6. Interview Scheduling & Interview Prep

ClubVMSA: Session 9 & 10 - Interview Prep

It's getting exciting you've come this far, don't take shortcuts now! The client is interested in your candidate and now wants to meet with them. Timing is key, candidates are active, and clients can only choose the best. In this module, you'll learn how to minimize delays, and lessen the time between each communication. You'll also learn that 'prepping a candidate" means more than just sending an email and hoping for the best.

Apply these practices in your everyday interaction, and see how big of an impact they can make.

Note: When a client challenges you and does not want to provide prep, remind them of this example: You want to set up your employees with the best environment to be successful. They need to support their future employees on the same level as they support their current employees.

Timeline

Although scheduling an interview will rely on both the candidate's and client's schedule to align, we should always aim to get the action of scheduling the interview immediately. Set the expectation and get every participant's available no later than 24 hours, and hold them accountable to those schedules.

Scheduling the Interview

The client wants to meet your candidate, what should you do next?

Here's what the AM will be doing to get information for your candidate; you should have the same mindset when speaking to the candidate.

From the Client:

- Who's the interviewer? What are their names and titles? What should the candidate expect; behavioral questions, technical tests, whiteboard challenges? Any information you can share will help the candidate prepare for the interview.

- Please provide your availability for the next 2 to 5 days. Since this is quite an important step, if the candidate is confirmed, I will block off the time in your calendar. If anything changes after this call/email, please inform me immediately, as this will take priority.
- I will also schedule a call within 24 hours after the interview to do a debrief as well. This information will help us keep the candidate engaged, as well as help refine the search if required. Please have feedback ready.
- Are there any other candidates in the interviewing process at this time?

All information you gather will be useful and should also be saved to APN for future interviews.

From the Candidate:

- Please provide your availability for the next 2 to 5 days. Since this is quite an important step, if the client is confirmed, I will block off the time in your calendar. If anything changes after this call/email, please inform me immediately, as this will take priority.
- I will also schedule a call within 24 hours after the interview to do a debrief as well. This is an opportunity for me to gather information from you and help address any concerns ahead of time. Think of this as the last chance to say anything to the client.
    - Imagine during the debrief the candidate said that they did some research after the interview, and discovered XYZ. How amazing would it be to share that info with the client; the candidate was so engaged, that they quickly went and learned some of the content they didn't know after the interview, the candidate is truly invested in your company.
    - This will also be an opportunity to get a thank you note across to the client (with substance).
- Please let me know if you're currently involved in another interview process. How does this opportunity compare? What current stage are you in with your other potential clients? Who else are you interviewing with? Would you fulfill this entire process before making any decisions? etc.

Check List

Here is a list of items to get at the MINIMUM for your candidate

- [ ] CHECK IF THE CANDIDATE IS STILL INTERESTED OR NOT!
- [ ] FEEDBACK! GOOD AND BAD!
- [ ] Availabilities
- [ ] Who the interview panel will be
- [ ] Format of interview (in person, video, phone call)
- [ ] What will be covered (behavioral questions, technical test, etc.)

- [ ] Any information the candidate should have ready (pen, paper, sample work, etc.)
- [ ] Any additional preparation that the client would like to provide to your candidate
- [ ] **LOWER the bar. Set realistic expectations for the AM / Client.**
- [ ] INTERVIEW FEEDBACK FROM ANYWHERE ELSE IS USEFUL
- [ ] WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?
- [ ] PRE CLOSE!
- [ ] THIS is the time to set expectations on "COUNTER OFFERS" (again if not already)

Interview Prep (MOCK INTERVIEW)

Relay the information you've gathered to your candidate, this will form the initial information for your interview prep notes. Any feedback you received from prior interviews should be included in the prep to help give your candidate the best opportunity. Believe it or not, most candidates will be ecstatic to have someone prep them for an interview; they view you as the expert, and someone who has vital information to help them succeed.

- If time permits, get the Account Manager to in your prep call with the candidate; this will lessen the chance of misinterpreting information.
- IF you know someone who is a tech expert in that field, see if you can invite them into the call. IE. If I placed a candidate in the past at the company, I would invite them in to provide tips.
- Do NOT only send information to your candidate, and consider the prep complete. Send the information ahead of time, and let the candidate know to review the information first, and that you'll go over any highlights and answer any concerns they may have.
    - You've spoken to the candidate a few times now, and have completed a talent meeting. What were some of your personal concerns? Do they talk too much? Do they talk too little? Do they lack engagement? Not concise with their answers?
    - You are their partner, so do not be afraid to point these items out.
    - PRACTICE going through some questions with the candidate. Although you may not know if the answer is correct or not (due to technology gaps) that is fine. The goal is to get the candidate ready, confident, and help correct any flaws.
    - Note that a lot of candidates may not have interviewed in a while, so getting a chance to practice aloud will help boost positive behavior.
    - **DONT USE "WE" USE "I"**
    - A good trick to answer any type of question is to always think:
        - **What was the problem, what was the solution, what were the results?**
- If this is a follow-up interview; remind the candidates of their own feedback and the client's feedback. Imagine being able to show what they've learned from their past interviews!

