



the employment interview

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IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKET, the task of hiring new staff for the MICE industry can be a challenging and daunting process. Choose the wrong person and you waste valuable time and money.

So how can you ensure that you will select the best individual for the job? To reduce the risk of making a costly mistake, the process of interviewing potential employees needs to be given precedence. The employment interview is a crucial component in the recruitment of new staff. While there is a tendency to focus on a candidate's performance in an interview, the employer's performance is just as important. An employer's interview approach should not be underestimated as good interview skills can assist in the assessment and selection of high quality personnel. Here are some interview guidelines that can assist in hiring the right candidate.

1. Preparation is important! Read the candidate's resume before the interview and compile a set of questions that will verify their competencies, qualifications, duties performed and any employment gaps/overlaps stated in their resume. Also, being familiar with a candidate's resume means that they won't have to repeat simple information that is clearly stated in their resume. This is frustrating for the candidate in addition to being a waste of valuable interview time.

2. Compile a set of standard interview questions to use for all candidates. Having a standard format ensures that all candidates are being judged by the same approach and also helps when having to compare candidate suitability. Open-ended questions are great as they allow the employer to see how individuals are able to express themselves. It is important not to focus purely on ensuring all the set questions are asked, but to listen carefully to each response. If the answers are unclear or the candidate appears to be avoiding the question, ask for further information. Ask only one question at a time and allow the candidate sufficient time to answer before moving onto the next item.

3. Know the interview objectives. When undertaking the task of interviewing candidates it is crucial that you understand what the interview is attempting to identify. Does the person have the attitude and skills needed to perform the job? Will they fit into the current workplace environment? Do they have the enthusiasm and motivation to succeed in the position? How do they compare to other candidates under consideration? Objectives help frame the content of an interview, giving the employer a structured and more efficient approach when identifying suitable candidates.

4. Create a friendly atmosphere. In the initial stages of an interview it is natural for a candidate to be a little nervous. Allow for this, as the last thing you want is to overlook a good

candidate because they were anxious or ill at ease during the interview. Establish rapport with the candidate and attempt to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. You can achieve this through a warm introduction and by spending the first few minutes referring to the candidate's hobbies and interests or any unique areas evident in their resume. Also, it is a good idea to inform the candidate of the interview format ahead of them, so they have an idea of what to expect.

5. Learn to listen. A common complaint by candidates is that they weren't given the opportunity to prove their suitability for a position because the employer dominated the conversation. Allow the candidates to sell themselves by encouraging them to do most of the talking. Be an active listener by responding to their answers with interest. Having said this, it is important that you also maintain control of the conversation to prevent answers from becoming too drawn out or getting off track.

6. Sell the company. Don't assume that the candidate automatically wants to work for your company. Employers need to realise that candidates are likely to be applying for other positions. Promote the positive aspects of the available position, mentioning the strengths of your company and any potential for career growth and learning opportunities. It is not only what the candidate has to offer, but also what the employer can offer the candidate.

7. Any questions? At the end of the interview provide the candidate with an opportunity to ask for further information regarding the available position or your company. In addition to covering anything that was missed throughout the interview, it can help give an indication of their enthusiasm and knowledge of the role.

8. Record your overall impression. It is important to make notes about each candidate while they are still fresh in your mind. After the interview you should record your overall impression of the candidates seen, assessing their presentation and personality in addition to judging their competence in relation to the available position. Writing a candidate summary is a valuable tool when faced with the task of comparing individuals and their suitability for the position.

These are a few interview techniques that, if utilised, can increase your skill in identifying top quality candidates for your organisation and, in turn, help to give you that competitive edge. For further information please contact Event Recruitment on 02 9279 1533 or email info@eventrecruitment.com.au