

DSC SPEED READS

**MANAGEMENT**

# Interviewing

Heather Brierley

DSC



DSC SPEED READS

## **MANAGEMENT**

# Interviewing

**Heather Brierley**

DIRECTORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Published by  
Directory of Social Change  
24 Stephenson Way  
London NW1 2DP  
Tel. 08450 77 77 07; Fax 020 7391 4804  
email [publications@dsc.org.uk](mailto:publications@dsc.org.uk)  
[www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)  
from whom further copies and a full books catalogue are available.

Directory of Social Change is a Registered Charity no. 800517

First published 2011

Copyright © Directory of Social Change 2011

The moral right of the authors has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. **No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or reproduced in any form whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the publisher.**

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior permission in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published, and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

ISBN 978 1 906294 44 1

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Cover and text designed by Kate Bass  
Typeset by Marlinzo Services, Frome  
Printed and bound by Martins the Printers, Berwick-upon-Tweed

All Directory of Social Change departments in London:  
08450 77 77 07

Directory of Social Change Northern Office:  
Research 0151 708 0136

|  |
|--|
| For other titles in the DSC SPEED READ series go to:<br><a href="http://www.dsc.org.uk/Publications/SpeedReadSeries">www.dsc.org.uk/Publications/SpeedReadSeries</a> |
|--|

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Chapter 1: Preparing to recruit</b>                  | <b>5</b>  |
| ■ Job review  | 5         |
| ■ Job description                                       | 6         |
| ■ Person specification                                  | 8         |
| <b>Chapter 2: Shortlisting and selecting candidates</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| ■ Shortlisting and selection methods                    | 10        |
| ■ Making the decision                                   | 11        |
| ■ Ensuring fair evaluation                              | 12        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Preparing to interview</b>                | <b>15</b> |
| ■ Involving others in the interview process             | 15        |
| ■ Inviting candidates to interview                      | 16        |
| ■ Interview location                                    | 17        |
| ■ Interview questions                                   | 17        |
| <b>Chapter 4: During the interview</b>                  | <b>22</b> |
| ■ The key skills of an interviewer                      | 22        |
| ■ Structuring the interview                             | 23        |
| ■ The three Cs: 'challenging' candidates                | 25        |
| ■ Treating candidates equally                           | 27        |
| ■ Two-way interview: your responsibilities              | 27        |
| <b>Chapter 5: After the interview</b>                   | <b>28</b> |
| ■ Keeping good records                                  | 28        |
| ■ Making the final decision                             | 29        |
| ■ Informing successful and unsuccessful candidates      | 29        |
| <b>Chapter 6: Selecting volunteers</b>                  | <b>31</b> |
| ■ Key considerations                                    | 31        |

# Introduction

## Who will this book help?

This easy-to-use, practical guide will help anyone who is involved in interviewing and wants to make sure they get the right person for the right job. It takes you through an overview of the recruitment process, from what you need to do before you even start advertising the job, to what you need to do before, during and after an interview. This guide will help those who are new to selection interviewing as well as those wanting a refresher. It will be useful for those who have to select both paid staff and volunteers.

An effective selection process avoids unnecessary disruption for you and your staff caused by a mismatch between the person and the job. All too often we are under pressure to recruit staff as fast as possible. We forget to properly assess the purpose of the role and the type of person who needs to fill it. We sometimes arrive at the interview without considering the information that we need to gather from candidates, and the questions that we need to ask. This book will help those who are tight for time but want to ensure that they consider all the essentials.

## What will it give you?

This book provides you with the essentials that you need to know for an effective and fair interview process. Packed with guidelines, top tips from people in the sector, real-life case studies and further resources where you can find out more, this book will ensure you recruit the right person for the job.

# Chapter 1

## Preparing to recruit

*This chapter covers what you need to consider when reviewing jobs and the key elements needed for job descriptions and person specifications.*

There are several reasons why you may be recruiting someone. There may be an area of new work that needs to be staffed. There may have been a restructure and jobs have changed. Or someone might have left your organisation and you need to replace them.

It can be tempting to recruit someone as fast as possible, but before you jump in, it is important that you plan recruitment in order to make sure that you get the right person doing the right work.

### Job review

When someone leaves, it is so easy simply to assume that you need to recruit someone to exactly the same role. However, roles and organisations change. You should consider whether the purpose of the role is still relevant and whether it fits with the organisation's needs. Here are some areas for you to consider when reviewing jobs.

- Do the duties involved in the job still need to be carried out?

### Top tip



Conducting exit interviews with departing staff can provide information which helps the development of job descriptions, person specifications, the interview process and interview questions.

**Cathy Shimmin,**  
Senior Training  
Consultant, DSC

## Case study



A museum supervisor, having never had any recruitment and selection training, had to recruit someone quickly. Not thinking about what was actually needed from the new recruit, she simply used the old job description and person specification without reviewing them. At interview, the questions asked were inappropriate and unrelated to the job description. The person selected had various performance issues and wasn't the right fit for the job.

- Are the duties appropriate to be carried out by one person? You might need more than one individual, or for the work to be divided between people who are currently employed. Perhaps this is an opportunity for a restructure.
- If the job is still needed, is it best to try to recruit internally first, or should you advertise it both internally and externally?
- Is the salary and grade of the job still appropriate?

The case study shows that it is so important to keep up-to-date with your own recruitment and selection skills, vital to make the time to review the job, and essential to ask relevant questions. Think about what you need to find out from the candidate. Ask questions that will allow candidates to provide evidence linked to the criteria set out in the job description and person specification.

## Job description

The job description is a key document that you should use throughout the recruitment process. Spend time writing an accurate job description which outlines the responsibilities and requirements of the job. Speak to any staff members who work closely with whoever will hold the position, as they may have useful information about the tasks involved.

A well-written job description will help you make sure that you and the person applying for the job are clear about what they will need to do. In addition, it will be helpful in assessing the performance and training needs of the person once they are recruited.

## Checklist

- ☐ Organisation name.
- ☐ Job title.

# DSC Speed Reads

Aimed at people who are short on time and need to absorb information quickly, these indispensable guides are:

- **Accessible** – practical guidance on a wide range of subjects
- **Condensed** – distilling experience and expertise in just 32 pages
- **Clearly signposted** – Top Tips, Case Studies and Where Next ideas

Covering a wide range of topics and building into an invaluable library, Speed Reads are an essential addition to any bookshelf.

## Interviewing

It is vital that the right people are recruited into the right positions for your organisation. Effective interview processes avoid wasted time, effort and money and ensure that the best people are in place to help your organisation make the maximum positive impact.

**Heather Brierley** has been involved in various projects at Cancer Research UK. She was the National Vice President of AIESEC UK and was responsible for its Work Abroad Programme. She is currently working as a Training Consultant at the Directory of Social Change, specialising in management and leadership.



**Mixed Sources**

Product group from well-managed  
forests and other controlled sources

Cert no. TT-COC-002706  
[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)

© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

ISBN 978-1-906294-44-1



9 781906 294441