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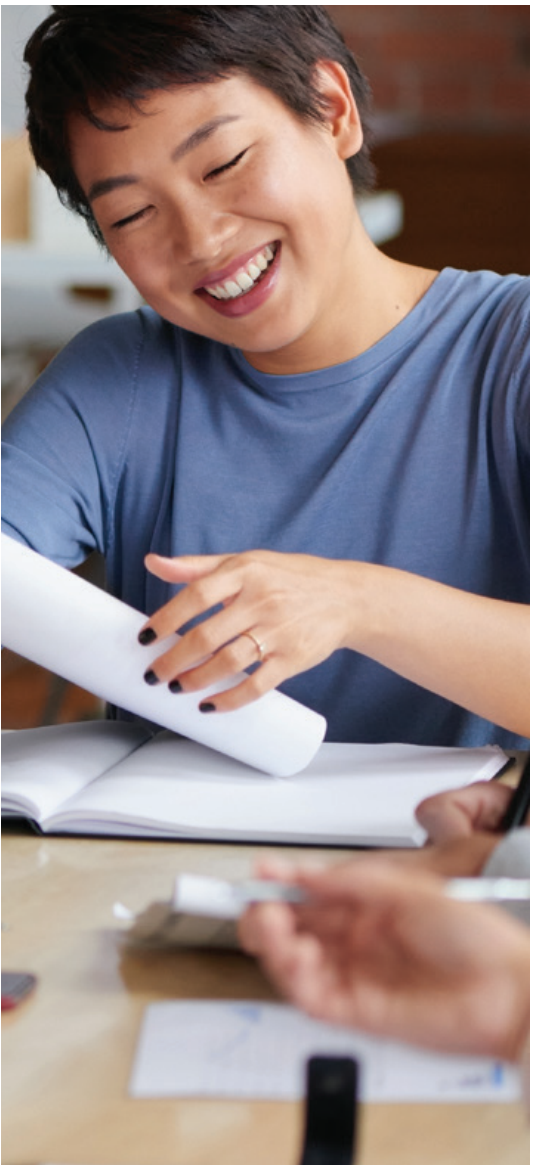
TEMPLATES FOR HIRING PROS

How to Conduct Better Interviews

INTRODUCTION



A bad hire can cost your company as much as **30% of a yearly salary,**[1] so there's no room for mistakes during the interview process. The mood, attitude and perspective of unhappy or disgruntled employees can rub off on others, affecting the company culture of the entire team or office. A thriving culture depends on hiring employees that can both do a job well and align with company values.

60% | **of hiring managers and HR professionals** said bad hires don't get along with other employees.[2]

Your employer brand also depends on a good hiring process. Happy employees write better reviews about their company on Glassdoor. Likewise, **candidate interview reviews on Glassdoor influence and inform** the perceptions of your company for fellow job seekers.

6 REVIEWS | The majority of **job seekers read at least six reviews** before forming an opinion of a company.[3]

Sources: [1] U.S. Department of Labor; [2] Robert Half Survey, 2012; [3] Glassdoor U.S. Site Survey, January 2016

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To leave candidates with a great interview experience, **interviewers need to be prepped and prepared**. Our guide and checklists will help you do just that!

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SECTION 1

Interview Planning

Because requirements differ between different positions and teams, **have a structured plan before posting each job** to ensure the highest quality candidate eventually receives and accepts an offer.

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Organize the Process

- ✓ **Create an evaluation flow map** for each position. Steps may include:
  - Initial phone/video screen
  - Phone/video screen
  - Test or assignment
  - First round of interviews
  - Second round of interviews
  - Team presentation
- ✓ **Identify interviewers upfront** and assign topics based on interviewer role or evaluative strength.
- ✓ **Implement standardized feedback** mechanisms through scorecards or questionnaires.
- ✓ **Schedule post-interview debriefs** if appropriate.

