





table of contents

Introduction

..... 6

step one

planning..... 9

step two

recruiting..... 25

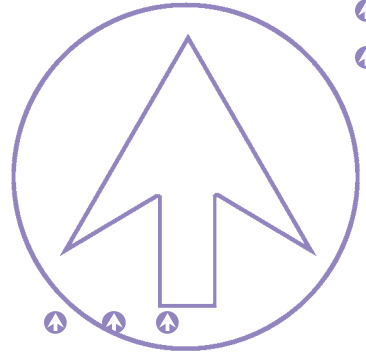
step three

interviewing.....35

step three

Interviewing

step three step three step three step three



Even managers who interview thousands of applicants throughout their career make mistakes and hire the wrong people. It's often because they approach the process the same way they did five, 10, even 15 years ago.

Not a good idea, especially when you consider the fact that applicants have become professional interviewees. They've answered every traditional question numerous times before you've had a chance to ask it.

They're well-schooled in the proper responses. They're ready for you. You can thank turnover for their expertise. In step one of this handbook, Planning, you described your ideal employee. You can find the character traits you want in your employees by asking questions that reveal those traits.

If, for example, hiring people with a great deal of past experience is part of your philosophy, ask questions centered around past work experience.

On the other hand, if you have a great training program and you're confident that you can teach the skills necessary to be successful, you should be asking questions about how willing a candidate is to learn on the job.

the gift

A wise person once said: "New applicants are like unwrapped gifts which have ended up on your doorstep. Some are attractively wrapped while others may be neat but ordinary. Occasionally they are mishandled during delivery. However it got there, it's on your doorstep. Just remember that the wrapping is not the gift."

Think of the person sitting across from you in an interview as a gift. As you get ready to interview an applicant — the unwrapped gift — ask yourself: "What do I want to know about this person? When I take the wrapping off, what's inside?"

Now write down the traits you want to see in your employees:

space

Your list will most likely contain characteristics like:

- Honesty and integrity
- Goal oriented
- Team player
- Takes on challenges
- Doesn't give up
- Takes direction well
- Always on time
- Wants to serve others
- Wants to help others
- Has self-respect
- Maintains a professional appearance
- Has good hygiene
- Accepts responsibility
- Stands for something
- Can talk to people and likes to talk to people

- Works well with others
- Stays busy all the time
- Wants to be a winner/be the best

behavioral interviewing

It's important for employees to be able to work with a point-of-sale computer, do a complete checkout, accurately count money, among many other responsibilities. But these are all skills that can be taught.

What you often can't teach are the character traits you outlined in the previous exercise. The trick is to find the people who fit the bill.

Think back to employees you've lost, terminated or even still have on staff. If you had focused on your traits list, would you have hired them in the first place? Maybe, but your odds of success improve if you zero in on the qualities you're looking for during the initial interview.

Call it behavioral interviewing.

Behaviors are formed over time through repetition. If an individual has done something in the past, they're more likely to repeat it in the future.

Take, for example, a person who returns change at a store's register after getting back too much. He or she is likely to be honest again when

Step Three interviewing

a similar situation presents itself in your restaurant — like, on the rare occasion, you leave cash on the desk in the office and forget to lock the door.



Exploring past behaviors requires a little digging. You'll get a flat "yes" when you ask: "Do you consider yourself to be an honest person?" The follow-up question is what puts the applicant on the spot and gives you important behavioral insights.

You simply ask about a specific time and place when honesty was demonstrated or put to the test. Example: "Tell me about a time when you demonstrated your honesty."

A less-than-honest person often takes on the appearance of a deer caught in the headlights, instantly stunned with a request for an experience that never happened.

When an act of honesty has been undertaken, however, it generally stays on the surface of the memory. Quickly, see if you can recall one of those times when *you* demonstrated honesty.

What counts are actions, not words. But there will be times when an applicant, often nervous, struggles to come up with a specific incident to support his or her statement of character.

