



2024

NAVIGATING INTERVIEW FORMATS

A PRIMER FOR NEW
AND EXPERIENCED
HIRING MANAGERS



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Interview Formats	2
1. Single Interviews	3
2. Panel Interviews	4
3. Job Shadowing	5
4. Case Studies	6
5. Group Interviews	7
6. Technical or Skill-Based Interviews	8
7. Behavioral Interviews	9
Impact of Technology on Interviews	10
Diversity and Inclusion	12
Making the Right Choice	14





Introduction

Choosing the right interview format can transform your hiring strategy and is key in running an effective job search and finding the perfect match for your team. Whether it's a technical genius or a visionary leader, each role demands a unique approach.

A good interview process is also an important part of creating a good first impression on the candidates you are pursuing. Every detail of the interview process – from the experience of booking the time, to the moment they arrive and the conversation itself – is all part of your brand, and will have an impact on their interest in working for you.

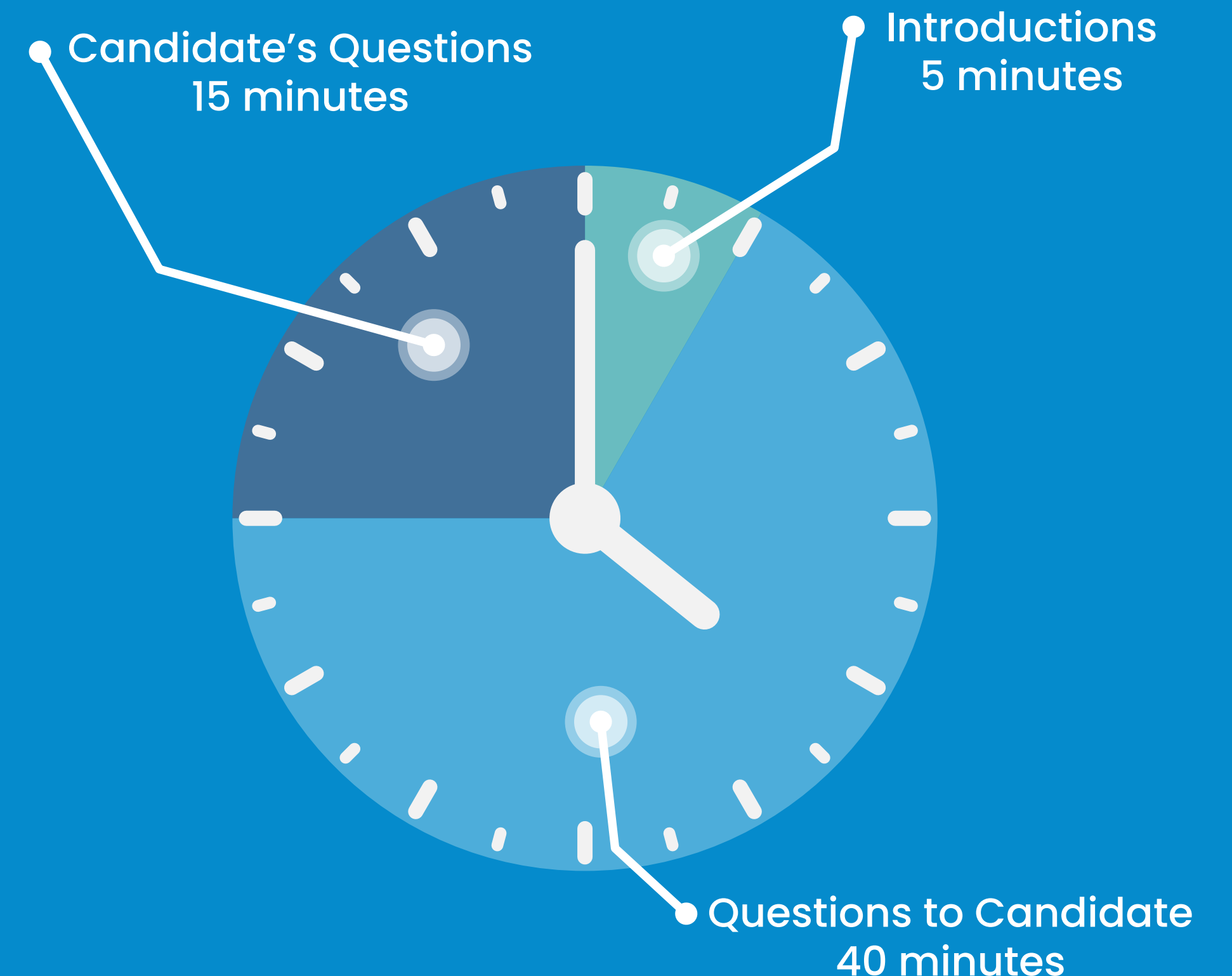
| Section 1: Interview Formats



1. Single Interviews

A classic one-on-one interview captures the excitement of meeting someone new, exploring their skills, experiences, and fit with your team's culture. These interviews are effective for initial screenings and can be developed further to assess technical skills, work styles and professional experience.

