

Four Ways to Put Candidates at Ease During Job Interviews



Whether you're interviewing a new graduate or someone with years of experience, the interview process can cause stress and anxiety. It's understandable—being on the spot can make people nervous, and if a candidate isn't relaxed, they aren't likely to show their best side.

As an employer, you want to create a comfortable, warm atmosphere for your candidates. You want them to feel relaxed to talk about their qualifications and experiences, as well as who they are as a person. When you create that environment, you'll understand whether that individual is a good fit for the position. Here are four ways to make your candidates feel at ease during an interview.



Explain The Unknown

People fear the unknown. Some companies hold one-on-one interviews; others perform group interviews, require a skills demonstration, or have several managers ask questions and observe. When conducting a group interview, several applicants are typically invited. The interview should occur in a conference room, and the candidates should sit around a table or desk. If more than one interviewer is present, decide who will ask questions and pre-arrange this with the other managers. If you require a skill demonstration, let the candidates know in advance. Applicants can demonstrate building graphs in Excel, editing PowerPoints, or other basic skills. Let them know in advance, either by phone or email, whatever the interview format is.

Applicants should be informed well in advance of a group interview to avoid feeling intimidated by walking into a room with several people - the same goes for multiple managers being present. If you're planning on potential employees demonstrating specific skills during an interview, give them a guide or thorough explanation beforehand to avoid being unprepared. That way, if there are concerns about their ability to perform the task, they can address those concerns before the interview. When people know what to expect, they tend to be less fearful and more prepared.

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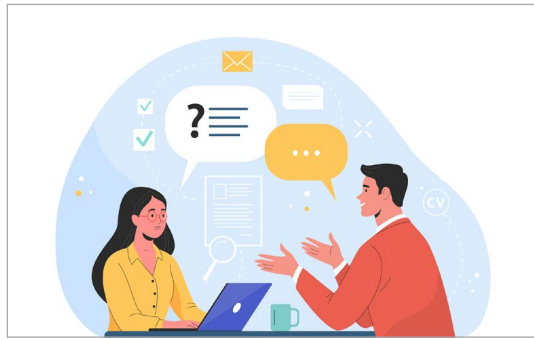


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Create a Warm Welcome

Shaking hands, maintaining eye contact, and smiling are simple ways to put a candidate at ease immediately. To warm things up, ask your interviewee some “ice-breaker” questions—for example, what they’d eat for the rest of their lives if they could only eat one thing, or which books/movies they recommend. This will give them a chance to see that you’re a genuine person, interested in what they have to say. It also allows you to open up the conversation before the interview questions begin, helping you to get a sense of their personality. Remember to keep discussions about things that everyone can relate to and not veer into topics too personal, such as family status, politics, and religion.

Give Them Time

To put candidates at ease during job interviews, give them time to think of their answers, as this allows them to prepare their thoughts and lets you watch their body language. Maintain a calm demeanor if the candidate looks nervous, starts to fidget, or swallows hard. As the interviewer, your body language is also essential — sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and show minimal facial expressions. If someone has trouble answering a question, try to remain patient. Encourage the speaker by smiling and nodding; this way, you’re not interrupting their thoughts and showing that you’re listening and interested in what they have to say.

When taking notes during an interview, use positive body language to indicate you’re listening. Nod your head while writing down observations or occasionally look up from your notebook to make eye contact. If the person answering questions stops, they may think you’re no longer interested. Pause, look up, and make eye contact to re-establish your interest in their responses, then ask if it’s OK for you to finish writing a few words before asking the next question. As you take notes, avoid crossing out words or sentences; a job candidate may notice that small detail, and the extra pressure might make them tense.

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Avoid Distractions

Your interviewee is probably trying to be as relaxed and focused as possible. A ringing phone or even a knock on the door might distract them and make it difficult to continue the interview. During an in-person interview, turn your cell phone on silent and let your coworker know that you'll be interviewing at that time, so another conversation won't distract you. Try holding the meeting in a conference room or your office to limit background noise. If there is a television or radio in the area, turn them off before your interview begins.

If you are conducting interviews remotely, choose a silent room and ask those who live with you to remain as quiet as possible while you complete the meeting. The room should have a plain background so that candidates can focus on your questions. Try to make the environment as professional as possible to mimic an in-person interview. In addition, you should turn off all programs on your computer or any email notifications during remote or in-person interviews to avoid disruptions.

When preparing for a job interview, one important thing is that the candidate should feel comfortable. Even if an interviewee seems nervous, it's vital to greet them warmly to put them at ease. Explain the process before the day of the meeting. Don't rush candidates — give them enough time to think about their answers and schedule interviews in quiet settings so you both can give your full attention. All this will help candidates show you the best possible aspects of their personalities and skills.

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We've been in this business for decades and have developed a deep network of professional connections. Whether they're companies looking for talent, job seekers looking for work, or an up-and-coming store in need of some temporary help, we know the right people to bridge the gap between the hiring and the hired.

But what's more, we get to know people. From employers hiring to candidates looking, we take the time to listen and learn. We hear your likes, talents, and needs. We gain an understanding, and with it, we're able to facilitate lasting relationships between businesses and people.



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