Interviewing
Performance Appraisal
Exit Interviews

English for HR

Warm-up

In pairs, look at the statements below about selecting a job candidate after a round of interviews. Discuss the information and put 'Do' or 'Don't' next to each statement to make 'rules' for selecting a job candidate.

1. Make a snap judgment.

2. Select a candidate in your own image.

3. Select a candidate based on personality rather than ability.

4. Select a candidate based on ability.

5. Review all candidates on an individual basis.

6. Rush the decision-making process.

7. Reconvene to review the candidates again if you have reached a stalemate in the decision-making process.

8. If there is deadlock over 2 or more candidates, select one at random.

9. Contact a candidate's previous employer to check information.

Interview questions and answers

Look at the following 'difficult' questions that you might hear during a job interview:

How would you describe yourself?

What influenced you to choose a career in ...?

How has your university education prepared you for a job in ...?

Tell me about your current job. What have you been doing?

How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?

Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?

How do you handle pressure?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you feel you have to offer this company?

What personal weakness has caused you the greatest difficulty on the job?

What would you say has been your most rewarding accomplishment?

What are your goals for the future?

What do you think you'll be doing in five years' time?

I would describe myself as someone who is ambitious, hardworking and motivated by challenge.

As you can see from my CV, I've been working as a project co-ordinator for the British Council in Rome for several years.

My job has mainly involved organising special events

Against the odds, I managed to successfully work with our partners and reschedule the project events.

I guess at times I am a little reluctant to delegate certain tasks.

I would say successfully completing my university degree has been my most rewarding accomplishment.

My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, and take on additional responsibilities.

Once I gain the necessary experience, I see myself moving on to a management position.

a. describing your current job

b. describing your personal qualities

c. describing a personal weakness

d. describing how you overcame a difficult situation

e. describing your ambitions

f. describing your achievements

Identifying Critical Incidents

Ask your partner to tell you the following about their current position:

- One positive experience had while in that role that led to great success
- One negative experience had while in that role that resulted in problems which negatively impacted their ability to carry out a crucial part of their role

As your partner shares his/her stories, listen carefully to identify what themes are being presented in the stories and how these themes contributed to the individual's success or failure in the role.

Smile for the camera

The rise of the video CV

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the way we communicate and work, taking the video call from an awkward but rare situation to a daily necessity. Job interviews suddenly stopped being 'in-person' and became something you could attend from the comfort of your bedroom, possibly still wearing your pyjamas from the waist down, out of view of your computer camera. (a) _____

Since the beginning of the pandemic, virtual recruitment has climbed, with one study showing 65% of companies hired a new employee without ever meeting them face-to-face. In March 2021, a survey was conducted showing that 79% of managers responsible for hiring defined videos as 'more important' than before the pandemic in order to vet candidates. A further 61% of people looking for jobs saying that they felt a video CV was likely to replace the traditional written document. (b)_____ Research in Canada showed responses were 10% more likely after a video CV was sent, with 66% of employers opening and watching them. LinkedIn created a feature in early 2021 allowing users to put a 30-second video introduction on their profile page, which was followed by TikTok creating a way for users to send their video CVs directly from the site to possible employers.

(c) _____ With a written CV, employers are making their first decisions based on the experience of the candidate and how well their CV is presented and written. A video CV obviously is far more visual and therefore may lead to bias in the process of choosing candidates, even if it is unconscious. Some people are naturally better at presenting themselves while others find it difficult to talk into the camera. (d) _____ So not being good at this task should not mean that you don't get a chance to do the job. Other problems can include the amount of time they take to put together, which some would argue is better spent working on your writing skills. There's also the added work for employers, who can spend a very short amount of time looking at a written CV, possibly less than 10 seconds. (e) _____ Watching 20 virtual candidates now takes at least an hour while 20 written CVs could be read in ten minutes.

(f) _____ Younger people have grown up with the Internet and social media, and will be much more comfortable on camera, which they can use to their advantage. Jobs which require public speaking or regular presentations will benefit from picking candidates in this way and increase the chances for people who are naturally good in this situation, helping them to stand out from the crowd. Like it or not, video CVs could be the future of recruitment.

Scanning for details

Look at the following extracts. Quickly read through the article on page 5 and decide where they should go. There are two extracts which are not used.

1. The video CV does have its negatives, however.

2. Many people will not be happy with the idea of a video CV because they do not like their appearance.

3. Yet video CVs are each likely to last around 3 minutes.

4. For a large number of positions, talking into a camera while being filmed isn't needed.

5. However, for many candidates, a video CV will be a chance to show their personality.

6. So, it is perhaps unsurprising that some companies have started to ask for applications to be delivered in the form of a recorded presentation – a video CV.

