The Return Hub

Career Academy

How to consider D&I as part of the recruitment process.

Interview Guidance for Hiring Managers: Assessing for potential

A "perfect" manager of returners would be

- Supportive

- An advocate

- Honest (about the working culture and set clear expectations)

- Understanding (to flexible working)

- Trusting (in my ability to get the job done)

- Approachable

- Aware

- Empathetic

Interview guidance

- Your candidates are highly capable, mature, motivated and come with substantial experience. These are qualities and characteristics shared by any typical experienced hire.   So what might be different about a returner and how can you address this at interview stage?

- Hiring Managers typically have some misgivings about recruiting returners….

"I'll admit, when I was first approached about the concept of taking on a "returner", I can remember harbouring doubts. I was concerned about the practicalities of taking on experienced hires (albeit often experienced in different fields) into an intense, technical and hectic environment on a temporary basis."

"I completely misjudged X's level of competence and ability to learn quickly – she far outperformed my expectations. I wish we had put her into a different role from the start."

Prior to her joining the firm, I had some misgivings about a "returner" joining the client facing consulting team, despite being very supportive of the "return to work" program. The team requires specific technical knowledge across a wide range of finance topics, and has a very lumpy workload in line with the quarterly meeting cycle

- This guide acts as a simple reference point to check in and consider the role you are playing and the things you might consider to help select the best returning talent

Myth Busting

Out of Touch?

New Skills/ Networks

Not committed?

Conscious Decision making process

Difficult to Manage?

Resilience and Maturity – self starter

A Tick box exercise?

Return on Investment in tangible results

Considerations Pre-Interview

Mindset of a Returner

Returners can differ to typical direct hires:
- Mature with a mass of experience, but may have a less 'traditional' career path
  - Gaps in CV
  - Unconventional experience such as building own ventures
- Heightened sense of 'imposter syndrome' – particularly prevalent amongst high performing perfectionists
- Feeling significant pressure to get this right and prove themselves
- Lack of clarity over professional identity
- Lack of clarity and/or trepidation over logistics of returning to a corporate role

Awareness of your own Unconscious Bias as an Interviewer

Our values and beliefs influence how our brain makes snap decisions about people, particularly those who don't "fit the mould"
- What assumptions am I making about this person?
- How are my values and beliefs impacting on my assessment of candidates and ability to make objective decisions?
- When I get a 'good feeling' or I'm "unsure about" someone, where is this coming from and what is it telling me?
- Is this a priority for me? How am I giving myself time to prepare?
- How do I need to show up to make the best of the time I have with each candidate when interviewing these candidates?

Helping you find the best returning talent

Common Traps when Selecting Returners

In our experience there are some common traps organisations can fall into:
- Candidates aren't given enough information or encouraged to ask the right questions to help them assess if this is the right opportunity for them (including whether the logistical challenges in their life can fit)
- Interviewers have not prepared enough pre-interview to understand the subtle differences between 'normal' candidates and returners

Myth busting

Consider the following when you are preparing to meet these candidates:
- **I have to make sure the person I hire has done the same job before– FALSE** – use the interview to assess the candidates potential. Whilst they may not have done the exact same job look for transferable skills.
- **These candidates have been out of action for years - FALSE** - many have only been away from the corporate world for a couple of years and have been working in that time – in some cases running their own businesses
- **This is no different to recruiting any other senior hire –Not completely true**– These candidates have huge experience, but they may have a heightened level of self doubt – make allowances for this to bring out the best in them.

Interview process & Example Questions

	Meet and greet	Formal start of interview	Candidate asks questions	Close	Post review/ wash up
Objectives	Create supportive, welcoming and positive environment. Build rapport and put the candidate at ease. Share something about yourself.	Hear about and assess skills and capabilities. Make it clear examples can be from any context. Help candidates to shine, and look for realistic picture of skills.	Help candidate to explore some of their worries/ interests.	Help candidate to feel positive about experience.	Document key outputs. Share views with colleagues whilst fresh. Decide next steps.
Returner's inner voice	*"This is my big chance. I must not fail."* *"I don't know if I fit into this corporate environment anymore."*	*"I am a fraud and I am going to be 'found out' or exposed during this process."* *"I don't have any directly relevant experience"*	*"I don't know what I don't know so can't probe too far into the realities of the role and what would work for me. I really want this role and so I will work out the detail and any issues later."*	*"Hope I did ok – I really want this, they seemed great and supportive."* *"I now feel clearer about this opportunity and what it could mean for me and my family"*	
Questions/ probing	*Share something about your day* *Explain structure of interview*	*"Thinking about experiences throughout your career and across all aspects of your life, can you give me an example when you …?"* *"Tell me more"* *"How did you personally contribute?"* *"What did you specifically do?"* *"Why have you decided to apply to us?"* *"How can you see yourself adding value here?*	*"We'd value hearing your questions"* *"Please feel free to ask anything that's on your mind"* *"Past candidates have been interested in how flexible we can be when you're juggling life at home, we're happy to explore any of this if useful?"*		*"What strengths did we see?"* *"What skills/ capabilities would need to be developed and how could we help her with this?* *"Where could this candidate add value?"* *"Should we take her forward?"*
Observed capabilities	Personal impact Emotional intelligence and rapport building Ability to cope with stressful situation Rapport building	Clarity of messaging Personal impact and ability to articulate value Listening skills Agility Motivations	Appreciation of potential reality Curiosity Ability to deal with ambiguity Ability to self-start Confidence over working style and boundaries	Overall impact	

