers?*
6. *Why would you think you are qualified to go into marketing with your background?*
7. *What didn't you like about your last job?*



- *Why did you leave your last job?*
- What are some of your reasons for considering this job?
- *Did you have trouble with your boss?*
- How would you describe your boss?
- *Why did you leave school before you got your degree?*
- Was there any particular reason that you decided to leave school when you did?
- *You mean to say you are unemployed?*
- Could you share more about your current employment status?
- *Did you get along with your co-workers?*
- Could you describe your relationship with your colleagues?
- *Why would you think you are qualified to go into marketing with your background?*
- Would you comment on how you feel you could use your background in our marketing area?
- *What didn't you like about your last job?*
- Were there less pleasant aspects of your last job?



Assess Candidate Fit

- Understand how to evaluate whether candidates align with the role requirements and organizational values.



Assess the Candidate's Desire Factor

- Did the candidate research your company, its achievements, competitors, and challenges prior to an interview?
- Still, some will go out of their way to articulate their understanding of who you are and why they're so excited about joining your firm.



- Try questions like these to isolate those who are hungriest for the opportunity that you offer:
- *Why would you want to work here, and what do you know about our organization?*
- *What makes us stand out in your mind from our competitors?*
- *How would this role with our company provide a link to your future career progression?*



Areas to question

- Knowledge: Applied Information
- Skills Learned: Skills (facts) incl. Technology
- Abilities: Performance
- Attitudes: Personal Behaviour
- Experience: Practice



Group ACTIVITY

Decide on a job vacancy of your choice

Plan a set of questions for a job interview that takes half an hour.



Body Language – Its importance in an interview

Body language plays an important role in an interview to :

- Gauge the personality of the candidate
- Determine the suitability of the candidate to fit the role of job in the organization.

Interviewer's Body language

- Greeting and Smile
- Firm, professional handshake
- Facial signals
- Eye Contact
- Head as the focus of attention
- Mouth should remain clear
- Hands/Gestures are to be controlled
- Feet are to be planted
- Active Posture



Note Taking

- Do not use signs, symbols or words that indicate race, gender, age, disability, sexual preference or religion.
- Record specifics as they relate to job responsibilities.
- Record favorable and unfavorable responses to create a balanced image.
- Spend some time after the interview polishing your notes.
- Take notes consistently.



To avoid



- Insistence on showing authority/dominance
- Long introduction
- Aggressive and irritating personalities
- Argumentative
- Disagreement on every answer
- Not interested in what the interviewee says
- Looking at mobile phone
- Clock watching

Blocks of Good Listening

- Lack of preparation
- Lack of objectivity
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of concentration
- Lack of patience



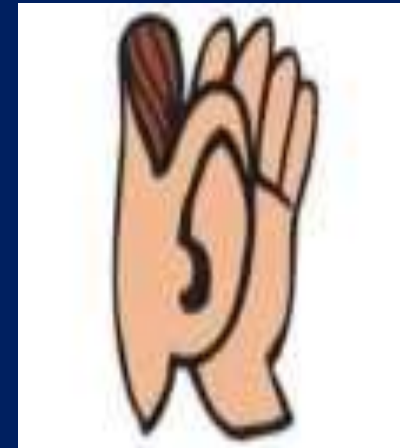
Using time effectively

- Block out the time for the interviews
 - No interruptions
 - No phone calls
 - No in between meetings
 - No messages
-
- Manage the interview
 - Introduction
 - The general questions
 - The specific questions
 - The clarification questions
 - Conclusions



The art of good listening

- Clear and logical structure
- Sufficient empathy
- Concentrate on the interviewee only
- Recognise and acknowledge any prejudice
- Do not accept everything at face value
- Probe for evasions and examine half truths
- Be patient and DO NOT interrupt
- Be tolerant
- Be comfortable





**Masters in
Human Resources Management**

Minimize Bias

Techniques to conduct fair interviews and recognize unconscious biases to ensure equity in the selection process.



