

# BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

How you can hire  
better employees

Page 3

Best Practices For Interviewing: What NOT to do

Page 4

A Better Approach to Hiring & Interviewing

Page 6

How A-list Interviews Can Help

Page 6

How Obsidian HR Can Help



Hiring has never been easy. You may have experienced the frustration of hiring someone who seemed like a good person only to find they're a bad employee.

Hiring is also a time-consuming process with multiple steps. The most challenging and important step to get right is the interview. But interviews can take up a lot of your time. On average, HR professionals spend two-thirds of their overall hiring time on the interview process.<sup>1</sup> Yet, HR spends little time preparing for it. The most amount of time is spent reviewing applications – with only 1.5 hours preparing for the interview.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the time commitment and the importance of interviews, employers and HR professionals have even more to contend with in the interview process. Interviews have become predictable. Candidates can easily prepare and make the process less genuine by telling you what they think you want to hear – resulting in a bad hiring decision.

The cost of a bad hire? It's steep.

## 4 Ways a Bad Hire Negatively Impacts You



### Finances

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates turnover can cost an organization up to 30% of an employee's total compensation – both salary and benefits. So every employee you lose because of a bad hire has a significant impact on your bottom line.



### Reputation

If a bad hire behaves poorly in front of your customers it hurts your reputation and future profitability.



### Productivity

Bad employees also have a way of influencing those around them. A bad hire can create high levels of stress and poor team morale. Your team's productivity could be temporarily damaged as a result.



### Culture

Your culture is out of balance when your employee hiring is ineffective. The culture and camaraderie you've worked hard to build and instill among your employees can quickly crumble with just one bad apple.

There are best practices you can use to hire better employees. There's also a better approach to the interview process that results in better hiring decisions – and maybe even a more enjoyable hiring experience.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING: WHAT NOT TO DO

### **Don't lie to candidates**

Though it should go without saying, lying to a candidate is never a good idea. If you feel the need to lie about a particular question, then there are other issues to solve outside of your hiring practices. This also goes for not answering a question or lying by omission. Candidates will take that as a bad sign. Be honest about what the role entails – the good and the bad. This will give the candidate a better understanding of what it takes to be successful in your company.



### **Don't talk too much**

While answering candidate questions will require you to talk some, avoid adding in your own experiences or anecdotes as you interview. Particularly, the first interview should be about the candidate. The candidate will be able to get to know you in follow-ups should they be qualified for your position.

### **Don't ask about information you already have**

Resumes are used for a reason. Anything that's listed on a resume, you don't need to ask about in an interview. The interview should be about qualifying the candidate to meet your needs outside of their skills and experience.

### **Don't ask yes or no questions**

Interviews should be more conversational. Yes or no questions limit dialogue and make it difficult to understand a candidate's thought process. For example, instead of asking something like "Can you use this platform?" Ask them how they've used the platform to solve a specific problem or need.

## Don't ask certain questions

Asking about any of the following five aspects below could put your organization at risk. They create liability if a candidate ended up pursuing a discrimination lawsuit later on.

Race,  
ethnicity,  
religion, or  
gender

Citizenship  
status or  
place of birth

Any physical  
or mental  
disability

Marital  
status or  
family status

Age

Knowing what not to do is step one in improving your interviewing and protecting yourself from the liabilities associated with the hiring process. But interviews are tools for both the employer and candidates.

So another way to improve interviews is to focus questions on achieving two objectives:



Qualifying the candidate  
for the role



Informing the candidate  
for the role and company

One approach that helps achieve these objectives was developed by Beth Smith, President of A-list Interviews, author of *Why Can't I Hire Good People?*, and creator of the Response Analysis System™.

## A BETTER APPROACH TO HIRING & INTERVIEWING



For over a decade, **Beth Smith** has been empowering business owners, hiring managers, and human resource directors to interview and hire the right person the first time.

