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Successful Interviewing

TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE
INTERVIEWING



Project History

This guide was developed through the Responsive Career Pathways Research Project, and in consultation with working Canadians and small and medium-sized employers in Manitoba.

In March 2023, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) joined forces with Blueprint ADE to create a new proactive career services and workforce development model for working Canadians, involving both working Canadians and employers. The project tested a forward-thinking intervention to address the pressing workforce needs of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and the career development needs of mid-career workers. This was achieved through three service delivery pathways: 1) Worker-centered; 2) Employer-driven and 3) Intersections between working Canadians and employers.

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Fresh Ideas for Interviews

We all strive to find candidates who will excel in their roles, adapt well, and grow with our organization. In today's competitive labour market, it is more important than ever to uncover the talents of job seekers and determine culture and values alignment with your organization.

Here are some tips to consider for getting more out of an interview:

Set the Stage for Success:

- Encourage and assist candidates to familiarize themselves with the role and think about their compatibility with your team. This can be done by sending an information package prior to the interview or by having a conversation about the role and company culture before the formal interview.
- Information packages could include job descriptions, mission and value statements, news articles, and employee testimonials. This practice encourages a more meaningful conversation during the interview.
- Remind the candidate that interviews are a mutual screening process and encourage them to bring questions specific to the position and company culture.

Try Group Dynamics for Entry-Level Roles:

- Consider starting with a group interview that focuses primarily on educating candidates about your organization and the role they applied for. This is an excellent way to increase brand awareness but also fosters candidate familiarity. It could also uncover potential candidates for other positions within your company. Initiate the process by inviting the top five applicants to a group interview as their initial interaction.
- Clearly outline the agenda and advise that it is a group interview intended to share more information about the company and the role for which they applied. Engage both the Manager and an existing employee to present the role's aspects, rewards, and challenges and address any questions.
- Design a **team-based exercise** to evaluate their communication skills and collaborative interaction. Progress to in-person interviews from this point. With this approach, candidates become more at ease and well-informed compared to a conventional initial interview format.

Create a Comfortable Environment:

- Strive to create a welcoming atmosphere whether **in person** or **virtually**, where candidates can share authentically.
- Consider limiting the number of interviewers to no more than two and include someone who can answer questions about the position.
- Pay attention to **seating arrangements** and nonverbal cues. For example, a round table vs. across from your desk. Putting candidates at ease can bring about more authentic answers and questions.
- Maintain **approachable body language** and remember to smile.
- **Motivational Interviewing techniques** prompt candidates and keep the conversation flowing.

Utilize Effective Questioning:

- **Behavioral Descriptive Interview questions** can be valuable when you know why you're asking them, and when questions match the position and the values of the workplace.
- Provide context or examples of how questions relate to the job before you ask the question.
- Don't hesitate to rephrase questions or try different angles to elicit responses.
- If needed, use **situational questions** to help candidates feel successful and improve their answers.

Remember the Bigger Picture:

- Look beyond the candidate's answers and consider skill set, potential, references and alignment with the organization's values. Be prepared to hire for potential and train for the industry.
- Many candidates who have been hired for their superior **soft skills** and potential rather than their technical skills or previous experience have become loyal top performers.
- When you help a candidate understand the role, the organization, and the values before the interview, candidates can answer your questions in context.

Incorporating these tips into your interviewing process can help you move beyond the ordinary and find candidates who truly align with your organization's goals and culture.