Questions

Potential	***How have you developed over the last six months – and can you correlate how that development might fit into this environment?*** *Determine how they have increased their potential. The best answers are about being wiser. Acquiring knowledge/skills is the first step. Leveraging that knowledge/skill is the second. Converting knowledge and experience to wisdom is the final step. Learning from one's failures can also make someone better at what they do. If you don't learn from your mistakes, you're doomed to repeat them. Being better isn't just about successes.*	***What are you currently working on to improve – either personally or professionally?*** *Knowing our biggest weakness only matters if we are doing something about it.*	***Tell me about the last article/video/talk that really intrigued you*** *This question is asking how they are making themselves more effective. They should be able to articulate how their efforts will have an impact. How are they leveraging resources/communities to increase their potential. This should reveal curiosity, initiative, and proactive learning.*	***What do people come to you for help/advice about?*** *See if they are increasing the potential of others. Being able to ask for help/advice is a skill often overlooked.*	***Can you suggest why a team might be better because you are on it?*** *A collaborative team has high collective intelligence and thus high collective potential. Look for answers about how they contribute to the team rather than how they personally elevate it.*
Trajectory	***Look ahead to six months from now what do you want to have improved – professionally?*** *See if they are aware of the trajectory they are on and if it's the right trajectory. Good answers will explain how they will leverage and apply what they are getting better at.*	***What was the last thing you learned about yourself that you didn't know before?*** *Find out how self-aware they are as well as how their trajectory has helped them grow. Even simple answers "I realised that I perform better in face to face meetings" can be revealing. Delve into how they came to their realization.*	***Think of a recent project you have undertaken personally or professionally – in hindsight – can you think of what you might have done differently if you were to do it again?*** *See if they have been learning and gaining knowledge. A good answer will reflect the ability to reflect, analyze, and critique their own work.*	***Can you explain how you see your career trajectory? Can you tell me the last 'career correction' you made and why?*** *Get a sense of why they have made the career decisions they have and assess their motivation*	***They say you're only as good as your next accomplishment. What are you or do you plan to accomplish next?*** *Good answers articulate vision or strategy and encourage answers outside of a professional environment. that they can learn to be comfortable speaking in front of a room (i.e. leading meetings).*
Performance	***Describe a piece of work that you took ownership for. How did you measure success?*** *People with a sense of ownership will articulate what the project is, why it is important, and how it will have an impact. How was success defined completion? Output vs outcome*				

POST INTERVIEW REVIEW

"What strengths did we see?"   " Is this person a self starter?" "What skills/capabilities and experience can they bring to us?"
"What skills/ capabilities would need to be developed and how could we help with this?"
"Where could this candidate add value?"   "How can we take this further?"   "Cultural Fit? If not, wny not"

Always prepare feedback and be aware of retaining company brand with candidate management.

Preparation

Review

It is not about reinventing the wheel, but about asking the right questions and giving the candidates the ability to demonstrate their ability to do the job. Level the playing field and remove barriers.

Give yourself the time to review the job description and review the candidates CV highlight relevant information to reference during the interview. If there is a break in the CV depending on the nature of the break you might want to explore skills they have gained during that time.

Adjust

Question your mindset before you enter the interview. So much that we do is unconscious and no change can happen without challenge. Be prepared to hear from a different point of view that might benefit the organisation.

Record

Make a note of your feedback and make sure it is communicated. This makes a huge difference to the candidate and is crucial in protecting your employer brand.

Employer Brand

Supportive, welcoming and positive

Put yourself in their shoes

Give opportunities to shine

Questions

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