

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PHONE SCREENING

You've collected resumes, selected candidates and are ready to begin talking to top contenders. So what's your next step? We recommend a telephone interview.

With overwhelming constraints placed upon IT hiring managers, phone interviews can be an effective time-saver, enabling you to quickly identify the most qualified candidates. In a recent survey of executives commissioned by our firm, 58 percent of respondents said screening prospective employees by telephone prior to meeting them is a very important step in ensuring their hiring process is as efficient as possible.

Here are some guidelines you can follow to help make your phone screening process easy and effective:

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Estimate how long you'll need to conduct an adequate telephone interview with your IT job applicants (a time-frame of 20 to 30 minutes should work). Without a set timeframe, you may spend too much or too little time on the process.

If the candidate isn't available and you need to leave a message, set a specific time for when he or she should return your call the next day. This can be a good test of initiative - candidates who fail to return the call or make alternative arrangements by the designated hour may have a lack of interest or commitment.

HAVE A CANDIDATE'S RESUME ON HAND

Review the resume and cover letter carefully, making notes on any questions you have before you call a candidate. Keep these materials on hand when you're talking with the applicant, and jot down his or her responses and your initial impressions.

DEVELOP A LIST OF QUESTIONS

For comparison purposes, ask the same or similar questions of each candidate. You'll likely see a pattern emerge among the applicants who are a good fit for your company. Here are a few good questions to ask:

- Tell me a little about yourself and your work history.
- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- What interests you about this opportunity?
- What skills (technical and interpersonal) can you bring to our organization?
- What sort of work environment brings out your best performance?

While phone screening is not a replacement for an in-person interview, it can be the ideal vehicle for narrowing the field of possible candidates for IT job openings at your firm. The key is to be consistent and maximize the time you spend with each job hopeful.

For more phone screening tips and strategies, please contact Prism Group today.