Recognise and control your own bias

- Interviews are biased in some way or another.
- Hence the importance to be aware of your unconscious bias as this can lead to an interviewer to the following mistakes.



- Believe that candidates who impress during an interview automatically have the skills and competences to succeed in the role (or vice versa).
- Give too much priority to a particular strength or weakness and not take a balanced view of a candidate's fit
-
- Be overly impressed by a candidate's experience, cv or social poise and minimise signs that a candidate might not fit the role.
- Buy the person, not the person's fit for the role.



Other Errors of evaluation

- Gut feeling
- Making an intuitive judgement about an applicant without facts
- Assumptions about intent...he did that because...
- Halo/Horns effect
- Allowing one or two traits favour judgement
- Stereotyping
- Similar to me effect
- First impressions or last impressions (Primacy/Recency perceptions)



Behaviour of interviewer can change response

- Changing wording of questions
- Reading questions differently
- Response to answers or inappropriate comments
- Failure to probe through questioning
- Response to interviewee's appearance
- Intentional subversion of results



10 ways to reduce interviewer bias

Define the job, not the person

Focus on what the candidate will do in the role, not what experience they should have.

Conduct a phone screen first

The phone interview is the crucial part of the first impression bias.

Use panel interviews

Replace the 30 minute 1:1 interview with a 2-3 person organized panel.

Script the interview

Conduct a work history review and ask every candidate the same questions.

Don't make snap judgements

Wait 30 minutes before making any "yes" or "no" decision.



Be a juror — not a judge

Keep all the evidence before deciding yes or no.

Use reverse logic

Become curious with those you like, and overthinked with those you don't like.

Test candidates as consultants

Assume the candidate is extremely competent and treat them with respect.

Use a talent scorecard

Require interviewers to provide evidence of the candidate's competence and motivation to do the work.

Measure first impressions of the end

Determine if the person's first impression will help or hinder on the job success.

Source: LinkedIn Talent Solutions Blog



CONCEPT APPLICATION- Case Study: Talent Acquisition at InnovateTech Inc.

- Background:
- InnovateTech Inc., a mid-sized technology firm, is expanding its operations globally. The company is looking to hire a team of software engineers for its new office in Berlin. The hiring manager has tasked the HR team with designing an effective interview process to identify top talent. The team must ensure the process is efficient, fair, and aligned with the company's values.
- Challenges:
- The company has received over 500 applications for 10 positions. The hiring team needs to evaluate both technical and cultural fit. The process must be completed within six weeks to meet project deadlines.
- Your Task:
As part of the HR team, you are responsible for planning the interview process.

Questions:

- 1.How would you research and define the evaluation criteria for this role?
- 2.What steps would you take to review candidate profiles effectively?
- 3.How would you structure the interview process to assess both technical skills and cultural fit?
- 4.What tools or methods would you use to ensure the process is fair and unbiased?
- 5.How would you handle the high volume of applications while maintaining quality in the selection process?

formative assessment tool



Phone interviews

Phone interviews can be a great method to get knowledge about a candidate before making a decision to get them in for an interview in person.

With the help of phone interviews, hiring managers, employers and HR professionals are able to improve their opportunities of discovering the ideal employee by finding out candidates that stand out and filtering out those who are not the right fit even before a face to face interview which is particularly time consuming.



1. Get all the tools ready:

Make sure you have consistent and good connection, if recording do a test run. Do maintain a notebook, pen and other noting tools. Make sure you have the phone number and any other contact details with you.

2. Prepare:

It is important to learn about a candidate as much as possible prior to an interview. You should have in front of you: the resume and any additional details that have been provided, through online application or such.

Even make sure that you have the description in front of you of the job title you are hiring for, to ask them questions related to the experience they have mentioned in the provided information.

3. Know your interview questions in advance:

Know what you wish to ask and generate questions to ask at interview to acquire complete knowledge about the candidate. Keep it short and direct.



4. Send the candidate complete details:

Make the preparation for the candidate easy, for the interview send them complete details about the company, of the people they will be speaking to and the related phone numbers. Sharing the plan can be beneficial and helpful as well.