Single interviews excel in simplicity and efficiency as they are easy to prepare for and offer both parties space to foster rapport, which aids in evaluating cultural fit. However, conducting a successful interview requires preparation, experience and skill; any weaknesses in the interviewer's ability can lead to missing a great candidate. Relying solely on one interviewer increases the risk of unconscious bias and limited perspective.

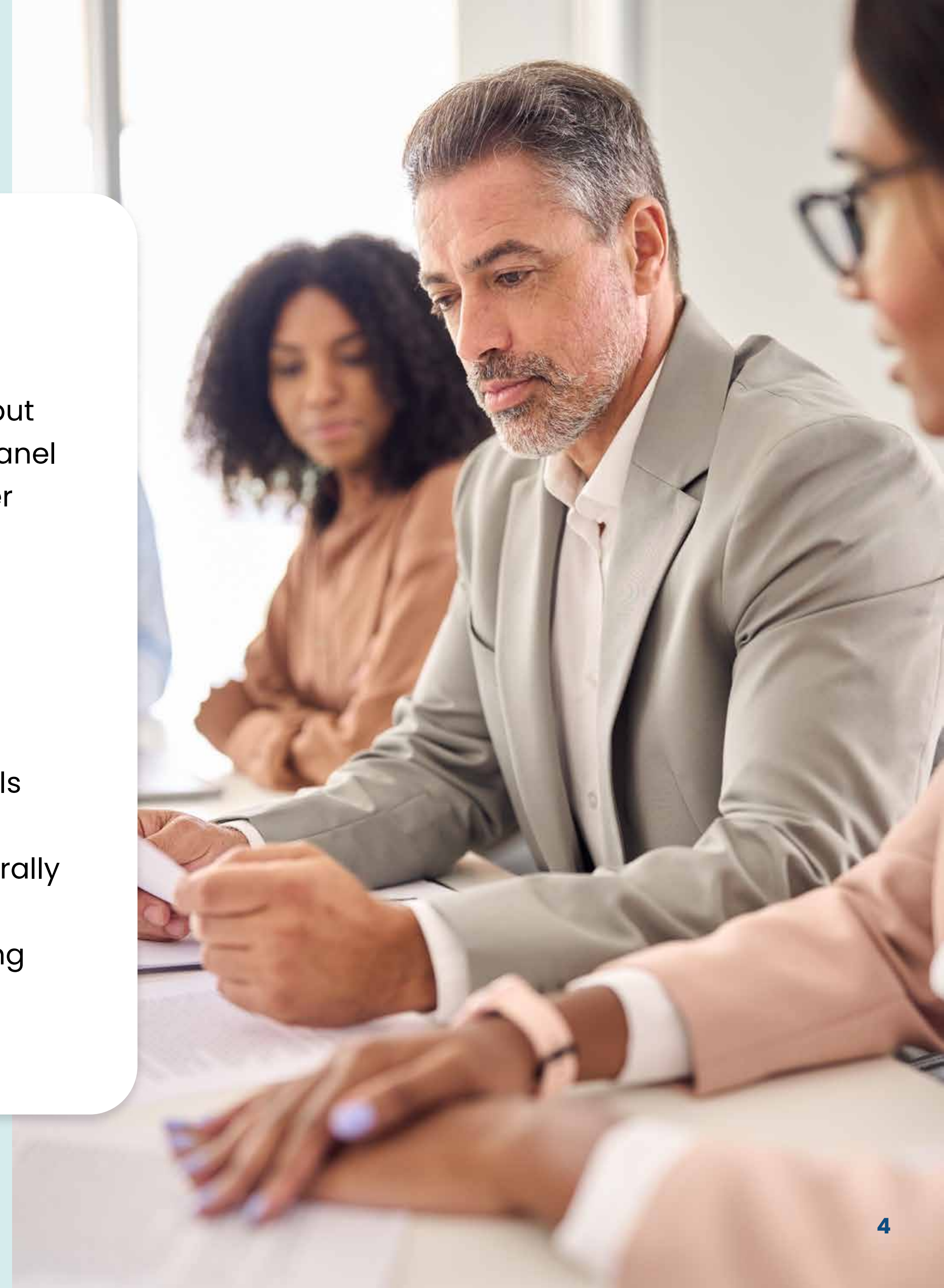


"Planning the 1:1 interview. I typically aim for a 1-hour interview that is 80% my questions and 20% reserved for the candidate's question"

2. Panel Interviews

Panel interviews are fantastic for roles that interact with multiple teams, but it's essential to keep it organized to avoid overwhelming the candidate. Panel interviews draw on the collective insight of the panel and each interviewer can leverage their own experience to focus on different aspects of the candidate's potential. It's also a great way to support a less experienced interviewer who might be overwhelmed in a single interview.

Conversely, panel interviews can be intimidating, making it difficult to develop rapport with the candidate. This can lead to underwhelming performances that cause you to not recognize a candidate's talent. Panels also put a lot of pressure on members to work together and coordinate questions. It's incredibly easy to go off topic, mismanage time or be generally disorganized. Where speed is often important in a hiring process, coordinating calendars with multiple interviewers can slow down the hiring process and lead to losing a great candidate to a competing offer.



3. Job Shadowing

Job shadowing offers a test run for both parties, providing the candidate a glimpse into the job while allowing employers to see them in action. It's effective across various roles, from specialist developer positions to office admin teams and even recruiters. Typically, candidates passively shadow current employees and observe their work for part of the day, but some companies can experiment with creative alternatives such as pair programming scenarios to assess hands-on skills.

While job shadowing provides a valuable experience for both parties, it can be demanding on candidates and disruptive to your workplace. It also raises confidentiality concerns in environments that deal with sensitive information. Additionally, many jurisdictions classify job shadowing exercises as unpaid work and have taken steps to explicitly prohibit it.

