

Virtual Interview Guide For Employers

In order to comply with social distancing, keeping our candidates, consultants and their families safe from the Covid 19 coronavirus, we moved our interviews and assessments of candidates to a virtual safe space.

During the past month of office closure and consultants working from home we have interviewed hundreds of candidates and arranged numerous virtual interviews with clients. Whilst we have years of experience interviewing and gaining an accurate assessment of a candidate face to face, things are a little different in a virtual space and the recruitment process has become even more important to get right.

A face to face interview can often be an intimate experience between two or more people, usually in a confined space where naturally air is shared providing a greater opportunity of transference of the virus. We are impressing upon our staff and our candidates the importance of following government isolation measures and **we will notify you of any candidate who is displaying symptoms or who is known to have been with someone with symptoms.** We implemented this early at the first signs of the outbreak in the UK when we asked candidates to let us know and therefore not to attend interviews if they had been in contact with anyone who had been tested positive or who was showing symptoms and follow the recommended timeline for isolation.

We are all being asked to prepare to continue with social distancing when measures are lifted and we return to the office. With that in mind, we are recommending that **as many interviews are conducted virtually with clients and candidates to limit close proximity even after lockdown.**

We also recommend that **additional virtual interviews should be added to the usual recruitment hire process** in order to build the relationship and avoid unjustified bias.

Once the candidate has been selected, much of the **onboarding can be done remotely** and the candidate can start on a solid footing and become as effective and productive as quickly as possible.

We will need to adapt to a new way of working and operating but if we can be creative and opportunistic, we may find that **we are more efficient, productive, fulfilled and happier as a result.**

Here are a few flags and tips to consider before connecting with your potential employee in a virtual world.

- 1 Preparation is key not just to maximise the accuracy of your assessment of the candidate but to ensure your favourite candidate is impressed by you.
- 2 Prepare an accurate Person Specification considering skills, experience, personality, cultural fit (detail gained from current incumbent, their team and managers for priorities).
- 3 Prepare a recruitment process considering additional interviews (virtual) than usual with individual team members and as a group. If the candidate is aware of the process at the beginning your Consultant can manage their expectations and other jobs they are applying for.
- 4 Give your Consultant any information on the job spec, company including any employee benefits so that you have an interested and informed candidate to interview.
- 5 Give your Consultant your preferred virtual platform so that we can ensure they have the software/app downloaded, tested and the invitation ready. If you are new to virtual interviews do a quick screen check with your Consultant to ensure you have a suitable background!
- 6 Send a reminder of the interview schedule 15 minutes prior to it starting so that you are both on time and ready.
- 7 Read the CV and mark up with notes and relevant questions considering skills, experience and character fit for the position referring to the person spec. This helps to focus your attention on the critical hire factors rather than irrelevant distractions, keep the interview flow and impress the candidate.
- 8 Start with open questions to get the interview flowing ... "tell me about" is a good one to get the candidate talking and relaxed. Equally don't be afraid to probe further with a "what, when, why" question if you feel the candidate is being vague, off-point or irrelevant or a "could you tell me more" if they are struggling to articulate.
- 9 Be mindful of employment law and keep off any unlawful questioning such as age, marital status, children.
- 10 Have your list of questions ready and CV and agency profile summary printed off with a pen and paper for making notes.

- 11 Notes should be answers to questions and be factual and not derogatory. Try to be as objective as possible referring back to the person spec. The notes can then be used to assess, shortlist and to provide feedback to the Consultant and candidate.
- 12 Give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions. If you don't know the answer you can pass this to your Consultant later.
- 13 Write up an assessment of the candidate after the interview so that you can help remember each candidate accurately and provide objective feedback to your Consultant.
- 14 Compare the notes of all the candidates referring to the person spec criteria. It can be helpful to give them out of 10 for skills, experience, education, personality, cultural fit and enthusiasm to compare them particularly if you have several who you are finding difficult to differentiate you can discuss objectively with your Consultant.
- 15 Use the feedback from your Consultant to assess the candidate's enthusiasm for the role and what other roles they are being offered.
- 16 Make the recruitment process as short as possible to ensure you secure your chosen candidate. Whilst there are few jobs during lockdown, we are anticipating a high demand when the jobs that are on hold come back on. If you can move as far along the recruitment process now, you will be the first in the queue to select the best candidates.

