Types of Interviews

Select an interview type or format that is most appropriate for the position the agency is filling. An agency Human Resource (HR) section can help the hiring manager decide how many levels of interviews to conduct and determine who participates.

Sometimes an agency will hold several levels of interviews to reduce a large applicant pool. At times, a panel is used to do an initial screening of candidates and present only the few top candidates to the manager for consideration. Sometimes the hiring manager will want to be a panelist. The hiring manager may choose to have a conversation with finalists once a panel has made their recommendation. HR should make sure the interview type chosen meets the needs of the agency.

Some of the interview types listed below could be used as the sole method for interviewing and other types could be used in combination with other interview types. Not all types of interviews are appropriate for all types of positions.

- **Individual**: This is the most commonly used type of interview. The panel interviews each candidate. Questions are asked of the candidate about his or her experience and how it relates to the position. Panelists record the candidate's responses to prepared questions.

- **Group**: A group interview can be used for positions where the incumbent is expected to interact in a group on an ongoing basis. In a group interview, a panel assesses several candidates at the same time. A group interview generally includes some type of group activity that shows how a candidate interacts with others and the style of decision making the candidate uses. Often each candidate is given a few minutes to talk about his or her abilities, education, experience and skills relating to the position.

- **Presentation**: Having a candidate make a presentation related to the duties of the position is an interview type that fits positions requiring an individual to speak before an audience as a trainer or a media representative.

- **Live Resume**: Having a candidate present a "live resume" is a way to allow a group of partners or stakeholders to listen to a candidate. The candidate has a set amount of time to discuss the jobs and experiences that helped prepare the candidate for the position. Instructions are given to the candidates in advance that caution them not to talk about personal information, such as their marital status, children, what kind of car they drive, their health, etc. If the audience will ask questions or take notes, brief the audience about appropriate questions and note taking in the same manner you would panel members.

- **Demonstration**: Requiring candidates to demonstrate their ability to draft a document use a computer or demonstrate other equipment helps to assess an applicant’s ability to perform a function. This technique should be used in conjunction with another interview type.
- **Telephonic:** Interviews by telephone can prevent candidates from traveling a long distance to attend a first-round interview and to reduce a large applicant pool.

- **Facilitated Interviews:** Interviews tend to run more smoothly when a facilitator provides direction to the panelists and the candidates, trains or briefs the panel, records any group information, makes introductions, escorts the candidate in and out of the room, and in general ensures proper procedure and decorum are followed. If a panelist should ask an inappropriate or potentially illegal question, the facilitator takes immediate steps to mitigate the potential for damage. If a candidate provides information that is personal and not related to the requirements of the position, the facilitator informs the candidate of the type of information the panel is looking for. The facilitator asks any questions of the candidate regarding accommodations. A facilitator can serve as a dual role as a panel member, or just facilitate the process.

- **Hiring Manager’s Conversation:** When a candidate pool is reduced to one or two candidates, a hiring manager may wish to have a “conversation” with each finalist. This format avoids the structure of the formal interview setting to help the candidate relax. The manager asks only appropriate questions and avoids any conversation that causes the candidate to provide information about the candidate’s personal life.

**Whatever type of interview is chosen, make the interview purposeful and conduct it in a way that gives each candidate a chance to succeed.**

Since the past can be a good indicator of the future, look at the agency’s history of successful and unsuccessful hires. Of the past hires that generally performed well and raised the performance of the agency, what types of interviewing techniques were used? What type of interviews resulted in unsuccessful hires? Do the techniques need to change?