5 Creative Interview Techniques to Add To Your Repertoire

Many organizations try to use objective measures to screen out and/or screen in candidates including using testing and data analytics but the predictive value of these measures is still in its infancy. While more and more big data is being compiled for use during the hiring process today you still need to rely on a combination of objective and subjective data you gather on a candidate to make your final hiring decision.

If you are looking for some interesting and creative ways to help gauge the fit of a candidate consider adding some of these 5 techniques to your interviewing arsenal.

1. **Ideal Job Description:** One way to learn about a candidate is to ask the candidate to write their ideal job description for a job at your organization. Tell them it does need to reflect the job they can do today or ask them to write a job description for their next job at the organization.A variation of this theme is to ask the candidate to write a company culture description, describing the type of organization they believe would be an ideal company culture for them. Ensure you do give them a limit so you are not reading a tome (max of 1 page).When evaluating these responses consider the key qualities you are looking for in a candidate. For some roles creativity, vision and perhaps even a sense of fun or humour might be important characteristics, for other role you might look for someone who is realistic, sensible, detail oriented.

2. **Assign a pre-hire project**: A technique that is often disliked by many candidates so choose wisely as you risk alienating a great candidate. The more odious or time consuming the more you risk starting off on the wrong foot with a candidate so consider a one element of the job that can be accomplished within a time frame or 2-10 hours.Another type of 'pre-hire' project involves hiring a candidate in a contingent or contractor role on a limited term from 3 weeks to 3 months giving you an opportunity to evaluate the candidates work before committing to a long-term role. Be cautious if you take this option that the role truly is limited and fits the definition of a contractor role. Keep the task finite and the contractor at arms length.

The third type of pre-hire project involved sponsoring a contest or competition where candidates compete for a reward (not just the job). This can be a project to solve a real-world company problem or complete a task that would be a bonus for the organization.

3. **Ask for their Analysis:** Ask the candidate to analyse the company and /or role, identify strengths, weaknesses and problems and offer suggestions. You have the option of providing this as a pre-interview question, provided to the candidate to be returned prior to an interview or for discussion during the interview.Use this type of assessment to gauge how much the candidate knows about the organization and how much thought the candidate put into their preparations. You can also gauge how well the candidate aligns with your current thinking or what other creative or innovative ideas the candidate is prepared to offer.
4. **Engage them in your Community**: Using social networks, in a group setting or a group interview with some of your employees ask the candidates to spend some time interacting, asking and answering questions. You can provide your employees with some questions or topics to use to facilitate the engagements. When your organization is involved in a community activity such as fundraising or a 'make a difference in the community' event this could also be an opportunity to invite potential candidates to participate.

When evaluating candidates in this type of engagement ensure you are considering their social skills as only one part of the puzzle. Extroverts tend to stand out during in-person events and introverts may have the edge in some online social engagements. Keep in mind 3-4 qualities and skills you are seeking.

5. **Request a First Impression:** Ask the candidate to prepare a 100 word 'why I am great candidate for this role' letter or video of similar content (set a time limit of 1 minute). This challenge will help you see which candidates have clarity about the role and their fit for the role.

Changing up the interview process provides an opportunity to get a different perspective on your hiring decision-making. Selecting a candidate should be a combination of an art and a science. Data analytics are useful tools but a person who knows your organization and the needs of a team still have a lot to offer during the hiring process.