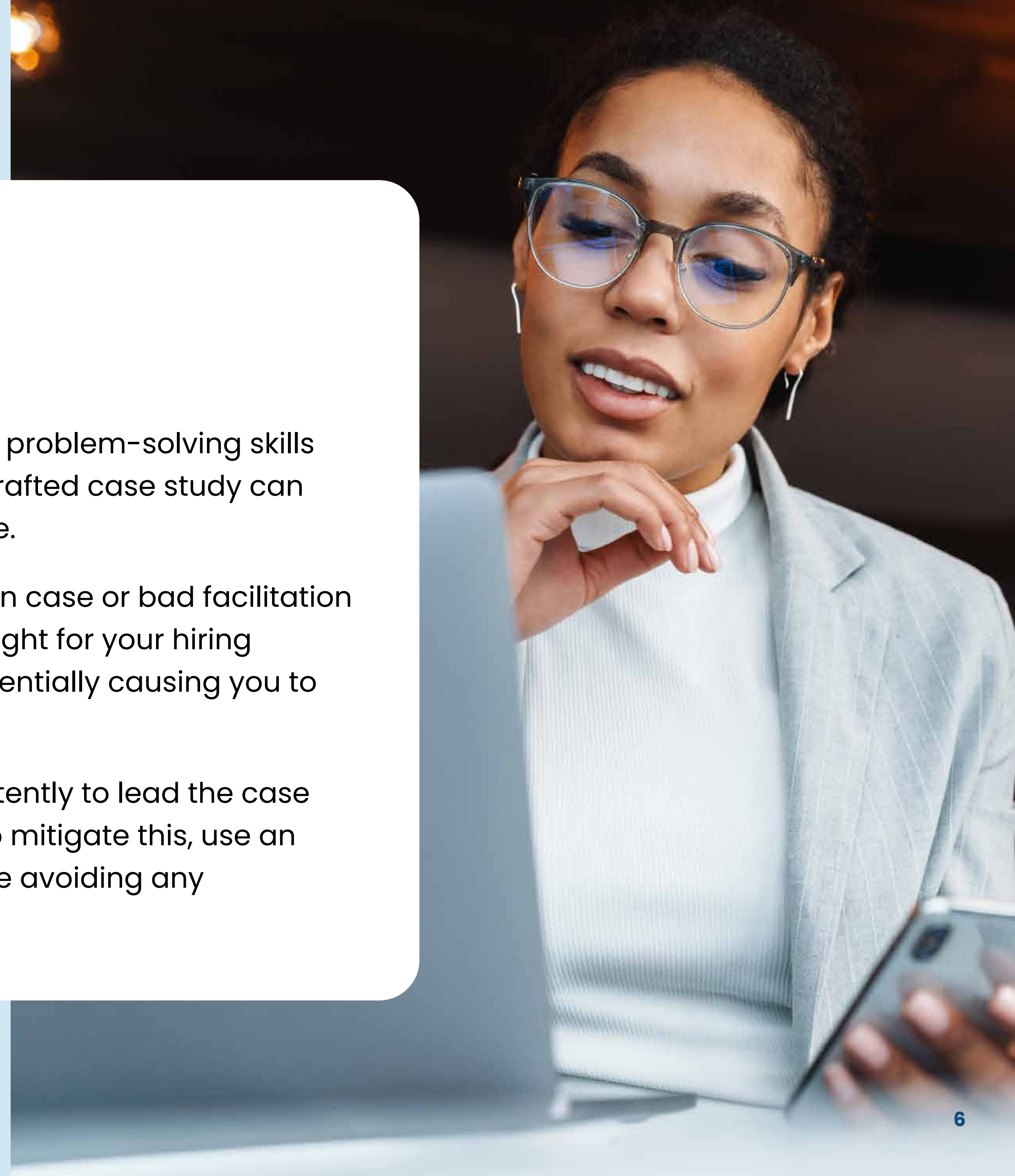


4. Case Studies

Case studies challenge candidates to demonstrate their problem-solving skills and are ideal for roles requiring critical thinking. A well-crafted case study can reveal a lot about a candidate's approach and work style.

However, the quality of the case is crucial; a poorly written case or bad facilitation can hinder the candidate's experience and yield little insight for your hiring decision. Case study interviews can also be stressful, potentially causing you to miss otherwise talented candidates.

Another risk is bias; it's easy for an interviewer to inadvertently lead the case conversation, resulting in an unbalanced assessment. To mitigate this, use an objective scorecard tied to actual job requirements, while avoiding any perception of soliciting unpaid work.

