

Recognising Red Flags in Interviews

It's widely recognised that the Wealth Planning industry is a candidates market. Candidates who are aware of this may display behaviours throughout the recruitment process that we would describe as 'red flags'.

Disciplined hiring starts with the ability to say no. It's easy to see the red flags when interviewing candidates and ignore them. Instead of eliminating candidates when seeing deal breakers, we can rationalise candidate's answers if we like them or are in a rush to recruit.

Top 10 Red Flags that shouldn't be dismissed

1. They are late to the interview – even if it's by five minutes. This is a big red flag
Getting lost, heavy traffic etc are poor excuses as it suggests lack of preparation
2. They are not dressed appropriately for the interview
3. They have not looked at your company website or social media channels
4. They don't give you straight answers to the questions – you are left with a sense that they have talked a lot but not actually answered the question. Don't rush to move on to the next question... try to uncover whether it's just nerves or if there is something that needs exploring
5. They don't give valid reasons for leaving past employers or if there is a pattern
6. They move on from most jobs after 1 year to 18 months. It's often the time when mistakes are getting found out and this needs exploring
7. They are unable to provide specific examples when asked or their answer raises red flags in itself – please give an example where you made a mistake at work and what did you do to correct it
8. They criticise their old/current company or boss throughout the interview
9. There are gaps in their CV that are not explained adequately
10. They don't ask any questions at the end

In addition to ignoring red flags, many interviewers don't ask enough questions or enough of the right ones. An interview isn't a casual get-to-know-you session, where you just chat with the candidate. Job interviews are designed to ask lots and lots of questions.

Here are a few practices to follow when interviewing candidates:

- **First:** Try to put candidates at ease by telling them you approach interviewing differently to other interviewers. The more at ease candidates are, the more forthright they'll be. Tell them your role is to help them make a good decision for themselves. And when candidates make a good decision for themselves, the organisation has made a good decision as well.

- **Second:** Warn candidates that you ask lots and lots of questions and tell them that it's not personal. Tell them you ask lots of questions to ensure you both make a good decision.

- **Third:** Your responsibility as the interviewer is to give the candidate every opportunity to be successful. As a result, if a candidate is having difficulty answering a question, ask it in three different ways in order to determine if the candidate can't or won't answer the question.

After following these three practices, it's important to ask the right questions. There are multiple sources — books, training programs and interview guides — for almost all of the interview questions you'll ever need to ask.

But there are a few interview questions these sources miss. And if you don't ask these questions, you're destined to continue hiring the wrong employees.

There are two absolute deal breakers. Candidates must be self-aware and open to feedback. Employees who aren't self-aware and aren't open to feedback are the people no one in your organisation can work with. They make things hard, just because they can.

We'd suggest that in addition to the interview questions you're already asking, try this:

“Tell me about a time you received negative feedback. What happened? What did you learn?”

If candidates can't answer that question, ask, “If I walked around your last place of work and asked the people you worked with to tell me about you, what positive and negative things would they say?”

If the candidate can't answer that question, ask the question in a third and final way. Ask, “If I asked your friends or family to tell me the things you do that are frustrating, what would they say?”

Every adult has received some sort of feedback during their lifetime. People who are open to feedback and are coachable can answer these questions. People who are not, cannot.

If you'd like to continue the conversation, ask a question or discuss your Wealth Planning recruitment needs – we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at kate@cranleighpersonnel.co.uk or 01483 279837.

