

HR RESOURCING

PINPOINTING
THE BEST
TALENT

Guide 3: Managing Interview Processes

| How to be more effective
| at hiring top talent



Introduction



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About Us

AR Resourcing has been providing Procurement and Commercial recruitment services across the construction industries since 2011.

We recruit all experience levels across our specialist job functions, managing vacancies from Assistants through to Heads of Department and Directors.

We can support single and multiple hire campaigns, or national transformation programmes.

Our recruitment services help companies hire the best people and maintain high performing, streamlined teams.

Our candidate research services help companies better manage their recruitment and retention strategies.

Many managers and decision-makers find themselves responsible for hiring new people into their team with little or no training as to how to work with recruiters, select and vet potential new hires or what to do once decisions have been made.

That's where this collection of 4 guides comes in. They are designed to tell you what you need to know and what to do throughout the hiring process. The guides will help you get the best out of your recruitment agency by working in partnership with them and explain how to secure the best candidates, while minimising the disruption to your day job.

The 4 Guides:



1. Engaging a Recruitment Agency



2. Briefing Agencies on New Roles



3. Managing Interview Processes



4. Post Interview & Preboarding

All four guides are available, free in the "Insights" section of our website. I hope you find them useful. However, we know every recruitment scenario is unique, so should you require more detail or have any questions, please get in touch and we will be happy to help.



“We asked Adam to find a Category Lead for us which he filled first time. This was an interesting assignment, due to the greenfield nature of the role candidates needed experience of change and implementation of new ways of working as well as core procurement skills.

By working closely with Adam he ensured a high calibre shortlist and we appointed an excellent candidate”.

Jamie Swanston

Procurement & Supply Chain Director
Tilbury Douglas



Interviews

Interviews are the key part of the hiring process. It's where you decide to offer (or not) and candidates decide if they want to work for you (or not), so invest the time to do it well.

Make the process as concise as possible as the longer you delay a decision to offer, the more likely the candidate is to accept an alternative offer. When this happens, the agency may need to start the search process all over again and you will have to wait longer before you have your new member of staff.

It should be rare that more than one interview is needed except for senior hires. If you are thinking of holding two interviews, consider:

- including the second stakeholder in the first interview;
- making the first interview a video call to ensure it's worth having an in-person interview as a second stage; or
- scheduling the second interview as soon as possible after the first one, even running them back to back.

Scheduling Interviews

The more compact your recruitment process, the more likely you are to secure your preferred candidate. As such, set aside interview slots for one week after your deadline for CV submissions. Give yourself 48 hours to review the CVs, decide who to interview and then work with the recruiters to fill the slots.

It's crucial not to sit on CVs. Great candidates don't hang about and they'll often accept the first decent offer.

- Block out time for interviewing at the start of the process and let recruiters know when the interviews will be. Otherwise, recruitment processes become drawn out as making time is often hard when you have a full diary of meetings or projects to complete.
- It's a good idea to schedule the interviews as close together as possible because it makes deciding who to offer so much easier. Having said that, we suggest you avoid scheduling more than 4 per day because by the end of the day you'll be a little tired, and the last interviewee won't get the same experience as the first.

We advise you to set aside an hour for the interview (it may turn out to be less if the candidate is an obvious no-go) and 30 minutes to make your notes and prepare for the next interview.

To interview in person or over a video call?

Given the choice, I would always interview a candidate in-person, even if that person is likely to work from home after they are hired.

The main reason is you'll get so much more from an in-person meeting: body language, small talk and how the candidate conducts themselves in a physical situation.

Clearly, if the person lives a long distance from your office, a video call may be the only option available to you. We'll discuss this a little later.

As mentioned above, if you have decided on a two-interview selection process, you could make the first interview a video call and the second one in-person.

Video submission with the CV

Some hiring managers find a brief recording of a candidate answering a few basic questions about themselves that is submitted with the candidate's CV to be particularly helpful.

Using these 'mini interviews' to assess a candidate can help employers identify rough diamonds and spot the CV exaggerators.