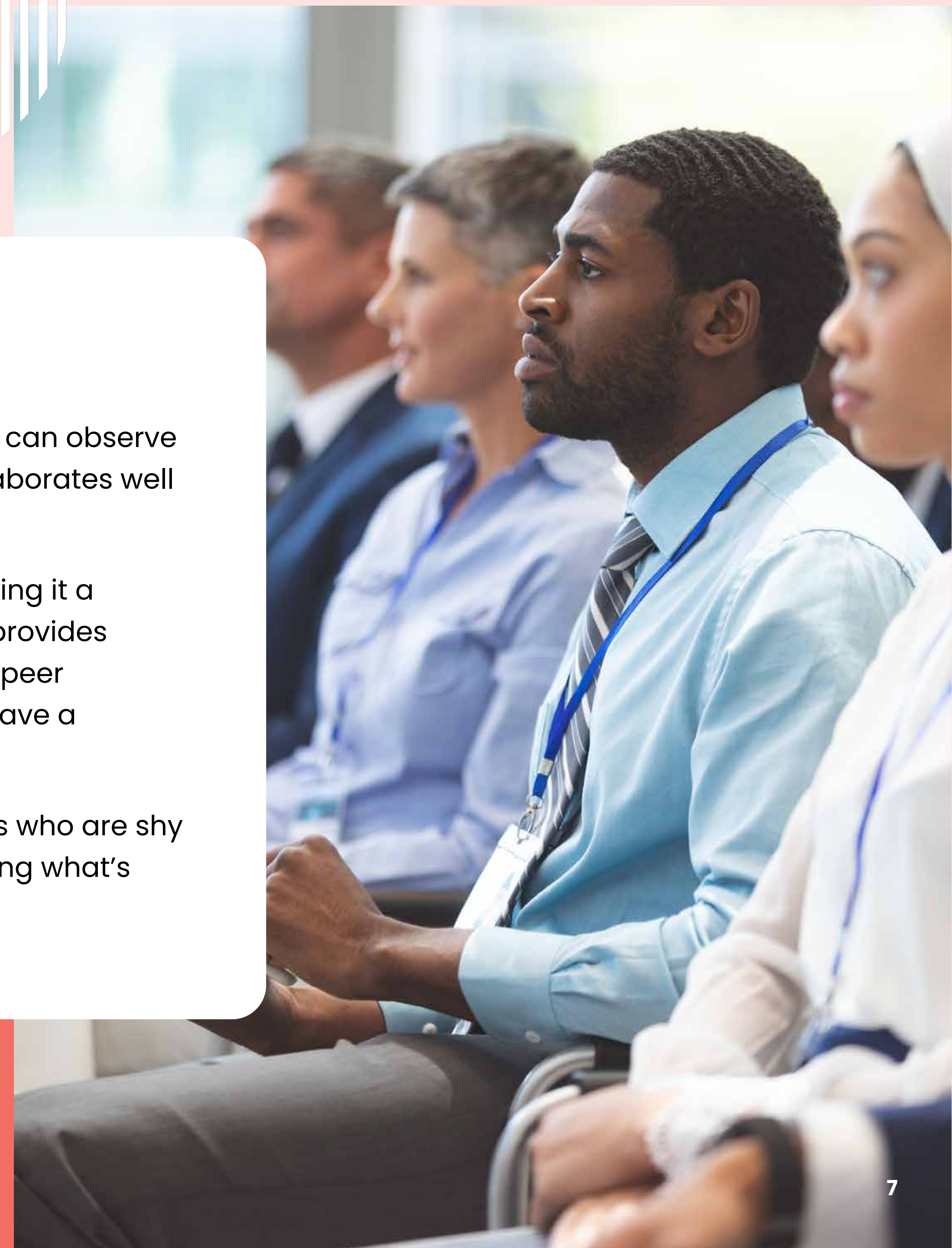


5. Group Interviews

Group interviews involve multiple candidates simultaneously where you can observe candidates interacting in a team setting – who takes the lead, who collaborates well and so on.

Group interviews allow you to consider several candidates at once, making it a time-efficient method for roles where multiple hires are needed. It also provides insights into how candidates handle group dynamics, competition, and peer interactions, which can be helpful for entry level candidates who don't have a substantial professional history.

If you use this approach, be wary of interpersonal dynamics. Candidates who are shy may be overshadowed by the more outspoken ones. It's all about knowing what's needed in the role.



6. Technical or Skill-Based Interviews

Technical interviews aim to see candidates in action, especially for highly technical roles, focusing on requirements and challenges. When creating an interview script, it's vital to benchmark a candidate's general competency and work approach rather than fixating on a single best answer, as multiple correct solutions can exist depending on objectives, assumptions, context and experience.

However, technical screening often looks backward, measuring only current knowledge and overlooking potential for future performance. Therefore, it's essential to leave room to evaluate curiosity and growth potential, neither of which will show up in traditional tests. The technical skills that brought candidates to the present may not stay relevant in the future.

