# 6 interview tips that stop the nonsense



Mel Kleiman of the hiring solutions firm Humetrics has pretty much seen it all—every type of prospective hire, and every interview mistake that can be made by those who have jobs that need filling. His advice to managers struggling to take away the best insights from job interviews included these eye-opening nuggets:

**1. Look at everything that happens before an interview as a test.** Did the applicant not show up on time? They've failed. Did they not do everything you asked on the application? Fail. How about giving the brush-off to the receptionist, or asking for directions to the interview when they could have easily Googled them? Fail.

These people have saved you time by passively informing you they don't meet your high criteria.

**2. A University of Chicago study says we make a decision about whether we like someone in 14 seconds—or less.** If you've subconsciously decided you like someone before even getting to the meat of the interview, your task is now much more difficult. So the questions need to get tougher. You'll want to give an applicant the benefit of the doubt—but that's a trap.

We all have a list of emotional factors that make us take to someone too quickly; try to identify some of your own factors before you perform interviews, lest you become starry-eyed for the wrong reasons.

**3. Make reference checks work double time.** So you're actually calling those references—good! "In general," Kleiman advises, "A-players like working with other A-players," so a list of references from a great candidate may also provide a gateway to other potential hires someday—don't forget about these people, or how they sounded on the phone when offering a reference. Might you have actually been talking to another superstar?

**4. If your goal is to hire the best, look in the mirror.** Ask yourself, "Why would a top-flight person come to work here when they have other options? Is the manager this person will be working for really worthy of someone like this?"

"How many people are lined up wanting to work for us?" is another question you need to ask yourself. Also: "How good is our retention rate?"

**5. Don't say something like, "I have a lot of applicants I need to interview" or "It'll take me a while to talk to the many people who applied."** This is like saying, "I'm not really sure what I'm looking for." If someone walks in, meets all your criteria, nails the interview and has great references, what are you waiting for? The future is always going to involve some risk, especially when it comes to new employees.

As Kleiman notes, "If you were hiring basketball players for your company team and Michael Jordan came in for a tryout, you don't want to be the one who says, 'We have to try out three or four more people.'"

**6. Remember the words of W. Edwards Deming, founder of the modern quality movement.** He said, "94% of all failures are caused by systems, not people." Apply that to hiring: "If your system hires people who aren't smart enough for the job," Kleiman says, "that's what your system is designed to do."

A strong hiring system is not unduly swayed by strong handshakes, shiny suits or snappy answers. Instead, it is set up to acquire as much pragmatic knowledge about good applicants as possible: verbally, physically, and visually; and through writing, texting and calling.