

# COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWING GUIDE

**OFFICETEAM**<sup>®</sup>

Specialised Administrative Staffing

Talk is not cheap if your interview technique fails to result in the right person filling your vacancy.

OfficeTeam offers a complete administrative recruitment service at all levels. This booklet has been designed to guide you through the interview process and add structure to your approach.

## EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

1. Conducting successful interviews in the 21st century	2
2. Interview introduction	3
3. Interview body	3
4. Applying the Competency Based Technique in the interview body	5
5. Conducting a CBI interview	6
6. Motivations and culture fit	7
7. Company information and job description	8
8. Closing the interview	9
9. Competency Based Interview Checklist	10



## CONDUCTING SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The technique of interviewing has evolved over time and in many ways has changed due to social developments in and out of the workplace. Remember when it was once okay to ask candidates ‘are you married?’, ‘how old are you?’ or ‘sorry, we don’t allow women to wear slacks in the office’. Today, not only do you face big risks asking these types of questions, but you will also miss the opportunity in finding the best candidate to fit your organisation.

But, it’s not just the type of questions you ask. How you structure the interview and the type of technique you use are also critical factors. So ask yourself, how good are your interview techniques and are they up-to-scratch?

Do you:

- Know what to look for in a candidate
- Know what questions to ask to bring out the right information
- Know how to obtain the right information
- Know how to manage overly talkative or monosyllabic candidates
- Make premature decisions
- Talk too much or oversell the company?

Remember, the interview is the most critical tool in assessing whether or not the candidate is the right person for your organisation, so preparing a properly structured interview will help you overcome the most common mistakes.

This booklet has been produced to help you develop effective interview techniques. If you have any queries about the information in this booklet, please contact your OfficeTeam Consultant.

## **Interview introduction**

Greet the candidate, outline your position in the organisation and establish rapport with the candidate – your first impressions leave a lasting effect. Put the candidate at ease; open with an icebreaker, a question or statement. Allow the candidate to feel relaxed and comfortable throughout the interview. Set the agenda; explain what you will cover in the interview. Time is limited, so preparing an agenda will ensure all your questions are covered.

**Tip: Prepare and follow a logical sequence**

## **Interview body**

The body will be the most time consuming part of the interview, so it's very important you plan this. Planning will also increase your ability to make an effective evaluation.

- 1. Find out about the candidate:** What is your education background? What work experience do you have?
- 2. Qualifications:** What qualifications do you have? Where did you achieve your qualifications? What were your results like? Are you currently studying or planning to in the future?
- 3. Work history:** Details to be covered regarding specific roles: job title, main responsibilities, staff responsibilities, structure of the department and reporting lines, computer systems, promotions/progression, current salary/benefits and when it will be reviewed.
- 4. Information gathering:** Ask open ended questions: who, what, why, when, where, how?

**5. Vary the questions:** Use a mixture of both hard and easy questions to relax and stretch the candidate. What are your key areas of responsibility? What areas have you enjoyed? What have you achieved in the role? How do you think your manager/peers perceive your skills? What has been your biggest challenge? What have you personally gained from the company? Where do your strengths lie? How has the role changed in the last few years? What was the most difficult issue you had to address in the last 3 months?

**Tip: Create a proper environment and put the candidate at ease**

**6. Warning signals:** Warning signals to watch out for that need further investigating during the interview process include: indecision about answers to questions, a tendency to criticise past employers, jobs, colleagues, courses etc., inconsistencies in background and attitudes, extreme defensiveness unless caused by your interview techniques, negative attitude to everything, over-aggression in interview, unrealistic claims to accomplishment.

**Tip: Let the candidate do the talking and be a good listener**



# APPLYING THE COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE TO THE INTERVIEW BODY

## What is the technique?

The Competency Based Interview (CBI) is a technique you can apply to make your interview more effective. CBI looks to demonstrate that candidates are judged on the same criteria, only on their true ability to do the job, on impartial criteria.

CBI has a clear focus on establishing 'job fit'. Matching the candidate and the job not only in terms of 'can do' but also in terms of 'will do'.

## Advantages of applying CBI questions

CBI questions are tightly structured, CBI ensures equal, appropriate information is collected from each candidate. CBI lays down a pre-established set of criteria, and bases its opinions on actual behaviours. CBI questions are highly specific and require the candidate to search their memories for examples and validate the success of their outcomes.

**'the interview is easy to do, easier still to do badly'**



## CONDUCTING A CBI INTERVIEW

Candidates are asked to describe their behaviour according to: the situation in which it occurred, the action they took, the outcome.

A simple way to remember this is the SAO process:

**Situation:** The candidate is asked to detail a situation in which they have been called upon to exhibit a certain kind of behaviour.

Example question: Tell me about a situation when you had to deliver some unwelcome news.