5. Avoid distractions:

Phone interviewing is not the moment where you can text message someone or can check e-mails. You need to eliminate any kind of distractions that you are aware can disturb you and try to focus on the interview.

6. Avoid talking too much:

A number of people are comfortable speaking in person and some on the phone. You must maintain the face to face interview principles, ask short questions and listen to the candidate throughout.

This is a filtering system for both candidate and the interviewer. Keep it short and detailed so that you leave room for the in person interview to ask more questions.



7. Plan a structure for the interview:

It is good to have a structure for the interview, so that you do not miss out on anything, ask all the questions you wished to ask and give the candidate time for questions.

8. Create checklist:

You can even create a checklist to make sure you are on track with the structure you have prepared. It will even help you to not miss out on any part during the phone call. As you gradually conduct and get done with each step you can mark off the step from the list. Note taking is also a great idea.

9. Ideal Structure:

The ideal structure for an interview can be by starting with an introduction of you or anyone else that may be involved in the call and then follow by thanking them for their time and look for any initial concerns.

Provide them with a short but sufficient introduction about the company and the role and then let them give overview about themselves. Have a transparent discussion with opportunities to clear all concerns and close it with providing details about further actions.



10. Be Ready for the unexpected:

Job seekers may never know when the Interviewer may ask them certain question that will be unique and odd during an interview.

It goes the same for that Interviewer as the candidate during the phone interview might pop up some question out of the ordinary or says something alarming or surprising. Preparing for job interview in advance will be beneficial to give away the right and appropriate answer to any rare situations arising.

11. Maintain flexibility:

An interview is a two way process. It is as crucial to selling you and the job as much it is about assessing the candidate's eligibility.

Competent candidates will have numerous offers and options to choose from and hence be flexible from the beginning itself to make it painless for them to speak to you.



Conduct talent acquisition interviews through online means



VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS



Step up from Phone Interviews Tips

Conducting talent acquisition interviews online is an efficient and flexible approach that has become increasingly common. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you navigate the process effectively:



1. Preparation

- Define the role:

Clearly outline the responsibilities and qualifications for the position. This helps ensure you're targeting the right candidates.

- Set up technology:

Use reliable video conferencing platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet. Test audio, video, and internet connectivity beforehand.

- Prepare questions:

Develop a mix of behavioral, situational, and technical questions tailored to the role.



2. Candidate Engagement

- Communicate expectations:

Inform candidates about the platform, duration, and structure of the interview. Share any materials they may need to review in advance.

- Build rapport:

Begin with a friendly introduction to ease any nerves and create a welcoming environment.



3. Conducting the Interview

- Start with small talk:
A brief conversation helps break the ice and establishes a connection.
- Ask consistent questions:
While adapting to the flow of conversation is important, ensure you cover key points for all candidates to maintain fairness.
- Take notes:
Jot down important observations to aid post-interview evaluation.



4. Post-Interview Follow-Up

- Evaluate candidates:
Use a scoring system or rubric to assess answers against predefined criteria.
- Provide feedback:
If possible, share constructive feedback with candidates, especially those who weren't selected.
- Communicate next steps:
Keep candidates informed about the timeline and next stages of the hiring process.



Tips for Success

- Eliminate distractions by choosing a quiet environment for the interview.
- Ensure the interview panel is aligned on objectives and criteria.
- Respect the candidate's time by sticking to the schedule.



TO RECAP

- Every interview has a purpose
- Preparation is paramount
- Ensure to be free from distractions
- Correct environment and seating
- Greet candidates
- Use appropriate questioning techniques
- Allow candidates to give full answers
- Ensure listening and observation
- Avoid biases and prejudice
- Give candidates opportunity to ask questions
- Inform candidates about outcome by earliest time



How to conduct interviews
Stanford graduate school of business

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ev0begDFc20>



References

- Armstrong, M. with Taylor, S. (2014), Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice, 13th edn. London: Kogan Page.
- Taylor, S. (2014), People Resourcing, 6th edn. London: CIPD.



**Masters in
Human Resources Management**