



Do panel interviews help you hire the best candidate?

As a CEO or business leader, adding the right talent to your business through the most efficient means is a top priority. Panel interviews are an efficient use of time since all members of the hiring jury are interacting with the candidate at once. However, interviewing requires both an employer as well as a candidate in order to successfully complete the two sides of interviewing. Since the most complex and complicated part of every business is the people who work there, how much thought is given to the candidate when using the panel interview format? The internet offers pages and pages of preparation tips for candidates. Hiring great talent requires attracting great talent. Does the panel format attract the right talent to your business?

We frequently see panel formats on TV when individuals are being interviewed by panel members of our government and in reality shows.

Let's explore the key issues to see how panel interviewing can help your business hire great candidates.

Panel interviews from the business' view

- Multiple people all interviewing the candidate at once;
- Efficient use of time;
- Effective multiple interactions;
- Observers can study responses such as body language and tone; and
- Really tough interview questions can be asked by the group, providing group insight based upon the candidates' response.

Panel interviews from the candidate's view

- Candidates often describe their feelings leading up to a panel interview as being nervous, stressed out and uncomfortable. There is a vast amount of panel interview preparation available to candidates. For example, here is an article describing the panel interview as "The Firing Squad". In this article, ambush is used to describe the panel interview.
- With the panel format, candidates might be spending more time rehearsing for the predicted interview questions than spending time researching your company and trying to best understand how they can solve the business challenge that would help your business.
- From the candidate's perspective, your candidate may even view the panel as if the candidate is preparing for battle. Ask yourself, is your business hiring for cage match or mixed martial arts competitors?

Let's not lose sight of the purpose of best practice hiring. It is a business event where your business needs critical talent to solve a business challenge while also fitting the culture of your company.

- Remember, being a candidate is difficult enough without being put into battle mode.

How to hire great candidates using panel interviews

- The panel interview approach will not lead your business down the road of hiring great candidates;
- Your business is reducing the chances for successfully hiring great candidates with the use of panel interviews; and
- The firing squad feeling that candidates experience suggest to the candidate that your business has little concern for a true candidate interaction.

The panel interview model delivers candidates who have fully rehearsed answering the predictable questions instead of candidates who are focused on solving your business challenge.

What is the best approach?

- Take the time to have qualified candidates meet individually with each member of the hiring jury. Yes, this will be perceived as taking more time. However, if each member of the hiring jury is spending an hour in a panel setting to meet with a candidate, then the same hour could be spent by each interviewer, only on a one-to-one. The one-to-one setting gives the candidate an opportunity to experience the company culture along with some personal interaction. Developing a personal connection for the candidate is critical in attracting and hiring top people. Once the

candidate has had their initial meeting with the hiring jury, any follow-up interviews can easily be held in a group setting. At that point, I would term them as a "group meeting" instead of a panel interview.

- The best results involve the employer making the candidate relaxed and comfortable, so you can see what they will be like when they are working in your business. Candidates do not respond well to tricks or perceived intimidation. Panel interviews are intimidating to candidates.

Ask yourself if panel interviews work

- Is your business embracing the medieval style of the outdated panel interview or is your business embracing modern technology and modern efforts to hire the right talent?
- As the CEO or business leader, have you audited your company's hiring process and do you ask interviewing candidates to tell you one thing your company could do to improve the candidate's experience?
- Is your company's hiring focus about simply hiring a candidate or hiring the right candidate. 

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