7. In the age of Instagram and TikTok, video CVs are an obvious choice.

8. There's evidence that they are effective too.

Hunter and Hunter carried out research into what selection techniques were the most effective in predicting future job performance. The following is a list of their findings in order of effectiveness:

1. a sample of work eg a written report, a presentation
2. tests of job skills
3. the ratings of colleagues
4. test of job knowledge
5. a trial period on the job
6. assessment centres
7. biodata
8. references
9. interviews
10. academic record
11. education
12. self-assessment.

EVALUATING THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Most organizations keep at least minimum statistical information on their recruitment and hiring processes. You will want to evaluate the processes to ensure that it is cost-effective, timely and, most importantly, that you hired the right person! Information gathered may be invaluable for further recruiting as your organization grows. Some things to think about:

Were your methods cost-effective?

Did you stay within budget?

Did your recruitment generate a large enough applicant pool to make a good selection decision?

Were your applicants qualified for the job?

How many applicants must you generate to get a good hire?

How long did it take to fill the position?

How long does it take for a new employee to "get up to speed?"

What about turnover? Do your new employees stay with the organization?

Useful expressions

Now put the expressions from the dialogue in the categories on the next page:

Don't you think he was a bit arrogant?

He seemed pretty motivated.

I had a good feeling about her.

Let's look at who we have here.

He did seem a little too slick for my liking.

I'd definitely consider him.

I'm not sure if he'd be a good fit.

She came across as very outgoing and relaxed.

Presenting the options: _____

Expressing a positive impression: _____

I'd definitely consider him. _____

_____

Expressing a negative impression: _____

_____

Add the following expressions to the above categories:

1. Let's look at the choices.
2. She appeared a bit unenthusiastic.
3. He seemed to be pretty sharp.
4. I don't think she'd be a good fit.
5. I liked the way he handled the problem.
6. She seemed to know what she was talking about.
7. She gave me the impression that she was hiding something.

Making a decision

Look at the expressions below. Put them into the correct category.

Daniella is clearly the best fit.   I'd rather not hire her.   Let's go with John.

Let's keep thinking.   Let's leave her out of the final list.   Let's make him a finalist.

Selecting: _____

_____

Rejecting: _____

_____

Performance reviews

The good, the bad and the ugly

Performance appraisals (PAs) allow an employer to evaluate an individual employee's job performance and productivity in relation to certain pre-established criteria and organisational objectives. They usually take place once or twice a year and involve an interview with the employee. While there are many potential benefits of PAs, there are also some potential drawbacks.

Benefits

PAs can often give individual workers useful feedback about their job performance, which helps them become more productive. In addition, PAs improve communication between managers and staff and this helps employees understand better what their boss expects of them. If an employee needs more training in a specific area, the PA can help determine this. Finally, PAs help with goal setting and collaboration – both managers and workers can match individual goals and performance with organisational goals.

Drawbacks

Despite the advantages of PAs, there are a few potential complications. If the evaluation is the manager's subjective opinion, this could have a negative impact on the employee's future performance. Reviews should instead be supported by data, for example customer surveys or other statistics. Another potential problem is the tension and stress that PAs can cause between employees and their supervisors during the period before the appraisal. Finally, employers need to set realistic performance goals during a PA. When goals are too challenging or impossible to meet, the PA will have a negative effect on the employee's morale and relationship with his/her supervisor or manager.

1. How does Sandra's manager feel about her performance overall?
   a. disappointed
   b. indifferent
   c. very satisfied

2. How many calls per hour has Sandra been handling since the last performance review?
   a. 7
   b. 11
   c. 12

3. How many calls per hour was she handling in the previous year?
   a. 7
   b. 11
   c. 12

4. What goal did they set at the previous meeting?
   a. 7 calls/hour
   b. 11 calls/hour
   c. 12 calls/hour

5. What does Sandra need to do to improve even more?
   a. handle more calls
   b. try to keep calm
   c. improve call quality

6. What salary increase does Sandra's manager offer?
   a. 7%
   b. 11%
   c. 15%

Phrasal verbs

Complete the phrasal verbs and their meanings with one of the words from the list.

bring	get	grow	kick	move	pack	stay	take

1. to begin something: _____ off
2. to begin something new: _____ on
3. to decide to be responsible for something: _____ on
4. to remain somewhere longer than originally planned: _____ on
5. to criticise something: _____ at
6. to develop and be able to do something: _____ into
7. to start talking about a new subject: _____ up
8. to stop doing something: _____ in

Now complete the following sentences with the correct phrasal verbs. Make sure you use the correct form of the verb.

