

## Interview Mistakes that Cost You, Great Candidates

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Recruitment is costly, we all know that, not only in terms of money but also time. Getting your recruitment process right means hiring average talent or amazing talent, which in turn will have a massive impact on your organisation.

It's no secret that good people are hard to come by. High calibre candidates will always be in demand. This results in every Hiring Managers' nightmare – multiple offers. Therefore it's essential that companies portray a positive image that will entice candidates and get them excited about working within your organisation. The interview is the first impression a candidate gets of your business beyond the press. This is often their only peek into how the proverbial “sausage is made” in your company. If you are not careful, these interview mistakes will give the wrong impression and lead to great candidates losing interest in working with you.

First, let's establish the key ideas employers should be contemplating before they embark on the hiring process. Why should a candidate choose to accept your offer over another? Does your employer value proposition align with your values? Why would someone choose to accept and stay with your company past the crucial 6-month mark? After establishing these fundamentals, here are 6 things to keep in mind when seeking to create a strong and lasting candidate experience.

### 1. Making candidates wait

A common misconception is that keeping candidates waiting before they are seen will create a good impression. No one wants to be kept waiting for any appointment – It creates a bad first impression. If the candidate has been punctual and turned up early, they may be kept waiting for over 15 minutes. Not a great impression when you're looking to attract the best talent (not push them away).

With the intense competition for top talent in the marketplace today, candidates are going to wait only so long before moving on to the next opportunity. In fact, LinkedIn reports that 47% of global talent say they want to receive follow-up communication after an interview. Successful hiring managers are courteous and timely in their feedback and are truthful with the candidates so that they can manage their expectations.

### 2. Being unprepared

“Fail to prepare, prepare to fail”

According to Geoff Smart and Randy Street (2008) “the single biggest problem in business today”: unsuccessful hiring. Always remember the opportunity cost for your team when they are spending time interviewing. Make the most of it with good, thorough preparation. Have a clear plan for what each

person is meant to evaluate them for in an interview and make sure they come up with good questions. Review the candidate's resume, including their education, achievements, hobbies, and dates matched between roles – identifying where their potential skill gaps or suitability lie.

Some experts believe that roughly 90% of failed hires don't work out because they did not mesh with the company's culture. It's incumbent on you to narrow down exactly what traits were and weren't a match because that provides additional information to incorporate into the next round. Refer back to the job description you would have created with the skills, qualifications, and experience for the ideal candidates. Candidates are unlikely to have each and everyone, therefore, you could allocate weighting to each requirement.

### **3. Not allowing for candidate questions**

Always allow time for at least one or two questions so the candidate can gauge a better idea of the culture and expectations. If the candidate does not understand what is required, you may find yourself refilling the role again in 3 months' time. Specifically set aside time for them to ask questions. Make it a reasonable amount of time, and don't let your questions run over into it. Showing you care about their questions sets the right impression on how you care for the interests of your team.

### **4. Unclear process**

Transparency is the key to a successful recruitment process. According to Elias Torres (2013) It's pivotal you are clear on how many stages there are before a potential offer is made – whether testing is required, how many references will be taken, security probity checks, etc. A candidate can then envisage how long the process will take and weigh this alongside their other interviews. Remember good candidates will have multiple offers – take your time and you'll lose out. You should have a hiring plan and be able to clearly articulate the steps each candidate will or will not go through. If you can move fast through the process, you will build momentum that makes joining your company seems inevitable for a good candidate.

### **5. Keep in contact after they decline your offer**

There will come a time when you meet the perfect candidate, but they have competing offers and accept the alternative. How often have you followed up after they've declined? Candidates make the wrong decisions, companies paint unrealistic pictures of their culture and roles change frequently. Keep in contact and cement that person in your network so that when they decide to reignite their search – you're the first to mind. Communicating post-process goes a long way. If the candidate was impressed the first time around, they are likely to be joining you when they make the leap.

### **6. Failing to sell your organisation**

An interview is a two-way street – it is equally important for you to position your organisation and team, as it is for a candidate to sell themselves. Hiring managers often concentrate too much on evaluation, missing the opportunity to inspire candidates. This is particularly important for hard-to-fill roles, where

talented employees are in high demand. Consider and articulate the key attractions of the role and organisation, so the candidate is equally attracted to both the organisation and the role itself.

Remember it's important to tailor your approach to each person. You want to strengthen your relationship with them and for them to see the value of being a part of your business. Recruitment is a craft, not a pre-defined "one size fits all" process. Follow these simple points and you'll be creating a lasting candidate experience. Finding and hiring good people is tough. They always have options. Don't make it even harder by not getting your interview process right.

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