

## Selection Methods

While interviews are by far the most common method of selection it can sometimes be insufficient or inappropriate on its own.

You need to determine your selection method prior to advertising your vacancy so applicants are aware of what information to include and in what form you require their application.

The following table details some common assessment methods for small to medium businesses.

Method	How it works	Works best...
<b>Written application</b> Use in conjunction with other methods for best effect	Gives you an understanding of what the applicant has done in the past, in written form. Can be good if you need an in-depth look at what the candidate has done previously and if writing skill is important for the role, assuming the applicant wrote the application. Don't be too tied to this method as it can be misleading and time consuming.	When you have time to read applications When you need to compare several candidates When you would like to keep details on file for next time When there is a need to assess written communication for the job
<b>Informal chat</b> Use in conjunction with other methods for best effect	Allows you to talk to the person to get to know them. Can be less daunting than formal methods. Not suitable when you need to compare multiple candidates. Can be a VERY unreliable method. Not recommended unless part of a wider assessment process.	When recruiting for more senior roles When used in conjunction with other methods such as a structured interview or practical demonstration When you need to hire for skills other than practical competence such as management
<b>Structured interview</b> Recommended over informal chats or unstructured interviews	An interview where the questions or areas for questioning are pre-determined in line with the selection criteria. The same questions are put to all candidates. Consider giving questions to candidates a short time prior to the interview. This type of interview is a more reliable way to rate and compare interviewees as they all have the same opportunity to answer the same questions.	When you need to compare several candidates
<b>Work sample test</b> Use in conjunction with other methods for best effect	This tests the ability of the applicant to do an actual task required for the job, for example answering a phone, pouring a beer or changing a tyre. Work tests can be useful if the job is task oriented and the candidate needs to have a certain level of competence from day one.	If you need to hire someone with certain skills Can be used to determine how much training or support a candidate will need if selected Best avoided when the job has other dimensions such as high-level decision making or managerial aspects
<b>Written test</b>	Multiple choice, true/false, short answer	Where you need to determine a level of knowledge or

		understanding of certain aspects of a job Useful where a level of language and literacy is a prime concern. Be careful not to eliminate people for reasons not related to the job
<b>Presentation</b>	Candidates prepare a presentation on a set topic for the interview panel.	When public speaking or presentations are part of the job such as a salesperson or trainer
<b>Example of previous work</b>	If it's relevant to the position, an applicant may be asked to bring a sample of their work. For example, graphic artists or photographers may provide a portfolio of work. Furniture makers may provide photos or actual pieces of work for consideration.	Where practical skills need to be demonstrated in a tangible format
<b>Reference check</b>	Always conduct reference checks and check qualifications to ensure authenticity. Preferably ask to see the original certificates. Ask for the names and numbers of people who can confirm the candidate's claims. Ask the referee for concrete evidence, not just opinions. Give an example of what the job entails and ask them to recall a time when the applicant undertook similar tasks. Like and questions asked of the candidate, questions to referees should only relate to the candidate's ability to do the job. Do not ask personal questions.	When attempting to decide between two closely rated candidates

If you choose to use the interview method, you may like to consider two styles of questioning: behavioural-style and situational-style questions.

#### Questioning to aid reliability of interviews

<b>Behavioural-style questions</b>	Designed to give you examples of the candidate's behaviour as opposed to just their knowledge and opinions. These questions allow you to describe situations, or the type of work involved in the job, and allows candidates to provide examples of how they have approached similar situations or work. Example: 'This job requires someone to prioritise a number of tasks during the day. Tell me how you have managed competing priorities in previous roles.'	When you need to determine how the candidate may have behaved in the past, and if that behaviour would suit your business.
<b>Situational-style questions</b>	A hypothetical situation based on challenging job-related occurrences is presented to the candidate and they are asked how they would handle it.	Where the applicant may not have enough work experience to draw on past experiences, for example school leavers or graduates. Also

Examples: "Tell me how you would deal with an angry customer."  
"Describe how you might manage deliveries at peak delivery times."

good for internal applicants applying for a job different from their current position.