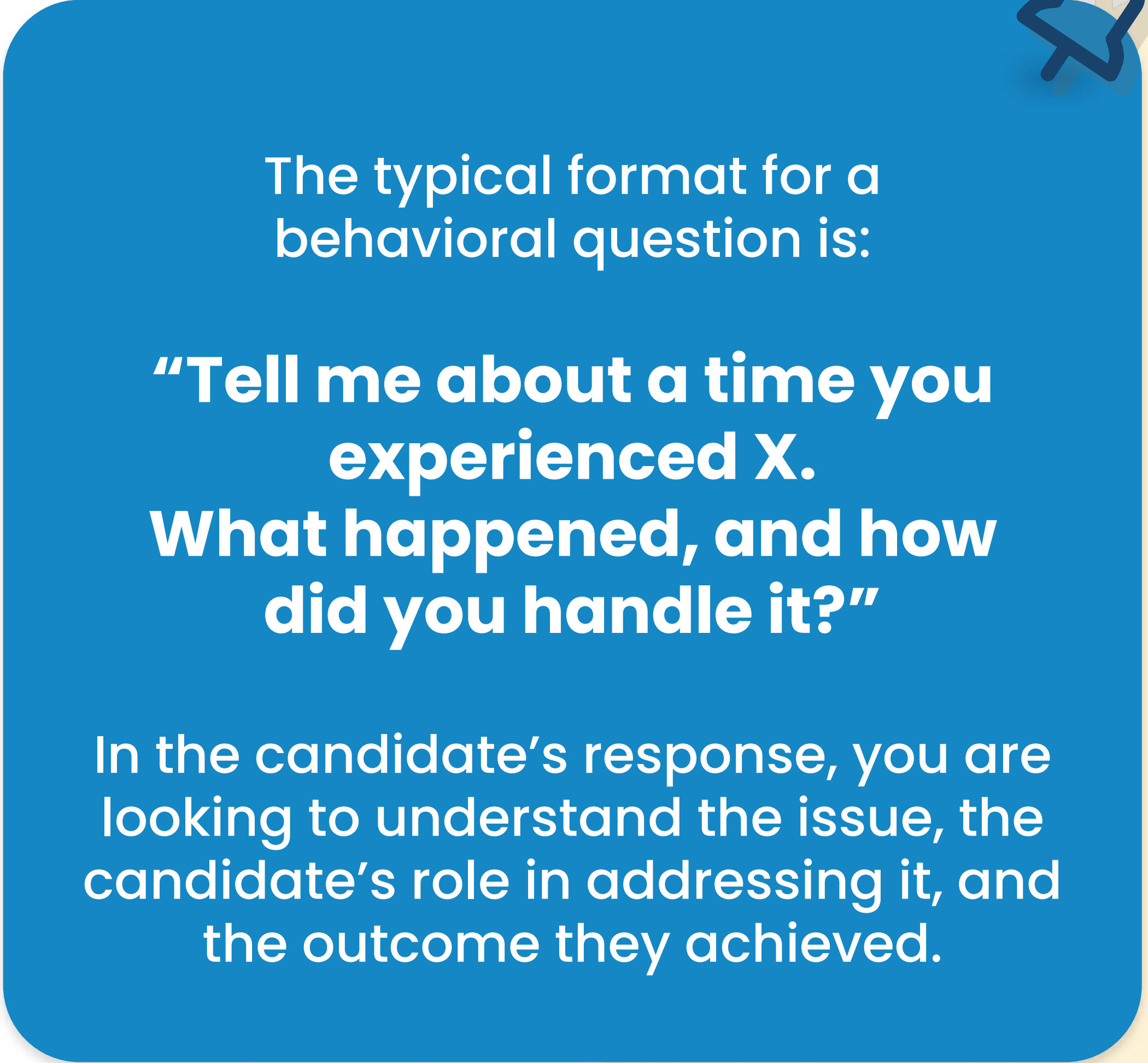


7. Behavioral Interviews

Behavioral interviews reveal how candidates have acted in past situations, providing insights into their work style and problem-solving approach. They are effective for assessing team fit and handling future challenges.

Behavioral questions aren't about exact right answers. Instead, they offer a glimpse into work style and situational responses. Consider whether candidates approach problems directly or indirectly, how they frame outcomes, and whether their answers are specific and measurable or more general.

A common mistake is letting candidates give high level answers and not digging into the details. Be ready to ask plenty of follow-up questions, and be sure to note any interesting points as something to follow up on later in the interview process when checking candidate references.