Imagine a shortlist with 5 candidates on it. If each one has provided a 5-minute video Q&A then from half an hour, you may be able to whittle the list down by a further two or three saving 2-3 hours of needless interview time.

These 'mini interviews' have shortcomings, however. Some people get nervous at interview and need time to "warm up" to show their true selves. Others may be very well briefed by the recruiter before they record their submission (potentially multiple times).



Interview Assessment Forms

To make the most of the interview, prepare by reading the CV again and making a note of any specific questions you would like to ask. Starting to fill in the candidate's Interview Assessment Form is a good starting point.

This form can contain whatever you need to make the interview run smoothly. We suggest you consider putting the following information on yours:

- Requirement reference and one-line requirement description.
- Interview date, time and location.
- Candidate name and submitting agency.
- A list of your mandatory skills and experience with space for a 1 to 10 score and to make brief notes against each criterion.
- Your 'nice-to-have' list with space for a 1 to 10 score against each one.
- Your question list. We have included a few generic ones in Appendix A. You also need space to add the specific questions you want to ask the interviewee.
- Space for your decision: i.e. Second interview; Offer; No offer; B-list. You should also explain why you have made the decision you have. This is important for your own memory, DEI reasons & to help you explain your decision to the agency.

NB - once you have created a template Assessment Form, you can reuse it for every interview you do.

Conducting the Interview

The first rule is don't keep interviewees waiting. Collect them or start the online interview at the agreed time. If this can't happen through an act of God, let them know.

For in-person interviews, the interview begins when you pick the interviewee up from reception. Avoid the temptation to send anybody else to escort them to the interview room. Please do not waste this opportunity to a) make them feel at ease and b) start your assessment of them.

For video interviews, if you have access to an AI notetaker such as Copilot or Fathom, it's a good idea to turn them on, but it's also good manners to tell the interviewee this is happening first. You might even ask their permission, which they will never refuse.

Consider the following questions to put candidates at ease:

- Did you find us easily enough?
- Where have you travelled from today?
- How did you get here today? and (if they travelled by car) was it easy to find a car-parking space?
- How was the journey?
- What did the agency tell you about us?
- Let me explain how the interview will go today: duration, style, you will be taking notes, attendees, questions they may have etc.



When asked in a relaxed and chatty way, these questions will help relax the interviewee which, in turn, will lead to a more productive interview.

If your interview is being conducted by video, you can use these questions instead:

- Can you hear me, OK?
- How much time do you have?
- What did the agency tell you about us?
- Let me explain how the interview will go today: duration, style, you will be taking notes, attendees, questions they may have etc.

Opening the interview with a few generic questions eases the interviewee into the process before you hit them with questions designed to explore their mandatory skills and experience.

Although you have left space to complete the form at the end of the session, making notes as you go is still a good idea. Score skills out of 10 and add explanatory notes. It's surprising how easy it is to forget what somebody said, especially if you're interviewing more than one person in a day.

Forbidden Questions

In the UK, there are a number of protected characteristics defined by anti-discrimination laws such as the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Discrimination based on any of these characteristics is unlawful and employers are not allowed to ask about them during interview. Here are some examples of questions that are off-limits:

Age: Employers should not ask about a candidate's age or date of birth. This includes questions like "How old are you?" or "When did you graduate?"

Marital status and family plans: Questions about marital status, whether a candidate has children, or plans to start a family are not allowed. For example, "Are you married?" or "Do you have/want children?"

Disability and health: Employers can only ask about a candidate's health or disability if it is directly relevant to the job and if reasonable adjustments are needed. Questions like "Do you have any disabilities?" or "How many sick days did you take last year?" are generally not permitted.

Race, religion, and nationality: Questions about race, religion, or nationality are prohibited. This includes questions like "What is your ethnicity?", "Where are you originally from?" or "What religion do you practice?"

Gender and sexual orientation: Employers should not ask about prospective employees' gender identity or sexual orientation. Questions such as "Are you male or female?" or "What is your sexual orientation?" are not allowed.

Pregnancy and maternity: Questions about pregnancy or plans to become pregnant are off-limits. E.g. "Are you pregnant?" or "Do you plan to have children soon?"