Communicate

- ✓ **Communicate next steps** to candidates as they get eliminated or progress through each stage.
- ✓ **Follow-up with interviewers** when large discrepancies in candidate evaluation occur.
- ✓ **Stress the importance of feedback deadlines** and on-time arrival for interviewers.

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SECTION 2

Pre-Interview Checklist

A day or two before in-person interviews, review this Pre-Interview Checklist to **prevent last-minute mishaps**. You don't want your candidates sensing your team is unprepared.

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Be Prepared to Prevent Last-Minute Mishaps

Re-read the job description and candidate's resume ☐

Write down questions to ask the candidate ☐

Double check room availability and technical support ☐

Check Glassdoor for any recent reviews of your company, particularly for reviews in the department or role the candidate is interviewing for ☐

Make sure every interviewer has:

- The job description ☐
- A copy of the candidate's resume ☐
- Correct interview time and location ☐
- Information about who the candidate will report to and work with most frequently ☐
- Instructions on interview direction or topic (if decided upon in advance) ☐
- Basic company info ☐
- Information on next steps ☐

Follow-up by soliciting feedback and/or attending post-interview debrief ☐

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SECTION 3

Interview Prep List

Make sure your interviewers **tell a consistent story** about your company and are well-informed about both the candidate and position. Use the following form to ensure all interviewers are **prepared with key facts** about the organization and position.

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The Company

- Company mission statement ☐
- Key dates and metrics (i.e. year founded, total number of employees, etc.) ☐
- Recent acquisitions or major partnerships (if applicable) ☐
- Benefits: vacation, health insurance, perks ☐

The Position

- Mission and function of department or team ☐
- Title and responsibilities (including the job description) ☐
- Reporting structure ☐
- Identify cross-functional team members ☐
- Future initiatives of department or team ☐
- Career growth opportunities ☐
- Potential start date of position ☐
- Salary range (if appropriate for interviewer) ☐

Glassdoor

- Glassdoor rating ☐
- CEO approval rating ☐
- Red or green flags about Glassdoor reviews ☐

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SECTION 4

How to Interview for Culture Fit

Company culture is one of the five **most important factors job seekers consider before accepting a new job**, according to a Glassdoor survey. In our Top 25 Companies for Culture & Values list, we found shared themes including having a supportive, team-oriented atmosphere, a family-like environment and genuinely standing behind company values.

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Tips on Interviewing Candidates for a Culture Fit

GENERAL CULTURAL FIT

To **elicit a candidate's values and work behaviors**, ask questions about work habits, ideal role, problem solving and how they handle challenges (see the next page for examples). For each question, analyze the response based on how well it complements the way other employees at your company function.

COMPANY VALUES

List your company's values, then **craft an associated question designed to illuminate how a candidate might react** or behave in that environment or circumstance. For example, if "agility" is one of your values, consider asking a question like, "Tell me about a time you were thrown into a new environment and how you handled that." Evaluate the response based on how well the candidate demonstrates they can embody that value.

TEAM CULTURE

Every team has its own culture based on the natural function of the role and the personalities within it. A talkative, assertive personality might be a perfect fit for a high-energy sales team, but not within a more quiet, analytical department like engineering.

Ask the hiring manager to **identify key traits of the team** and craft a question for each. For example, if you're looking for someone scrappy, ask a situational question about what the candidate would do in a given situation with limited resources.

General Tips

Get outside the office. Take candidates to lunch, for a walk or to a coffee shop. Observe how they treat service workers and cope with any challenges like a crowded street, a long line or weather. A more casual setting outside the interview room will more closely reveal their character.

Beware of bias. Many people have an unconscious tendency to make assumptions about a person based appearance, background or hobbies. They also tend to want to be around people just like them. To ensure diversity on your teams, make sure candidates for the same position are evaluated on the same objective criteria.