In these instances, keep the silence and possible embarrassment to a minimum by saying: "I realize it might be difficult to think of a specific time or example. Let's come back to it later."

Give the applicant an “out,” but don’t be fooled later. A fabricated story is often vague and non-specific. Watch the eyes. They’ll have a tendency to drift off.

All in all, the idea is not to screen out applicants. It’s to structure questions that uncover past behaviors that match the desirable traits you’re after. That’s all there is to behavioral interviewing.

back to basics

For any interview, there are preliminary steps to prepare yourself and the applicant. Keep in mind that you’re often fighting time constraints, so be productive. Cover some of the basics before getting into what can be a lengthy process of the behavioral interview.

Put applicants at ease by welcoming them and offering them something to drink. Hand out updated descriptions of all jobs you’re currently hiring for. Applicants may have a particular position in mind, but they may qualify for others.

Ask them to read the job descriptions and let you know if there are any aspects which cannot be performed. This is an important step relating to compliance with the ADA (American with Disabilities Act). If there are tasks listed that are unnecessary to the successful completion of the job but would eliminate a disabled person from consideration, you may want to make some changes.

Step Three interviewing

Conduct interviews in a quiet part of the restaurant where you won't be disturbed but can still monitor the flow of your business. It's best to have additional management coverage during interviews to eliminate the ever-occurring interruptions of deliveries, employee problems, customer issues and so on.



If management coverage isn't available, ask employees not to interrupt you during an interview unless it's an emergency. Or select a key employee to handle minor issues that may crop up.

After all, you're about to sit down with a person who may be interacting with guests and other employees, not to mention handling money, guests' credit cards, and much of your food, liquor and other business assets. You need to give your undivided attention for your own sake. Plus, it's the professional, courteous and polite thing to do.

It's an employee's market out there. It's just as much your responsibility to sell yourself and your restaurant as it is for the applicant to sell him or herself to you.

Assembling a team that sticks and clicks.

getting started

Begin with questions that allow you to make an initial decision within a few minutes. There are fundamental matches between you and your potential employee that must exist or the interview is over. Look for those matches right away.

[“Tell me about yourself.”]

This is the easiest question to answer because it covers a subject the applicant should know better than anyone. If his or her presentation and communication skills include smiles, good diction, eye contact and manners, and the listening skills match your job requirements, then move on. If these don't match up, are you willing to teach them? Can you teach them? Probably not.

[“Have you been applying with restaurants or other businesses as well?”]

The answer to this informs you of the applicant's sincere interest in the industry. The hospitality industry is unique in that it requires an honest desire to be of service to others. Whether it's the dishwasher assisting other employees, the host assisting guests with coats, or a cook making certain that a special order without onions is made correctly, this business is all about service.

If the applicant has applied to several different types of companies, he or she may be undecided about an employer or industry. On the other hand, an applicant focusing on the hospitality industry will probably have a longer tenure with you.

[“How much money do you need to make?”]



This is a critical question, with emphasis on the word “need.” The answer you’re looking for should be fairly specific. The applicant should be able to say: “I need to make \$350 per week.” Or: “I need to make \$1,500 per month.” Oftentimes the applicant will respond: “Well, I’d like to make...” or “I’ve heard a waiter can make...”

Steer the applicant back to the original question and underscore the needed amount of income. You know how much the position will pay or the amount of tip income possible.

You can have the best place to work in town, but if the level of income needed can’t be met by the position available, it’s not a match. The applicant may, indeed, take the position, only to turn around and seek a higher paying job. Hello, turnover, once again.

[“How many hours do you need to work?”]

This relates to the money question and is tied to income. Again, you know if the position available is full or part time and the rate of pay per hour.

Often, applicants entering this industry have visions of grandeur based on stories they’ve heard from friends or family. “I worked last Saturday night. It was only a three-hour shift and I walked with \$150 after tipout!”