If you are in any doubt as to the questions you can legally ask, run them past your HR team/advisor, or if you don't have one, check with your recruiter.

Should your Recruiter sit in on the Interview?

When using a sole agency in an exclusive or retained search there are advantages to letting a trusted recruiter sit in on the interview.

- It makes the discussion after the interview quicker and easier.
- It brings a different perspective that is often valuable.
- It gives the recruiter a more detailed understanding of what you are looking for.

However, as well as making logistics more challenging, it gives the less professional recruiters (especially if more than one agency is involved) the chance to school their future candidates on the questions they will be asked.

If you decide to invite the recruiter into the interview, it should be on the understanding that they will be an observer only. They should neither ask questions nor interrupt in any way. If it is a video screen, it's a good idea to have their camera and mic turned off for the duration of the interview.

How to end the Interview?

Unless you are 100% certain you are going to make an offer it's never a good idea to give an indication of your intentions to the candidate. It's better to wait until you've seen all the candidates and then make your decision.

Here's an effective closure sequence:

- 1** Ask if they have any questions for you. We've added a list of common candidate questions to Appendix B so you can prepare your answers.
- 2** Explain what happens next in the process.
- 3** Thank them for their time and for attending the interview.



Top Tips for Interviewing Candidates



Planning & Scheduling

Schedule interviews early: set interview dates when you first brief the recruiter(s). This gives interviewers, candidates, and recruiters clarity and avoids delays.

Keep the process compact: aim to complete interviews within 1–2 days (where practical). The faster the process, the more likely you are to secure top candidates before they accept other offers.

Interview promptly after CV review: don't lose momentum—hold interviews within days of reviewing CVs. Long gaps can lead to candidate drop-outs.

Limit to four interviews per day: avoid fatigue. Too many interviews in a day reduces interviewer focus leading to poor notes or rushed assessments.

Allocate time for write-ups: schedule at least 30 minutes after each interview for interviewers to complete their assessments while impressions are fresh.



Preparing for Interviews

Use pre-interview video submissions: ask shortlisted candidates to record a 3–5 minute video answering 2–3 specific questions. These can be useful for early-stage filtering or if time is tight. NB not all strong candidates shine on camera.

Review CVs in advance: read CVs thoroughly before the interview. Look for: alignment with the job description; gaps or inconsistencies; discrepancies with LinkedIn or other sources.

Create a structured question set: prepare four types of questions: warm-up (e.g., “Was it easy to find us?”); general (e.g., “What do you know about us?”); role-specific (e.g., “Give an example of when you...”); and candidate-specific (e.g., “Tell me more about your career gap in 2022...”)

Use a scorecard or assessment form: standardise decision-making by scoring candidates on defined competencies. Ask HR if one already exists, or create a simple matrix aligned to your brief.

Include a task or in-tray exercise (if appropriate): consider a task-based exercise to assess relevant skills—especially useful for analytical, writing, or coordination-heavy roles.

Clarify decision-maker involvement: if multiple stakeholders are involved, either: run panel interviews; have two interviews back-to-back; or schedule a preliminary video call with one and in-person with the other.

Use an AI Note-Taker (with consent): if using tools like Fathom or Copilot, always ask the candidate's permission. Most will say yes, and it helps reduce manual note-taking.



During the Interview

Welcome the candidate personally: if in person, collect the candidate from reception yourself—it sets a positive tone. If remote, be punctual and open with a warm greeting.

Stick to time: stay on schedule out of respect for the candidate and other interviewers.

Avoid discriminatory questions: never ask about protected characteristics (age, family, health, religion, sexual orientation etc.). If in doubt, check with HR.

Invite the recruiter to observe (optional): trusted recruiters can offer additional insight and support, particularly if they're helping shape the final shortlist.

Maintain neutrality at the end: don't reveal preferences or make promises. Instead: ask if the candidate has questions; explain next steps and timelines; thank them for their time.



Post-Interview & Decision Making

Hold a same-day wrap-up with all interviewers: debrief while the experience is fresh. Aim for consensus but be structured—use the scorecards to guide discussion.