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Cultural Fit Question Worksheet

Use this sheet as a guide to list your cultural traits, company values and team traits. **Write questions prior to the interview** that address each value or trait as shown in the examples. We've kicked things off with a few examples to get your creative juices flowing:

GENERAL CULTURAL FIT QUESTIONS

GENERAL (Fill in with additional topics)	SAMPLE QUESTION (Fill in with additional general questions)
Work environment	*Tell me about your ideal work environment?*
Team	*Tell me about a time you helped a coworker. What was the outcome?*
Problem-solving	*What's the most difficult problem you had to solve and how did you solve it?*

COMPANY VALUE QUESTIONS

VALUE (Fill in with your values)	SAMPLE QUESTION (Fill in with questions that address your values)

TEAM TRAIT QUESTIONS

TEAM TRAITS (Fill in with your team traits)	SAMPLE QUESTION (Fill in with questions that address your team traits)

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SECTION 5

When a Candidate Mentions Glassdoor in an Interview

Considering that **nine out of 10 (89%) Glassdoor users are job seekers**,[1] it's highly likely that you'll encounter candidates who have read your company's reviews on Glassdoor. In a **candidate-driven market**, job seekers want to find out as much as they can about a prospective employer's culture, benefits and salaries before they apply and interview.

Source: [1] Glassdoor U.S. Site Survey, January 2016

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Guidelines on Managing Questions About Glassdoor Reviews in an Interview

✓ Be prepared.

- Read recent Glassdoor reviews.
- Determine which ones need a response, and enlist an appropriate person to respond.
- Read our eBook *Responding to Reviews Builds Trust With Candidates*.

62%

of Glassdoor users agree their perception of a company improves after seeing an employer respond to a review.[1]

✓ Alert the team.

If a Glassdoor reviewer mentions issues relevant to a specific department, send a note to the hiring team. For example, *"We have had some reviews on Glassdoor about interviewers showing up late. Please show up on time for your interviews with every candidate to address this issue!"*

✓ Acknowledge comments about Glassdoor.

Transparency means being able to acknowledge both the good and the bad and moving forward with a positive attitude. Use these examples to guide your responses:

SAMPLE COMMENT	SAMPLE RESPONSE
"I read your reviews on Glassdoor and it made me want to work here."	*"Thank you. We really appreciate it when people take time to share their experience with us. We hope you'll leave a review after your interview process is complete."*
"Your reviews on Glassdoor are pretty mixed."	*"Glassdoor reviews are one way we collect feedback to help make us a better company. What specifically did you find concerning?"*
"I read on Glassdoor that there are some problems with management."	*"We know that all jobs aren't right for all people. We're aware of the comments and working to address those issues." (Also, speak to what you're doing to address those issues internally.)*

Source: [1] Glassdoor U.S. Site Survey, January 2016

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SECTION 6

Oddball Interview Questions

Often dreaded by candidates, oddball questions can also be the most enlightening. Not only can they help disarm candidates but they can also indicate how well candidates deal with unexpected situations. Used strategically, these questions can **indicate problem solving ability, creativity and cultural fit**.

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Categories and Sample Questions From Our Top Interview Oddball Questions List

PROBLEM SOLVING

These questions often involve estimating a quantity of something not easily counted or determined. The goal is not necessarily seeing a candidate arrive at an answer so much as **gaining insight into their thought process** in searching for that answer.

- *Asked at J.W. Business Acquisitions: "How would you sell hot cocoa in Florida?"*
- *Asked at Uniqlo: "If you had $2,000, how would you double it in 24 hours?"*
- *Asked at Delta Air Lines: "How many basketballs would fit in this room?"*
- *Asked at Space Exploration Technologies: "When a hot dog expands, in which direction does it split and why?"*
- *Asked at Whole Foods Market: "Would you rather fight 1 horse-sized duck, or 100 duck-sized horses?"*

CREATIVITY

Questions that illuminate a candidate's creativity often involve imagining a situation based on a movie, TV show or celebrity. They may also ask the candidate to imagine how to use an object for an uncommon purpose. Watch how long it takes the candidate to respond, and how the answer **reflects their ability to think outside the box**. Caution: If the question is related to popular culture, don't hold back points if the candidate is unfamiliar with the topic.

