

How to Pick Out Interview Fraudsters

How to Spot Interview Fraudsters



It's hard to spend even a moment online without someone giving you advice on how to find the perfect candidate, and yet, every hiring manager we talk to has a story of a poor hire. Someone who was instrumental in them reviewing or changing their recruitment process, as well as keeping them up at night, full of regret. In reality, it's just not that easy. Sometimes, you have to accept that poor hires happen. We are dealing with people after all! However, hiring someone who dupes you by seducing you with the power of their personality, convincing you that there was no one better than them available, perhaps even persuading you to cut your process short because they left such a great first impression – that can leave a particularly bad taste in one's mouth.

Another thing to consider is that, just as we as Interviewers prepare for interviewing our candidates, candidates are (well, should be) preparing to be interviewed by us. A keen candidate will do various types of research, and the Internet holds all kinds of information on us. People can and will find out about us, tailoring their answers to their perception of what we will love. Employer review sites like Glassdoor.com are gaining more traction too. These sites allow people to rate and rank employers, even sharing interview questions asked in interviews.

Finding out through the fullness of time that confidence and personality weren't the only things they were full of, is a horrible lesson to learn. Interviewing is an imprecise process, but you can improve your ability to evaluate candidates by asking questions that elicit facts instead of opinions and charisma. We are always on the lookout for fraudsters or for "professionals" who have the depth of a puddle and no substance. Here are some of the signs that can start alarms for the prudent.

Buzzwords

If you've heard enough jargon to make your head spin after 10 minutes, take pause and think about what exactly the candidate is trying to say. If there is nothing in the candidate's answers but well-placed buzzwords designed to make person sound hip and smart, ask more questions. Dive deeper to find out if they really know what they are talking about, or if the words are just filler. Einstein was quoted as saying "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself." It's just the same if people have a need to dress their answers up to make them seem smarter than they really are, which is a big red flag when considering someone for a job.

Over-talking

Ever been in an interview where the person just tries to baffle you with long-winded, tangent filled answers? Whilst they may eventually get to the point, these tangents fill you with doubt, and invite more questions than they answer. Don't get bored into submission, assuming that somewhere in that answer was what you were looking for. The length of answers does not always equal quality, and 1.5 hour interviews aren't always a good sign, so watch out for candidates who veer from the point.



Name dropping

Whilst this is used at times to showcase strength of network and connections, if not done in an appropriate manner it can feel insincere and inauthentic. Sure, they may be awesome names to drop and hear, does it really make a difference towards their potential success in your role? Often you may find that these names are being dropped to impress, and mask other short-comings.

Taking over the interview

If you notice a candidate trying to take control of an interview, this could be a sign that they're trying to hide their imperfections by bluffing. Be careful, as this can happen a lot, especially if you're less experienced as an interviewer. If you feel like the candidate is guiding the conversation towards questions that they want to answer, rather than questions you want to ask, then don't hesitate to get the interview back on track. A great way to do this is to go back and get them to expand on another answer, for example by asking "You mentioned earlier that you had experience with managing people, can you tell me a little bit more about that?"



Follow up questions, ask for specifics

If you notice a candidate using the word "we" a lot, you might want to take heed. Whilst it could imply they are a great team player, it could also mean that they didn't really do anything in particular. Like that person in your group projects at school, who got that great mark you all deserved, but maybe only wrote up the bibliography. Sales people, for example, must know the budgets they were working towards and how they are tracking towards them. Managers, must know the budget they control and the teams they manage, and cite difficult decisions they had to make. If you feel someone is being vague, don't hesitate to ask the hard questions, dive in further, and gain clarification.

Too much charm

Do you know that person who relies on smile, charm and general personality to coast through life? In an interview, you'll often find them flattering you and the company, making the interview all about you rather than themselves. Whilst it is fun to be the centre of someone's attention, you'll end up getting to the end of an interview feeling really good about it, only to realise you have absolutely no idea about the person's capability for the role. Be aware!

Prepare

Is your interview structured in such a way to allow you to find what you need? Is the interview the best way to make a great hiring choice? Have you thought about different ways of assessing candidates? Audition style? Role simulation? Put the time into your preparation, know what you are looking for, and structure your meeting to find this out. Going in cold, with just a resume and a “I’ll know what I’m looking for when I see it” attitude, will not get the results you want.

Too scripted

If someone is sounding really scripted, and overly prepared, throw them a curve ball, ask them something different. Get to find the “real” person. Sometimes, you need to shake things up to get to reality. Although this might confuse people, you’ll gain a better understanding of their true self and their capability for your role.



Get a second opinion

This is not a failing, it is a necessity. If the role is really important to your company, get a cross section of people involved in the meeting, all with an equal voice. We do not want to elongate the process, but only having one point of view is a genuine risk when hiring.

Don’t be afraid to check references to confirm or deny your initial thoughts about an interview.

Interviewing is an essential and important part of your recruitment and business process. Every hiring decision you make will have current and future ramifications for your business, and it’s a decision that’s too important to allow yourself to fall victim to fraudsters.

In Closing

Whilst hiring is definitely a business decision, there is also human emotion involved, and it is hard to remove that factor from an evaluation. To take the persuasive charmer on the basis of what they have achieved, not on how they have made you feel, is challenging. To admit, that we may have been charmed, bullied or duped and have based our hiring decision on no tangible reason is humbling. However, it’s better to do this before you hire, than to see your mistake reflected in a distinct lack of performance, costing the business more money and potentially harming your reputation. We have helped businesses to hire hundreds, if not thousands of people over the years, if you ever feel you are getting too close to the process or the candidates, **talk to us**, we will help you navigate these tricky seas.