



Improving Your Team Starts with a Better Interview

OCTOBER 2020

Improving Your Team Starts with a Better Interview

The success of your credit and accounts receivable teams depends on the talent you hire and the culture you create, two fundamentals that most agree are vital, but often take for granted.



Interviewing job candidates is not an innate skill. It is something that requires forethought and practice. As part of our effort to highlight areas where finance professionals can improve processes, this paper explores key aspects of the interview process that determine a successful new hire. We also provide some sample interview questions that will help guide conversations with job candidates.

Whether it's joining a new team or a new company entirely, new hires can be tricky for both the new employee and the hiring organization. For the new hire, there are names to learn, organizational structures to understand, a new culture adjustment, and more. For the organization, there is the need to maximize the new person's skillset, assess strengths and weaknesses, build trust, learn how the new member best fits in the team, and create the most productive work environment.

Onboarding new hires has always been an interesting and exciting challenge, but this period of adjustment is all the more difficult thanks to remote work. How do you integrate a new member when you've never met them in person? How can the new hire understand the nuances of their team's dynamic when they only communicate through text and email? How do you convey your company's culture through video calls? Transitioning an existing team to remote work is difficult, hiring and onboarding entirely new team members remotely is even more so.

While it takes time for a team to normalize and fully integrate new members, one key HR process can help everyone acclimate, adapt, and grow more effectively. That key process is the candidate interview.

More Than an Exam

Far too many hiring managers view the interview as an oral exam that the applicant needs to pass in order to be hired. However, interviews are so much more than that. And—especially in the age of COVID—the interview can be a great tool in understanding the new member on a deeper level while allowing them a glimpse into the cultures of the company and team. Additionally, the interview can help level any inaccurate expectations or perceptions that the new member may have about the company or that the company may have about them (based on their resumé or background info). Think of the interview less like a test and more like a first date between candidates and the organization.

The interview can help convey a few key things that will make the onboarding process easier. Some key factors that an interview can help with are **company culture, the member's work style and personality, level of skill and needed training, and work preferences.**

These four categories are typically learned through in-person workplace exposure and interaction. When working remote, however, you should format the hiring interview to cover these aspects deliberately with intentional questions.

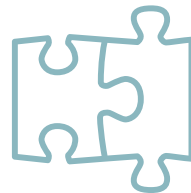
WORKPLACE EXPOSURE AND INTERACTION



Company Culture



Work Style

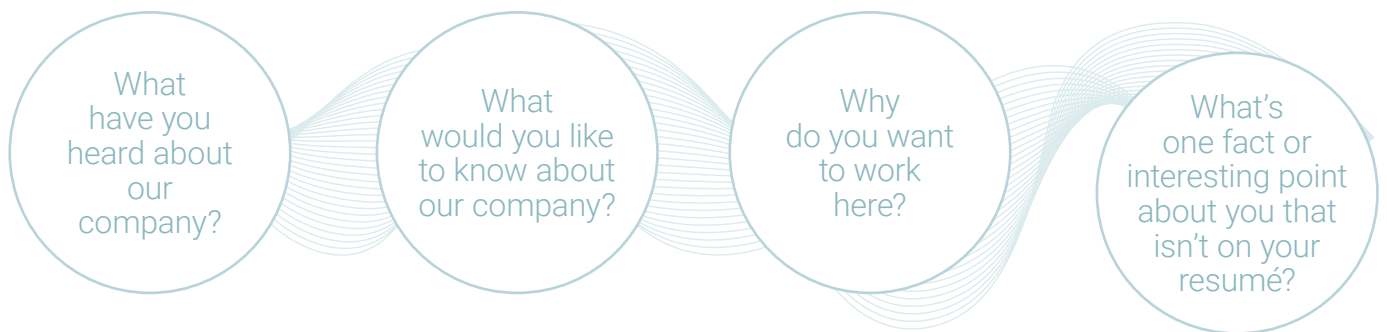


Skill Level



Work Preferences

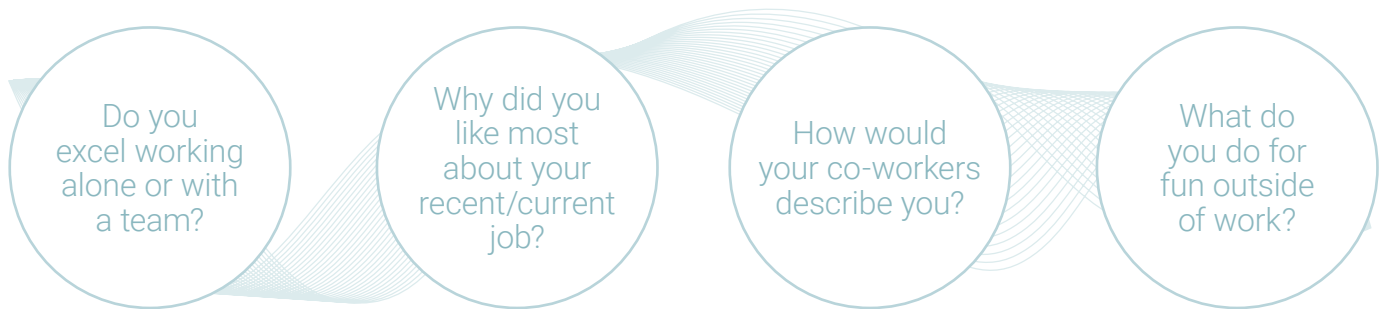
Conveying Culture



These are all interview questions that help the new hire gain an accurate understanding of the type company they are joining while helping the team understand the member on a human level. What is it about the company that convinced them to apply?