**She discovered the importance of the interviewing process when she made a poor hiring decision – which almost led to the demise of her first company.**

After launching an enormous research project to learn how to conduct more effective interviews, she concluded that there is a science to interviewing. Beth discovered that many managers are thrown into the interview room, scrambling to figure out what to ask and what to listen for – instead of being taught how to conduct an effective interview.

# Beth Smith's 7 Steps to Finding Great Employees

## Before the Interviews

1

### Create an Ideal Candidate Description

You can't find who you are looking for if you have not stopped to define your ideal candidate. This exercise is more than just listing job responsibilities. Think about personality styles, work habits, hobbies, interests, and more. Be sure to consider the company culture you have created as you outline the ideal person. You can use this description to evaluate candidates during the interview.

2

### Develop the Job Description

Start by identifying specific tasks that will be accomplished by your new employee. Be thorough, this document will be used to map out your training program. If you are not sure of all of the responsibilities and duties your new employee will be handling, ask team members, supervisors, and even existing employees about the duties associated with the position you are filling.

3

### Write Your Job Ad

There are a variety of ways to **write better job descriptions**. Many employers just post a list of technical requirements and a description of the duties of a position in a job ad. Instead, use your ideal candidate exercise to write an exciting and detailed job ad that will pique interest among those you want to attract to apply.

4

### Receive and Review Resumes

Post the job ad and review resumes and start scheduling the first interviews. Give very specific instructions in the job ad's next steps to weed out candidates that may not be focused on detail. Always respond to every submission, even if the response is no thank you.



## The Interviews

5

### Conduct the First Interview

The first interview should answer the question “Can I work with this person?” The first interview is just to gauge personality and cultural fit and can be short. Ask specific questions that show how the candidate may respond to stress, management styles, adversity, and conflict. And remember not to talk too much.

6

### Conduct the Second Interview

The second interview answers the question “Can they do the job?” This interview is your chance to ask some questions regarding the technical aspects of the role. One approach before this interview is to have the candidate complete some homework as a means to assess their thought process and how that would translate to working in the role. Then in the interview, ask a specifically designed group of questions to gauge learning style and technical aptitude. You can also ask questions about your industry and their understanding of your business.

7

### Conduct the Third Interview

The third and final interview asks “Are they Passionate?” The last interview in the series uses tailored questions to determine if your potential new employee will be around for the long haul by testing their passion for the position. If passion is missing, they are not the A-list candidate you are looking for and may turn over quickly within your business.

Using the 7 steps of Beth’s Response Analysis System™ may seem like a simple approach, but you still have to actively listen to answers from the candidate to determine if they are the right fit. Listen without filters, biases, or interpretations and take candidates’ responses at face value. This approach doesn’t necessarily create a quicker or easier hiring process, but it will result in better hiring decisions.



## HOW A-LIST INTERVIEWS CAN HELP

Beth Smith and her team at A-list Interviews offer interview training on her Response Analysis System™ and tailored consulting for your business to help you hire better. To learn more, visit [A-list Interviews.com](http://A-list Interviews.com). Or read Beth's book *Why Can't I Hire Good People?* to get additional steps and questions you can ask in each of the interviews above. Beth's new book, *Hire Power: Daily Tips & Insights To Boost Your Hiring Success* will be available soon!



## HOW OBSIDIAN HR CAN HELP

We can free you up to implement this approach and the steps that come after so you're not only attracting top talent but retaining them.

As your HR partner, we cover the administrative burden of hiring, paying, and managing your new employees. We have a platform that will make it easier to track all your applications. Then we'll cover your new hire paperwork, consult with you in developing an employee handbook, and help develop a strategy for your employee onboarding.

Our goal is to make it easier for you to attract and retain your new employees so you can grow your business.

[Reach out to us to learn more](#)



8100 East Union, Suite 106 | Denver, CO 80237  
720-456-3590 | [inquiry@obsidianhr.com](mailto:inquiry@obsidianhr.com) | [obsidianhr.com](http://obsidianhr.com)

---

**Follow us for more! We're constantly sharing information on how to be compliant with changing laws and regulations, hiring and retaining employees, and developing your HR policies and procedures.**