1. I'm not trying to _____ you I just think you need to pay more attention to detail with the customers.
2. The other manager in the team is going to be in hospital for a while, so I've agreed to _____ her workload while she's away.
3. Chris, I hear you're _____ to another company? We'll really miss you around here.
4. When I first took this job, I was only going to do it for a year or two. But it turns out I really like it and I ended up _____ . It's been over ten years now.
5. I'm meeting my manager today and I'm hoping to _____ the subject of my pay rise.
6. We'll be _____ the meeting at just 3 o' clock sharp, so if you need to get a coffee, go now.
7. I don't know why you keep interrupting me in meetings, but you're going to have to _____it_____ - It's incredibly arrogant and rude.
8. I was worried I didn't have the right experience for the job when I started, but I feel as though I've _____ the role over time.

Comprehension

Which of the following are problems with the exit interview? Tick ✓all that apply.

- ☐ The interview isn't scheduled in the last couple of days before the employee leaves.
- ☐ The HR representative doesn't explain what will happen in the exit interview.
- ☐ The line manager asks very personal questions.
- ☐ The line manager is very defensive.

- ☐ The HR representative is rude to the employee.
- ☐ The employee's line manager was invited to the exit interview.
- ☐ The employee refuses to answer some of the questions.
- ☐ The HR manager is very defensive.

Central tendency error

occurs when the rater doesn't give high or low scores. Instead, all employees are rated about the same, which is average.

Exit interviews

A time to learn

_____[1] , you have a member of staff who has decided to move on to another job? _____[2] organising leaving drinks and a collection for gifts, you might also want to spend time doing an exit interview. There are people that believe this to be a waste of time. _____[3] , what are they going to say in the exit interview that they haven't said in the years they spent working for you? _____[4] , it is a good time for a company to obtain an informed opinion about what it is like to work there and use it as a chance to improve the way the company and managers run the business. Here are some good general rules to follow to make sure it's an effective meeting for everyone.

_____[5] , it's a good idea to conduct the interview as close as possible to the employee's last day, preferably in the last two days. _____[6] , the employee should be relaxed with fewer tasks to attend to and will be able to consider their answers carefully which will be more useful to you.

_____[7] , at the beginning, explain the goal of the interview to the employee and tell them what you will be discussing. You will get better information if the employee is relaxed and doesn't feel as though there are unexplained reasons for talking to you. It's _____[8] a good idea to keep the interview quite brief.

If you want honest feedback, it's better not to have the employee's manager present at the interview. Even if they have a positive relationship, the situation can quickly get awkward if the leaver feels that their work could have been handled differently or they have a criticism of the management process.

Listen to what the leaver has to say carefully. Don't get defensive and try and explain anything that they are negative about. Try to see the situation through their eyes and think about how it could be improved.

_____[9] , keep the questions you ask them general. Ask them to think about what they particularly liked, what they felt could be improved. Remember that they have knowledge that can help you, so give them the power to express that knowledge. Ask for their help, for their recommendations for the business. This should be true of employees from all levels of the business, from the interns to the CEO.

While it can be sad to lose employees, it is a good time to use their feedback to improve the experience for those who replace them. Employees will always move on, but wouldn't it be fantastic if all of those who leave your business proudly told others they had worked for you and how much they enjoyed it? The search for excellence always requires continued assessment.

Listen: Feedback formula part 1 and 2

In this part of the talk (1:47-2:27), you will hear about the first part of the formula. Watch to decide if these statements are true or false:

1. The first part of the feedback formula starts with a yes/no question.

2. At this stage, you only have to be short.

3. This stage tricks the brain into feeling happy.

4. People who are receiving feedback can decide how to answer the question.

In this part of the talk (2:27 - 3:22), you will hear about the second part of the formula. Watch to find the answers to these questions:

1. What is a *blur word*? Give an example.

2. How is a *data point* different to a *blur word*?

3. Does this advice only apply to negative feedback?

In this part of the talk (3:22 - 4:49), you will hear about the third and fourth parts of the formula, plus an extra piece of advice. Watch to find the answers to these questions:

1. What information does the impact statement include? Is it always negative?

2. How does the impact statement help make your point?

3. What is the fourth part of the feedback formula?

4. Why is this important?

5. What's the final thing that the speaker says great feedback givers also do?