- Always have questions ready for the interviewer. Some go to:
  - **What will I contribute to during my first 90 days on your team?**
  - **Based on my answers today, are there still any concern that I can help clarify?**
  - VET THE QUESTIONS THEY WANT TO ASK.
- **Should we pull candidates from the process who aren't ready?**

Interview Prep Checklist

- [ ] Basic Info: Date, Time, Name and Title of Interviewer, Interview Type, Platform, Location, Dress Code, etc.
- [ ] Camera works, Mic works
- [ ] Company Research
- [ ] How to answer Salary, Rate question:
  - [ ] Salary: Deflect back to recruiter, or say the exact same number as presented
  - [ ] Contract: Deflect back to recruiter only!
- [ ] Mock Interview
  - [ ] Behavioural / Technical Questions: STAR or 3 Prong Approach
  - [ ] HR Questions: able to answer the following: Why do you want to work here or What value can you bring
- [ ] List of VETTED questions
- [ ] Does the candidate feel confident? Do you feel confident?

Rescheduling or Cancelling the Interview (on either side)

We can't control everything, but we can set expectations and hold individuals accountable.

- If you need to reschedule or cancel the interview, please give advance notice and provide a detailed reason.
  - Depending on the reason; please let me know your immediate availability so that I can reschedule and block off your calendar.
- Establish a trusting relationship; let the candidate know that it's okay to cancel or relay negative news. Hopefully, you've set expectations throughout the process, that you don't run into last-minute surprises.

Interview Prep Example: (AFTER YOU DO THE CALL)

Hi Carla,

Thanks for attending the interview prep! Just want to send you a written summary of the conversation you had with Gab:

- Info about Zola
  - Founded in 2013, but has good source of revenue, and have steady and plan to go public soon
  - 3 teams: Core (i.e., Zola identities, marketing, navigation, mobile experience), Commerce (i.e., guest list, wish list, soon to be marriage), Vendor (i.e., vendor experiences)
  - Zola's mobile app: only available in the US, but the company is trying to bring it to Canada
- Suzie Lopez (Head of Commerce)
  - https://www.linkedin.com/in/susana-l%C3%B3pez-61756875/
  - Super easy going, extraverted, and deeply artistic
  - Focus on how you came up with all of your designs, she'd like to understand the references and resources of your designs
    - How you conducted analytics for your designs, how you translate audience pain points into design systems, mockups, workflows
    - Going through UX/UI design experiences
    - Managing difficult stakeholders and how you adapted
      - How you use their feedbacks to make a better design
      - Explain complexity of environment and size of team
  - Showcase one of your projects that you are most proud of!
    - E.g., projects where you nearly failed but ended up delivering well and learn lots in
- Be open! – if you have projects that went well, evaluate what are some aspects that are still missing?
  - You'll have the opportunity to not only talk to Suzie, but also collaborate with Nobu (founder of Zola: https://www.linkedin.com/in/nnakaguchi/)
- Experiences communicating with engineering team, the challenges you've faced, and how you overcame it
- Ask questions!
  - What are the pain points in Suzie's projects? How can you contribute to that?
  - What's the growth opportunity like in Zola?
  - What's Suzie's leadership style like?
  - Remember: don't discuss about salary, as Suzie would like to learn more about your experiences more
- End of interview: debrief (text me/call me)
  - Evaluate Suzie and how her projects would contribute to your growth

- Clarification for any of your answers that you'd like us to deliver to Suzie

Other than that, let us know if you have further questions!

APN: Action Activities Immediately - Update Your Notes

Best Practice: Make it a habit...

Keeping track of multiple candidates as they move through various stages of the recruitment process can get confusing. Luckily you can stay organized and track this information within APN.

- Make it a habit to update the candidate's activity as they move through the process, and ensure you add detailed notes ASAP.
- You can also track your entire pipeline on the ATS homepage.

Links to Other Modules

0. Prelude: Way of Work - Organization, Best Practice, Top of Mind

1. Introduction - Recruiter

2. What to Work On - Partnering with an Account Manager

3. Sourcing (Networking) & Boolean

3.5. Resume Screening

4. Candidate Interview vs Talent Meeting, Relationship, Work Smart

5. Candidate Submission to AM

6. Interview Scheduling & Interview Prep

7. Feedback/Debrief - Offer Stage

8. Onboarding, Background Checks, & Future Opportunities