

How to run an effective interview debrief

Prepare

Goal: Go in to the meeting knowing what requires further discussion.

As the Hiring Manager, you should:

1. Read the written feedback from the interviewers on the loop before the meeting.
2. Identify and summarize the key themes.
3. Flag areas that you want to probe more deeply with the hiring team during the debrief.

Go around the room

Goal: Make sure everyone in the hiring team is aware of each others' high-level feedback, and spot any areas where it is inconsistent with the written feedback.

Go around the room and ask each interviewer to, in 1-2 minutes:

1. Summarize their judgement on the candidate's performance in their interview's focus area.
2. Highlight particular strengths.
3. Flag weaknesses or areas of concern.

Summarize for the group

Goal: Make sure your interpretation of the feedback matches reality.

In order to make sure you are being transparent with your thinking on the candidate, and to give the hiring team opportunities to flag where they may have been misunderstood:

1. Summarize what you heard in no more than a couple of sentences. Something as simple as "Sounds like we're excited about [X], but have a few concerns about [Y]."
2. Ask: "Have I got that right?"

Deep dive

Goal: Shake out any additional information you need from the hiring team in order to make a confident decision on the candidate.

Based on the areas where you feel least confident or clear about the evaluation, or the competencies that are most vital:

1. Where needed, probe interviewers for examples to back up their feelings. Ask "Can you remember when you first started to feel that way about the candidate?"
2. Watch back key moments from the interviews that relate to this competency or characteristic.
3. Don't forget to also probe strengths that were highlighted but not well supported.

Make the decision

Goal: Make the hiring decision (or at least the decision on next steps) in front of the team so that they are bought-in and calibrated.

Take the lead on making the decision:

1. If you decide to make an offer: explain why, despite any weaknesses that may have been flagged, you think that is the right decision.
2. If you decide not to make an offer: explain why, despite some the strengths that may have been flagged, you think they are not a fit for the role.
3. Sometimes the answer is obvious. If that's the case then great! Looks like you've found yourself a hire.