

Eli's Rehab Report

Staffing Strategies: Size Up the Best Candidate With These Surprising Interview Strategies

Gain important clues from watching what the interviewee does with her hands and feet.

Good interview questions aren't the only way to determine if an applicant is right for the job □ nonverbal cues can also help you decipher an applicant's cryptic answer or get a sense of her work ethic. Watch out for these nonverbal signals during your next interview.

- **Observe the applicant before the interview.** Try to do this without the applicant noticing, so that you get a glimpse of the resting face, the face she has when she isn't interacting with anyone. You can get a sense of her demeanor this way. Does she seem like a pleasant person or a negative person?
- **Pay attention to how the interviewee walks** when you ask her to come into your office. If she stands tall and walks briskly, she is showing some confidence and enthusiasm for the interview, says Schaefer. If she drags her feet or puts her hand in her pockets, she is showing signs of dejection; it's very possible that her previous employer let her go.
- **Offer your hand.** If your interviewee gives you a firm handshake and maintains eye contact, she is sincere and very interested in the position. If she practically crushes your hand, she's dominating. And if her handshake is limp, she could have a dull personality or lack enthusiasm for the job. If you notice that an applicant shakes your hand too vigorously, she's probably a little insecure. Don't be put off by clammy or sweaty hands. They're not pleasing to the touch, but it might just mean that your applicant is temporarily nervous.
- **Notice how the applicant sits in her chair.** Does she lean forward a little when you're speaking? This is a sign that she's interested and engaged in what you have to say. If she unbuttons her suit coat a little, she is showing warmth and openness. If she's slouching in her chair, she could be indifferent to the interview, and if she's leaning or tipping back in her chair, she may be full of herself.
- **Challenge the applicant with a look.** You want an applicant to maintain eye contact with you during the interview. An applicant who doesn't look you in the eye can be many things, including nervous, introverted, disinterested, or dishonest. None of these traits are desirable.
- **Use nonverbal cues in the applicant's face** to determine the real meaning behind her answers to your questions. For example, if you tell the applicant that her job will require her to work on weekends, watch her face when she answers. If she smiles first and then tells you it's fine with her, you know she's really OK with working weekends. If she says it's fine first and then smiles, she's probably not interested in working weekends.
- **Pay attention to the applicant's limbs.** If she places her hands in her lap, she's probably confident and relaxed. If she drums her fingers, she isn't paying attention to what you're saying. If she points her feet and knees toward your door during the interview, that's a sign that she wants to leave. When an applicant speaks with her hands open and shows her palms, she's demonstrating that she is sincere, open, and warm.
- **Observe how the candidate exits the interview at its conclusion.** This gives you another clue about how she acts when she isn't interacting with someone. If she walks out of the interview just as confidently as she walked into it, she's probably happy with the interview and an overall confident person. If she's hunched over, she could be insecure about how the interview went or lack confidence in herself.

Bottom line: Your facility functions much better when positive, confident, and friendly people are running the ship. Work to improve patient care and workplace efficiency by knowing how to pick out the very best new employees.