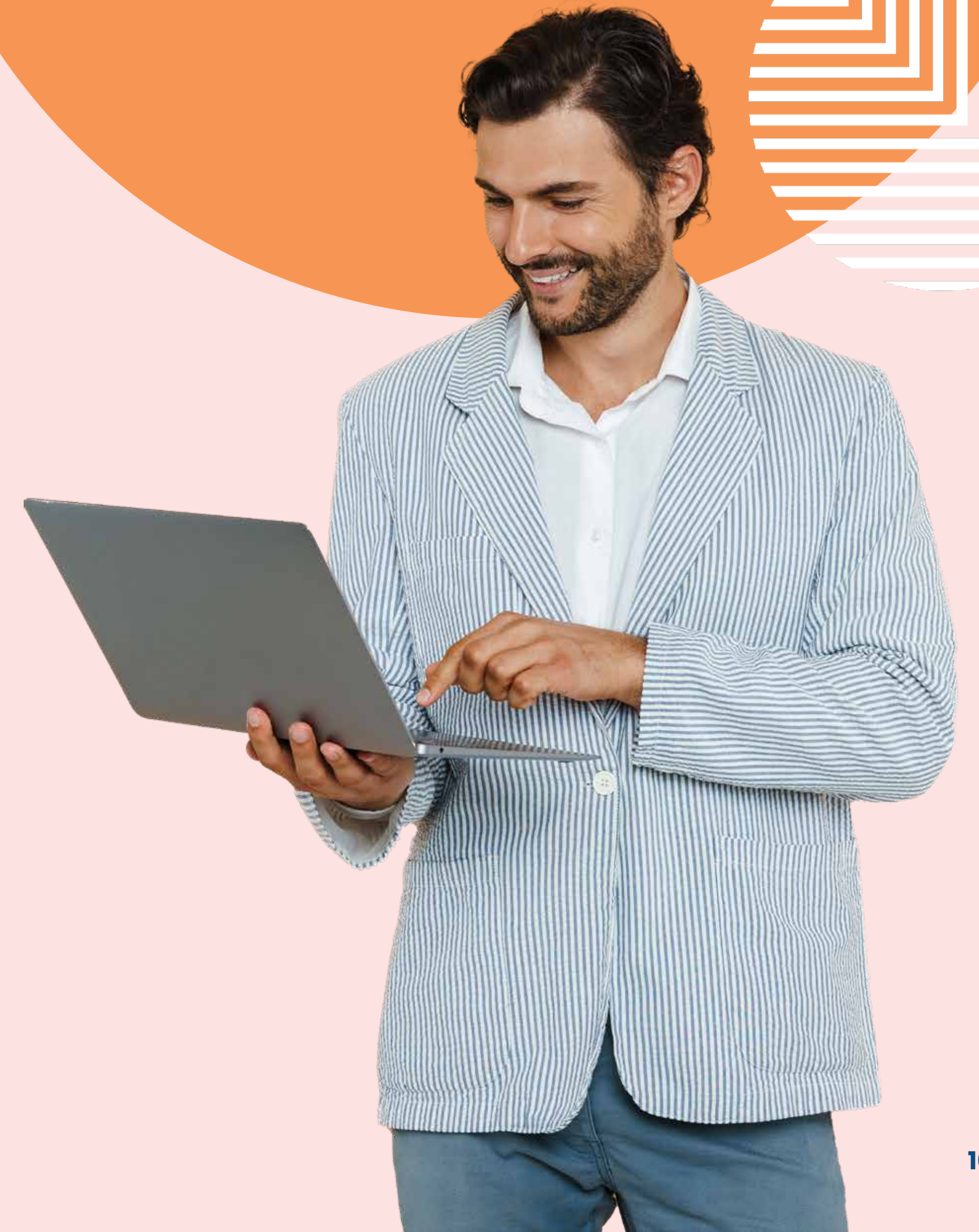
The typical format for a behavioral question is:

“Tell me about a time you experienced X. What happened, and how did you handle it?”

In the candidate's response, you are looking to understand the issue, the candidate's role in addressing it, and the outcome they achieved.

| Section 2:

Impact of Technology on Interviews



Technology is significantly impacting the interview process and candidate screening. The rise of video interviewing alone is a major shift that has broadened access to diverse candidates, but has also introduced a variety of new interview cheating schemes such as including substitute candidates, off-camera help and even advanced GPT-driven real-time answer support.

On the hiring side, new tools are emerging, from asynchronous recorded interviews to AI-driven voice and body language analysis. This aspect of hiring will continue to evolve dramatically as remote interviews and AI integration continues to proliferate.

As advanced as technology gets, however, it won't replace the core issue – hiring managers still seek the ideal candidate and use various techniques to screen and hire them. Skilled hiring managers will need to keep sharpening their skills or risk making costly hiring errors.



| Section 3:

Diversity and Inclusion



Diversity and inclusive thinking is a critical part of the interview stage. It is essential for creating a workforce that reflects a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

The top practice is to only use structured interviews, which refers to the idea of having a written interview script where all candidates are asked the same questions and evaluated on the common scorecard.

This consistency helps reduce the influence of unconscious bias. This practice should be closely followed by implementing effective DEI-centered training for interviewers, and using diverse interview teams wherever possible.



Making the Right Choice

Interviewing is all about learning about your candidates, assessing their fit for the role, and building conviction on who you think will be the best member for your team.

Interviews play a critical role in the assessment process, and it's important to use the right type of interview for your position, skills and hiring objectives. Each format, whether it's single interviews, panel discussions, job shadowing, case studies, group interviews, technical assessments, or behavioral questions, serves a specific purpose and offers unique insights into a candidate's suitability for a role.

A great interviewing process will be engaging to candidates and allow you to learn about them, contrast them, and reach a high level of conviction that you have found the right person.





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