**Approach:** Here the candidate details how they set about handling the situation. It's important that you probe to find out about the full process undertaken.

Example question: How did you go about breaking the news?

**Outcome:** Candidates must demonstrate specifically why they feel the outcome was successful. They ideally include independent feedback by someone other than themselves. If a 'vague' answer is received, probe beneath the answer.

Example question: What was the result? How did they take it?

**Probing:** It may be necessary to probe with additional, relevant questions at all stages of the process. For example, during the approach phase, you might ask: what were you thinking at that point? Tell me more about your meeting with that person. Lead me through your decision-making process.

**'CBI has a clear focus on establishing job fit'**

## MOTIVATIONS AND CULTURE FIT

### **Ideal role and working environment**

What a candidate will 'get' from a role influences their decision making process. It is helpful to understand what motivates a candidate and their level of interest in the role.

Example questions: What is it about this opportunity that interests you? What is it you enjoy most about your current role? Why would you leave your current role? How does the role compare to other roles you are considering at present? What is it about this opportunity that attracts you the most? What is your ideal role? What motivates you to do a good job? What un-motivates you in a work place?

**Tip: Perfect your questioning and take notes**

### **Culture fit**

Often candidates are hired for their 'skills' but leave due to the culture or management style. You want to discover what it is about a culture that brings out the best in a candidate. Under what circumstances will they thrive and fail?

Example questions: Describe the style of culture where you have thrived and produced your best results? How do you like to be managed so that you perform at your best? What job have you enjoyed working in the most and why? How would you describe the management style in this job? What job have you found the most disappointing and why? What are the key things you look for in a potential employer? What sort of role and environment helps you produce your best work? What sort of person/manager would you like to work for?

**Tip: Keep your reactions to yourself and stay in control**

## COMPANY INFORMATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION

After discussing with the candidate their motivations and desired work culture you will be able to appropriately tailor how you present your organisation and the role in question.

### Describing the job

It is important to provide the candidate with a strong understanding of the role including: day-to-day responsibilities, who they would be reporting to, description of the team, features and benefits.

### Selling the company

Sell the organisation (but don't oversell) by providing detailed information on: strategies and vision, description of the culture.

### Features and benefits

In the current market place, more and more candidates are making researched and informed decisions when they choose an employer. It is therefore important to differentiate your organisation from your competitors.

**Tip: Don't oversell the position**



## CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

### Answering questions

It is important to give the candidate the opportunity to ask any questions relating to the position, company and process. This is also an opportunity to evaluate the candidate's thought processes and demonstrate their initiative.

### Explain processes

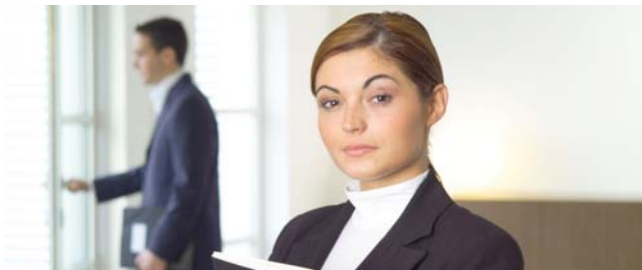
It is important to let the candidate know what the next stage of the recruitment process will be and also provide a time frame.

### Give feedback

A good interviewer will always give the candidate honest and appropriate feedback. This part of the process will allow the candidate to learn from each interview.

It is imperative to close an interview on a positive note as it is the last impression the candidate will remember. Walk the candidate to the door or lift and thank them for their time.

**Tip: Conclude on a proper note**



# THE COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

## The Basic Interview Tools

1. Prepare for the interview
2. Follow a logical sequence
3. Create a proper environment
4. Relax the candidate
5. Let the candidate do the talking
6. Perfect your questioning
7. Become a better listener
8. Keep your reactions to yourself
9. Stay in control
10. Take notes
11. Sell but don't oversell the position
12. Conclude on a proper note

## Sample Agenda

1. Candidate career history and background including skills and achievements
2. What sort of role the candidate is looking for
3. About the role and organisation

OfficeTeam is a division of Robert Half, the world's first and largest specialised staffing firm since 1948. OfficeTeam specialise in the placement of highly qualified office administrative professionals on a temporary and temporary-to-permanent basis.

Visit our website at [www.officeteam.com.au](http://www.officeteam.com.au)

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Melbourne

Tel: 03 9691 3663

Fax: 03 9642 1864

Email: [melbourne@officeteam.com.au](mailto:melbourne@officeteam.com.au)

### Sydney

Tel: 02 9240 0666

Fax: 02 9247 6491

Email: [sydney@officeteam.com.au](mailto:sydney@officeteam.com.au)

**OFFICETEAM**<sup>®</sup>

Specialised Administrative Staffing

A Robert Half International Company