

Interviewee Emotional Intelligence

Whilst it's crucial that potential candidates can do the job they're being interviewed for, or be successfully trained in it, it's also crucial to look beyond their professional achievements.

Emotional intelligence simply means understanding and managing one's own emotions and the emotions of others.

Encompassing skills like self-awareness, adaptability, empathy, motivation, and social skills, emotional intelligence can have a significant impact on team dynamics and workplace harmony.

Emotional Intelligence CV Clues

Gauging emotional intelligence (EI) from a CV alone can be challenging, as CVs primarily focus on professional qualifications and experience. However, there are certain elements and subtle cues that employers can look for to get an initial sense of a candidate's EI:

- **Teamwork and Collaboration:**

Check for examples of collaborative projects, team achievements, and contributions to group efforts within the experience section.

The CV should state more than "worked as part of a team," or "collaborated with colleagues" - these statements alone don't necessarily highlight the skill of teamwork. The key here is what successful element the potential candidate brought to the team. What positive results did they achieve for themselves, the team and the business.

- **Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution:**

Look for examples where the candidate has solved interpersonal issues or navigated conflicts successfully. Again, look for examples and positive results, don't just rely on phrases like "resolved a dispute," or "handled a challenging situation"

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- **Emphasis on Communication Skills:**

References to communication in the CV, with clear, positive examples of active listening are important, particularly within communication that involved difficult topics, including persuading, negotiating or communicating with diverse groups, with different opinions - these are strong indicators of EI.

- **Self-Awareness and Personal Growth:**

Consistent career growth and increasingly taking on more responsibility can indicate a commitment to personal development. Candidates who have pursued professional development through training such as CPD, online training (formal or otherwise) as well as professional study, particularly in their own time, shows a strong dedication to growth.

Gauging Emotional Intelligence During the Interview

Emotional intelligence can be assessed using strategic questions.

Some ways to help assess candidates effectively include:

- **Ask Behavioural Question:**

Use questions that focus on past behaviour to understand how candidates have handled emotionally charged situations. For example, "Can you describe a time when you had a difficult work colleague relationship? How did you handle it?" Look for specific examples and details in their responses that indicate self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.

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- **Evaluate Self-Awareness:**

Ask questions that require candidates to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses. For instance, "What is one piece of constructive feedback you received in the past, and how did you respond to it?" Assess their ability to acknowledge their own emotions and behaviours without becoming defensive.

- **Observe Non-Verbal Cues:**

Pay close attention to body language, eye contact, and facial expressions during the interview, particularly when asking more challenging questions. These can provide insights into the candidate's emotional state and how they regulate their emotions. Also note if their non-verbal communication aligns with their verbal responses.

- **Assess Empathy:**

Pose questions that reveal their ability to understand and consider others' perspectives, such as, "Can you give an example when you strongly disagreed with someone but had to put yourself in their shoes to understand their viewpoint?" Observe if they can articulate the emotions and motivations of others accurately.

- **Check for Active Listening Skills:**

Throughout the interview, observe how well the candidate listens. Do they interrupt? Do they interpret your questions correctly? Active listening is a key component of emotional intelligence, allowing a person to understand what they are being told rather than focusing on only trying to get their own viewpoint across.

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- **Gauge Flexibility and Adaptability:**

Pose questions that assess how candidates handle change and or unexpected situations. For example, "Describe a situation where you had to adapt to a significant change at work. How did you cope with it?" Assess their ability to stay calm under pressure, their willingness to adjust their approach when necessary and their desire to look for solutions to unexpected challenges.

Candidates who view your business as a holistic organisation, who genuinely understand and value teamwork and collaboration and are self aware enough to be part of that collaboration, will bring value to you, your staff and your business.

By prioritising emotional intelligence in your hiring process, you not only increase the chances of finding responsible and successful employees, but also employees who will contribute to a positive and productive work environment, that everyone benefits from.

Developing and recognising these skills will enhance both personal and professional relationships, leading to a more cohesive and effective team.

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