

5.3.18: Who's in an Interview

Learning Objectives

- Identify who should be present at an interview.

The question of who should participate in an interview is function of a number of factors such as culture, Human Resource and/or position-specific experience, and expertise and business or industry practice.

In general, **one-on-one interviews**, conducted by a Human Resource representative or the hiring manager, are the most common.

A second type of interview is a **series interview**, where a candidate is evaluated in a series of one-on-one interviews with multiple interviewers. These interviewers usually include a Human Resource representative and the hiring manager as well as representatives from the teams the position is a part of and works with. Each interviewer will have a unique perspective and ask questions unique to their understanding of the job and its function within the company. Typically interviewers will all discuss their observations and evaluations with the hiring manager, who will make the final decision.

A third type of interview that is standard practice in academia and common in business is the **panel interview**. In a panel interview, a committee of several interviewers meets with the candidate at the same time. When using this format, interviewers generally ask an established set of questions in order, taking notes and, in some environments, filling out a corresponding evaluation form. The evaluation form is similar to a grading rubric, with individual questions weighted like evaluation criteria and totaling to 100 percent. After the interview, participants compare their observations and evaluations. Potential benefits of a panel interview include a broader and more reliable evaluation of a candidate's abilities and greater ownership of the results, which may also extend to greater support for the successful candidate during the onboarding process and beyond.

There are, however, some potential drawbacks of a panel interview:

- If a member of the interviewing team feels a particular candidate is a competitive threat, he or she may use the evaluation to sabotage the candidate.
- If an interviewer resents the position or feels it should be filled by a friend or colleague, results will be skewed.
- If an individual interviewer or the interview committee make a hiring recommendation that's overruled by management, there may be resentment toward the successful candidate and a decrease in the individual or committee members' engagement or motivation.

Regardless of the format used, those involved in the selection process should be trained in effective interviewing techniques and briefed on what questions are off-limits for both legal and candidate (employer brand) perception purposes.

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