

## Get the Most From Hiring Interviews

*He walks through the door, spurs jangling, eyes darting around, taking in everything. The others in the room fall silent and watch his every move. He heads straight for the table in the corner and takes a chair with his back towards the wall. No one will be taking him by surprise today.*



*Then you speak. "So, let's get this interview started," you say.*

Is that how interviews start when you are hiring (except for the spurs part...it's more likely nerves are jangling)? People coming in for job interviews are usually nervous and not sure what to expect. They are probably wondering, "How many people will be interviewing me?," "Are any of those weird 'how do they make M&Ms' kind of questions going to be asked?," or "Is my deodorant working?"

To get the most from interviews you conduct, you would do well to put the interviewees at ease as much as possible. How can you do that? Mostly, you can treat them as you would guests in your home. Try these suggestions:

- ◆ make sure someone is there to greet them when they arrive, to take their coats, and to offer a beverage
- ◆ rather than jump right into questions, make a bit of small talk first
- ◆ make sure you are well prepared, so you will feel at ease yourself

Also, the way you set up the interview room is important:

- ◆ comfortable chairs
- ◆ blinds or curtains adjusted so the sun does not shine in their eyes
- ◆ make it pleasant with some plants and pictures
- ◆ sit at a table...if that's not possible, sit beside your desk rather than in your usual spot and put the interviewee in front of the desk...this way it's not perceived as a barrier and you can establish rapport more easily
- ◆ put interviewees closer to the door than you are...psychologically, this will put them at ease...they won't feel trapped with no way out

With your interviewees at ease, they will find it easier to answer your questions and their true personality and abilities will be evident. You'll be better able to make the right decision.

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## Recommended Reading

**Fierce Conversations** by Susan Scott

Susan Scott has been described as "the master teacher of positive change through powerful conversation." This book delves into practical ways to expand, and enrich communication with family, friends, and business associates. It enables you to have conversations where you hear, and know you are being heard...where you understand, and know you are being understood...where true change can be the result. As Ken Blanchard states in the Foreword, "The book will help you gain the insight and skills to make every conversation count."

## Communications Tips—Shaving Off Those "Word Whiskers"

You know word whiskers—those little "um's" and "ah's" that are often liberally sprinkled into the conversation. They usually come from speaking before knowing what you want to say. Depending on the conversation—say, a job interview—those whiskers can be detrimental. They can make your thought hard to follow, and they can even detract from your credibility.

When you will be in a planned conversation or interview, be sure you are well prepared. Think ahead of time of the information you want to convey, and even practice out loud with another person, or in front of a mirror. During the actual conversation or interview, don't rush. Listen, think, then speak.

Be sure to listen carefully. That way you will understand what you should say next, and you won't go off on some irrelevant tangent.

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### Quote

"Listening well and answering well is one of the greatest perfections that can be obtained in conversation."—*Francois De La Rochefoucauld*

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