The flexible hours? The commitment to the environment? The company's vision or goal? These initial questions will help level expectations in order to minimize any unexpected shocks that the new member might have after joining.

The New Team Member Work Style/Personality



In the physical workspace, it's easy to identify those who prefer working alone. They never leave their cubicle or desk. Maybe they put on headphones to focus. They keep their head down at their computer and work diligently while those who prefer a team atmosphere walk around and talk to teammates, and enjoy impromptu meetings.

In the remote environment, however, you might never know unless you ask. Are you leaving a team-oriented member to suffer in silence as they sit alone in their home wishing

someone would video call and brainstorm with them? Or are you interrupting someone who prefers to get their work done in isolated focus?

Asking the questions above will help the team get a feel for how the member prefers to work as well as what aspects of their past job they did not appreciate. This knowledge can go a long way towards finding the right dynamic and tasks for the new hire.

Assessing What Help They Will Need

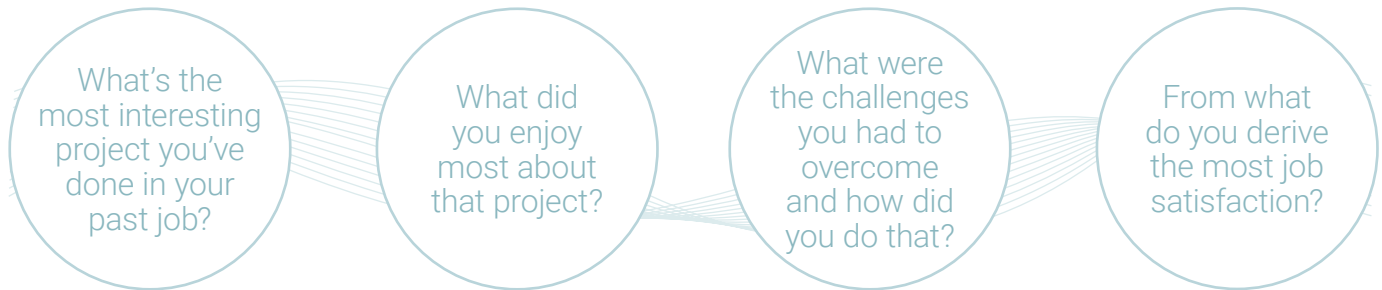


Understanding their learning gaps is another factor that is quickly evident when working in person. When the member is faced with a new tool or process with which they need help, they can just tap someone's shoulder or look around the office for someone to help. Spontaneous mentorship is often the best kind of mentorship.

When remote, however, a new member may be stuck with no one to turn to immediately. Identifying, in the interview, where

their knowledge and skill gaps lie can help the team identify a mentor or "team buddy" who can be specifically designated to help in the areas where the new hire is weak. Taken further, team members do not need to be in the office to take advantage of online skills training courses. There are many services and professional associations that offer specialized training depending on discipline. For instance, [NACM](#) and [CRF](#) provide and encourage continuing professional education.

Work Preferences



Motivation can be difficult when fully remote, especially when a member has no prior connection to fellow coworkers. Asking the member what type of work interests them along with what work they viewed as challenging can help further identify what motivates them, what they care about, and how they tackle problems.

Answers to these questions can help a team provide work that the member will be engaged with right off the bat. This can offer a quick and early success that encourages them to stay and foster work relationships with members who have similar mindsets and interests.

Preparation Mitigates Risk and Improves Hiring Results

Hiring is a good thing. It implies growth and brings tremendous opportunities. However, hiring is risky. The interview and hiring process requires resources, including time, and doesn't always produce the desired results. But almost everything in business is risky. It is how you manage risk that matters.

With the guidance provided above, we hope to have helped mitigate the risk and improve the results of hiring. We encourage you and your team to view hiring as an opportunity to expand your teams' skills and foster continued growth. With preparation and coordination, the interview process can be a great learning experience.

Moreover, constructing the interview process into a two-way engagement that helps the team and the candidate understand each other on a better level will help alleviate many of the "getting to know you" aspects of team building—aspects that can be difficult to achieve quickly when working from home.

Billfire™ VALET is the Ideal Accounts Receivable Automation Solution.

As the most intuitive invoice-to-cash solution, VALET eliminates all payment friction to deliver faster payments, increased efficiencies, and improved customer relationships. Accelerate your cash flow today with Billfire™ VALET.

Call us on 602-888-0853 or email betterday@billfire.com to learn how we Make it a Better Day with Billfire.