



How to conduct a technical phone interview

If you're a human resources (HR) professional, you're known for having an eye for talent and matching the right people to the right position in your company. However, one area that may pose a challenge is recruiting and hiring for technical positions.

These positions require specialized skills that can be difficult to find and understand. Normally, HR isn't expected to know what makes a good developer or network engineer. But, in many cases, HR is expected to handle the initial recruitment and screening. The technical screening process conducted by HR is a vital step in the process, so it's important to be prepared.

4 steps to an effective interview



1. Research, research, research

Learning as much as possible about the open position is the number one priority before the interview process begins. Ask the hiring manager to outline the particular skills needed to perform the duties of the position. Be sure to keep a list of these must-have skills and find out if there are any alternatives that will suffice. These baseline skills will be the first step in weeding out qualified candidates. Then, work with the hiring manager to create questions with a right or wrong answer. Questions that have definitive answers will immediately show you the extent of the candidate's knowledge in certain areas. Be sure to do your research to better understand the questions you will be asking. You don't want to sound like you don't know what you're talking about either.



2. Eliminate unqualified candidates

Separate qualified candidates from unqualified ones. By reviewing resumes, you can quickly determine qualified candidates based mainly on their technical skills and amount of experience using those skills. If candidates don't have the necessary or alternative skills for the position, you can eliminate them right away and determine which candidates are most qualified. That way, you can limit your calls to the top candidates.



3. Make the call

Now, the phone screening begins. Behavioral and personality type questions should be asked first. Then, you can focus more on the candidate's technical skills and how well they match the position. Follow this roadmap:

- Work environments for technical positions can vary greatly. So, make sure the candidate will fit in with yours. Some companies have IT departments that work in teams, while others value individual work.
- Assess the skills of the candidate. Ask them to rate themselves from 1-10 on each skill for the position. Then, ask them to explain their reasoning and when they used each skill. For example, if a candidate rates themselves a 9 or 10, be sure to have them explain the projects in detail.
- Although some of the terms may be foreign to you, write down relevant information needed to follow up and submit feedback to the hiring manager later.
- Ask probing questions about the candidate's past projects and their specific responsibilities. Determine if their role was a supporting or lead one. Learning about specific deliverables and roles candidates played on past projects is a great way to determine if they fit the needs for your position.



4. Follow up

As with any good candidate, you'll want to follow up as soon as possible if they are a good fit for the position. In the IT industry, this is even more paramount. Qualified people are in demand, so it's imperative to secure good candidates before they're snatched up by another company. After speaking with the candidate, consult with the hiring manager to set up an in-person interview with the corresponding member of the IT department.

Phone screening for technical positions is an important, yet difficult task. Conducting an effective technical phone screen requires you to be thoroughly prepared to determine if a candidate is truly qualified for the position at hand. Determining qualified candidates during the phone screening process can save many valuable recruiting and interviewing hours for all involved.

Still don't feel comfortable with the technical interview? We can help!