- *Asked at Trader Joe's: "What would you do if you found a penguin in the freezer?"*
- *Asked at Boston Consulting Group: "If you were a brand, what would be your motto?"*

CULTURAL FIT/VALUES

These questions might directly ask about a value, or force the candidate to describe a situation that reveals his or her behavior. Evaluate how well the response matches your company's culture and values.

- *Asked at Urban Outfitters: "What would the name of your debut album be?"*
- *Asked at Dropbox: "If you're the CEO, what are the first three things you check about the business when you wake up?"*
- *Asked at HubSpot: "If I gave you $40,000 to start a business, what would you start?"*

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SECTION 7

Why You Should Make Interviews More Difficult

What does the difficulty of a job interview have to do with employee satisfaction? According to a Glassdoor Economic Research study, **more difficult job interviews are statistically linked to higher employee satisfaction** across six countries examined: U.S., UK, Canada, Australia, Germany and France.

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In examining 154,000 pairs of interview reviews and company reviews submitted to Glassdoor by the same individual, for the same company, at two different point in time, we found:

1. Overall, a **10% more difficult** job interview process is associated with **2.6% higher employee satisfaction** later on.

2. The optimal or **"best" interview difficulty** level in every country is **4 out of 5** — an interview experience that is difficult but not overwhelmingly so for candidates.

Candidates who go through a rigorous (but not too rigorous) interview process can perceive that the company places a **high value** on finding employees who are a good match for both the position and the company culture. By **meeting with multiple team members** and sharing their skills in a presentation or assignment, candidates get a comprehensive picture of the culture and the job itself, and team members get a strong sense of the contribution the candidate will make as an employee.

Remember, **difficult should mean rigorous, not deflating or confusing**. Candidates want to feel as though their experience and intelligence is valued. By developing a well-defined interview process (Section 1), ensuring prompt response times (Section 10) and using a selection of the tips on the following page, you'll make better hires and prevent "disorganized" from being equated with "difficult."

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Four Ways to Make Your Interview Process More Difficult

Whether you adopt one or all four of the following tactics as part of efforts to make your interviews more difficult, planning and prepping interviewers is key.

1 Creative Interviewing

- Determine defining factors for cultural and skills fit.
- Use behavioral interviewing techniques.
- Read "*How to Interview for Cultural Fit*" and "*Oddball Interview Questions*" sections of this report.

2 Test or Written Assignment

- Determine objectives of test or assignment: personality, values, skills, etc.
- Decide how candidates will be moved forward or eliminated based on test results (scoring thresholds, ideal profile, unacceptable answers, etc.).

3 Panel Interview

- Prepare interviewers with job description and resume.
- Identify a panel leader.
- Assign roles to each interviewer based on job function or expertise.
- Solicit feedback via scorecard or post-interview debrief.

4 Presentation

- Determine objectives for evaluation of presentation with team.
- Be specific about presentation topic to candidate.
- Suggest ideal template or format for slides or other presentation materials.
- Solicit feedback via scorecard or post-panel debrief.

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SECTION 8

Illegal Interview Questions

Federal and state laws protect employees from discrimination by age, race, gender, national origin, citizenship, disabilities, marital status, sexual orientation, arrest and conviction record, military discharge status and pregnancy status. The purpose of a job interview is to **determine whether someone has the ability to do the job**.

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To prevent discrimination lawsuits, share this list of questions which cannot be asked with interviewers ahead of time.

