

Interviewing tips for employers

Many factors need to be considered before you offer a job to someone.



Monica Thadani is a Pharmacy Human Resources Specialist at Horizon Resourcing. For advice or feedback, call 03 9882 7977 or email monica@horizonresourcing.com.au. For more information on Horizon visit www.horizonresourcing.com.au.



When you are recruiting new staff, the interview stage means you're about halfway. A lot of the work is actually done before the interview takes place. After you have advertised and looked through resumé's you will need to shortlist the best candidates. Planning for your interviews will create clear structure and clarity of the position you're looking to fill. Ask yourself what the essential requirements for this role are? What skills will your desired applicant have? What kind of personality/behaviours would best complement your culture and team? Answers to these crucial questions will help you draft a position description to show your applicants at the interview stage.

Pre-planning

Spend some time familiarising yourself with your applicant's resumé's, highlighting any areas of doubt. Keep an eye out for any gaps in employment/education history – don't always assume gap periods were holidays or maternity leave! Past behaviour usually predicts future behaviour so look out for applicants who have stayed with previous employers for longer periods. If the applicant has moved around a lot find out why. Understanding their background before you meet with them means you can concentrate on more in depth questions during the interview.

When you call applicants to thank them for their interest and to set up interview times – make sure they know who you are, where your pharmacy is located

and what they need to bring. Allow yourself about an hour for each interview, with time before and after for planning and debriefing.

Greeting the applicant

First impressions last. How you appear will have a large impact on their decision if you decide to offer them the role. Make sure you get their name right and are on time! Put nervous applicants at ease by warmly welcoming them and offering them a drink. Briefly outline the structure and purpose of the interview, including a general insight to your pharmacy, the role and the reason this position is available. You may also want to engage in general small talk, giving the applicant a chance to tell you about themselves and relax. The more relaxed the applicant is, the more they will open up to you.

Conducting the interview

All interviews should be held in a quiet, private area where there are no interruptions. A successful interview is neither an interrogation, an informal chat, nor a conversation dominated by the interviewer. The 80/20 rule applies – the interviewer should listen 80 per cent of the time and talk 20 per cent of the time.

Your role is to give your applicant a clear, honest picture about what it would be like to work with you and your pharmacy and to identify if their skill set and personality meets your requirements.

The interview can be split into two parts, beginning with some

standard interview questions such as "What motivates you?", "What new skills have you developed in the past 12 months" or "How do you define and evaluate your own success?".

This can be followed with behavioural/competency-based interviewing. This requires applicants to answer the questions using an example of a situation that occurred, what steps were taken and what was the outcome. Examples include: "Tell me about a time where you had to deal with unreasonable expectations?" or "Describe an instance where you had to think quickly to get out of a bad situation".

Behavioural interviewing is very effective as it encourages applicants to demonstrate the application and results of their attributes/actions rather than just stating their abilities. It also enables you to track their thought process and evaluate certain skills such as ability to work under pressure, problem solve, interpersonal skills etc.

Closing the interview

After answering any questions your applicant may have for you, thank them for their time and give them an indication as to when you will be in contact. With global staffing shortages, it's best to make contact within three to five days. Anything longer may result in your applicant losing interest due to what they interpret to be your disinterest or they may accept another offer.

After an interview, conduct a minimum of two reference

checks for each applicant, double checking your findings from their resumé/interview. Don't contact any referees without consent from your applicant as you may breach privacy act legislation and you could jeopardise their current working situation. With referee details, try to obtain a landline number to verify the referee's position and relation to the applicant. Mobile numbers could belong to anyone! You may also need to check qualifications, board registrations etc.

Don't ever offer someone a role in an interview – a hasty decision can be detrimental in the long run. **R**

Recruitment tips

- Show sincerity and appreciation for the applicant's interest in your pharmacy.
- Keep the interview on track.
- Be mindful of discriminatory or personal questions – refrain from asking an applicant about their personal life.
- Keep questions directly related to the role and as impersonal as possible. For example, you can't ask how old someone is but you can ask where they see themselves in five to 10 years.
- Make sure all interviews are conducted in the same manner, with the same questions.
- Try to have another observer sit in on the interview. A lot of communication is non-verbal.
- Take notes.