Capture notes immediately: document impressions, key strengths, concerns, and any follow-up questions. This supports fair decision-making and candidate feedback.

Give timely feedback to recruiters: let recruiters know outcomes quickly so they can update candidates and maintain engagement.

Appendix A

Questions you can ask the candidate

Tell me about yourself?	Easy first question, good ice breaker and gets them comfortable in the interview. You're looking for a concise answer that mixes work and personal facts.
What motivates you?	To understand how to keep them focused on tasks when things get tough and targets / deadlines need to be achieved.
What do you know about our company?	To demonstrate an understanding and a genuine desire to work for this company (not just the salary on offer).
Why do you want this job?	Shows if they have really considered the role and compared it to their own skills, experience, character, values and career aspirations.
Why do you feel you are a good match for this job?	To see how they link their past experience with the job requirements.
Why are you looking to leave your current company?	To understand potential issues and avoid them happening again.
What are your greatest strengths / weaknesses?	To demonstrate that their strengths link to the job on offer and do their weaknesses show they have overcome a challenge or setback.
What are your career goals?	To demonstrate the likelihood of retaining them long term.
What are your greatest achievements?	To demonstrate they are a high achiever and achievement focused in each job.

Appendix A

Questions you can ask the candidate

How do you know when you've done a good job?	They will either require an external measurement or point to themselves and say something like "I just know". The latter are less needy and more independent but are sometimes harder to manage.
What achievement at work are you most proud of?	If they don't have any, that could be a worry.
What was your biggest failure at work and how did it change you?	Shows if they are afraid of failure and are also self-learning.
Do you prefer working on your own or in a team?	This may be relevant to the role, especially if you're light on managers.
Describe your communication style at work.	Are they clear on this, or not sure? Can indicate communication skills strength.
How do you prioritise tasks and what do you do if you are overwhelmed?	Looking for an organised and efficient way of prioritising work and somebody not afraid to flag up to management when they are overloaded.
What do you think makes you different from the other candidates we are seeing?	Shows character and is a useful thing to know.
What would you do when you realise that you're not going to hit a deadline?	Looking to escalate to their manager. Working harder is not a great answer though; it implies they have been coasting.

Appendix B

Questions the candidate may ask you

Prepare your answers to these questions before conducting your first interviews. If you are either:

- jointly running an interview
- have different interviewers for different stages

Once prepared, circulate the answers to these questions among interviewers in order to ensure consistency.

- Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this role?
- What are the most important qualities for someone to excel in this role?
- How do you measure success in this position?
- Can you describe the company culture and values and the type of people who tend to succeed here?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the team right now?
- How do you support professional development and career growth?
- What could my career path look like here?
- Can you tell me about the team I would be working with?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?
- How does this role contribute to the company's overall goals?
- What are the company's plans for growth and development in the next few years?
- How often will I have a performance review?
- Why do you [the interviewer] like working here?
- What will the onboarding process be like?
- What would I work on first?



10 Important Hiring Dos and Don'ts while Recruiting

- 1 Don't prejudge candidates before meeting them. It's harder than it sounds!
- 2 Don't kick off a search until you have the budget and approval to hire signed off.
- 3 For hard-to-fill roles, be prepared to flex on your requirements.
- 4 Take the recruiter's advice on timescales to hire and salary expectations.
- 5 If your candidate CVs are wide of the mark, consult with your agency as to why.
- 6 Remember, the candidate will often judge you on the quality of their interview.
- 7 Money is often less important than many people think – focus on your EVP.
- 8 When assessing candidates, don't let perfect get in the way of progress.
- 9 Never discuss money with the candidate. That's your recruiter's job.
- 10 Avoid making low-ball offers. You'll look cheap and will often lose top talent.

Summary

The secret to successfully and efficiently hiring the right people depends upon 4 things:

- Work with professional recruiters and treat them as partners.
- Consider if the role would better be filled with an exclusive or retained search.
- Fully communicate everything the recruiter needs to find you great candidates.
- Process candidates in batches and be swift and decisive at each stage.





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