- *How old are you?*
- *When did you graduate from _____?*
- *Are you married?*
- *Are you gay?*
- *Do you have/plan on having children?*
- *Who will take care of your children while you're at work?*
- *Is English your first language?*
- *Are you a U.S. citizen?*
- *What country are you from?*
- *Where were you/your parents born?*
- *What is your religion?*
- *Where do you go to church?*
- *What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?*
- *Do you have any disabilities?*
- *How is your health?*
- *How tall are you? How much do you weigh?*
- *Have you ever been arrested?*
- *If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?*

This list is not intended to be complete or constitute legal advice. If you have questions about the legality of interview questions, please consult your organization's attorney.

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SECTION 9

Keeping the Candidate Informed

When candidates know what's coming next, they **feel respected and valued**. When they receive prompt and personalized rejection notifications, they're more likely keep a **positive impression** of your company despite the rejection.

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Set Expectations at Every Step

✓ **Make sure candidates know:**

- General timeline for hiring process
- Names and roles of interviewers prior to each round
- Useful information such as expectations for a particular meeting, personal quirks or objectives of specific interviewers
- Expected response time after each step

Notify Candidates

✓ **Create rejection template emails** that mention the interview steps completed by the candidate. Personalize each email by the recipient's name and the name of the team and/or team members. **Create a separate template for each of these steps:**

- Initial phone/video screen
- Phone/video screen and test
- First round of interviews
- Second round
- Presentation

✓ **Send emails** as soon as a candidate is rejected.

✓ **Mention if you would like them to apply** for another role at the company in the future.

✓ **Ask candidates to write a review on Glassdoor:** *"If you'd like to share your experience with others, feel free to write a review of your interview with us on Glassdoor."*

✓ **Call candidates who made it to the final round** of a senior-level position, spent a significant amount of time interviewing or traveled to the interview.

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SECTION 10

Exit Interview Questions

Exit interviews are an important tool to **understand how to improve workplace processes and culture**. Whether you conduct exit interviews in person or via written/online questionnaire, ask the following 10 questions to understand what your company is doing well and what it could do better to engage and retain employees. Of course, these questions will mainly apply to employees who voluntarily leave and may not be appropriate if an employee is let go.

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10 Questions to Better Engage and Retain Employees

1. *Why did you begin looking for a new job?*
2. *What ultimately led you to accept the new position?*
3. *Did you have the tools and resources you needed to effectively do your job? If not, what was missing?*
4. *What three things could your manager or company do to improve?*
5. *How would you describe the culture of our company? Give specific examples of things that you think defines our culture.*
6. *If a friend was looking for a job, would you recommend us? Why or why not?*
7. *What could have been done to keep you employed here?*
8. *What will you miss about working here?*
9. *What would you have wanted to know about our company before starting here?*
10. *Would you like to share any other unresolved issues or additional comments?*

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CONCLUSION

In preparing this guide, we combed through hundreds of interview reviews for top-rated companies on Glassdoor. With such a rich, competitive resource at your disposal, we encourage you to look beyond your own company and interview reviews on Glassdoor. In fact, studying your main competitors for talent (or similar companies in your industry) and learning what makes them successful in candidates' eyes can help you optimize your own strategies and tactics, giving you a **competitive talent acquisition advantage**.

ACTION TIP

Check out our 2017 Best Places to Work lists to learn from the pros.

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About Glassdoor

With millions of company reviews, salary reports, interview reviews and benefits reviews on more than 640,000[1] companies worldwide, Glassdoor is a trusted and transparent place for today's candidates to search for jobs and research companies. Glassdoor helps employers across all industries and sizes advertise their jobs and promote their employer brands to a well-researched, highly selective candidate pool. By advertising jobs via mobile devices, email alerts and throughout Glassdoor, employers influence candidates at the moment they're searching jobs and making decisions. This results in more-informed candidates that require 50% fewer resumes to find a quality hire at a fraction of the cost of traditional job boards.

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Sources: [1]*Glassdoor Internal Data, December 2016;* [2]*As measured by application-to-hire ratio compared to other job sites based on a study of 2015 hiring data for 30 million applications*