GUIDE TO

Remote interviewing strategies for the modern workforce

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Interviews for the world today

Gone are the days of stuffy cubicle walls and long commutes. The ability for employees to work remotely was once considered a perk—right up there with free food, ping pong tables, and unlimited vacation—offered only by the hippest tech companies in a bid to attract top talent. But with 74 percent of organizations planning to make remote work permanent,[1] remote working is no longer the exception—it's the expectation.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the future of work and has changed many aspects of everyday life, including how and where we work. Work is no longer a place we go, but a thing we do. Even for organizations that plan to return—or have already returned—to in-office operations, the pandemic has permanently altered candidate expectations for the interview process. Unfortunately, many organizations' recruiting and talent acquisition processes are still catching up to this new reality.

The need for HR leaders to develop effective modern interviewing strategies has never been more obvious or urgent. To hire the best talent—and ensure you're putting the right people in the right roles—the same old approach to recruiting just won't cut it.

In this guide, you'll discover how the remote workforce has changed the hiring process, tips for creating a positive remote candidate experience, and how to implement a video interviewing strategy that enables your organization to hire smarter, faster, and safer.

74% of organizations plan to make remote work permanent

The changing state of talent acquisition

Seemingly overnight, COVID-19 changed the remote work landscape and the face of recruiting forever. Social distancing measures and stay-at-home orders intended to combat the spread of the virus led employees to begin teleworking and accelerated the transition to remote interviewing.

With recruiters, hiring managers, and interview panel members working remotely, hiring teams have had to assess, evaluate, and collaborate on hiring decisions without ever meeting candidates face to face. The need for remote hiring team collaboration has exploded and become a critical component of aligning stakeholders on hiring decisions.

47% of organizations report that video interviewing has already shortened their time to hire

To power remote recruiting, video interviewing has become a mainstay of the talent acquisition process. And for many candidates, that's a good thing. For one, candidates prefer video interviews. One survey showed that nearly 25 percent more job seekers prefer live video interviews to in-person interviews.[2] And it's easy to see why: Candidates don't have to carve out hours in their day, take time off from their current job, or make a lengthy commute just for a short 45-minute interview.

When done right, companies also stand to benefit from the transition to remote interviewing. In fact, 47 percent of organizations report that video interviewing has already shortened their time to hire.[3] By delivering a better candidate experience and faster hiring process, video interviews also give employers a greater chance of securing top talent before the competition.
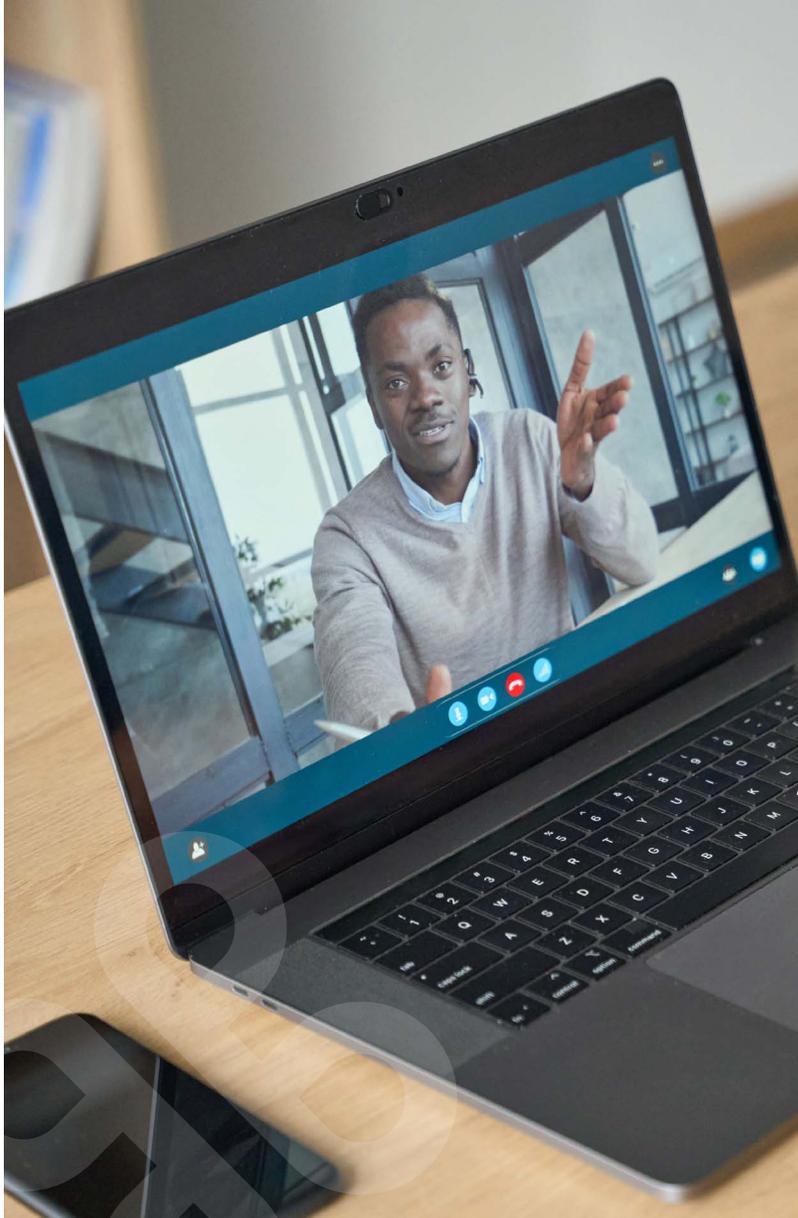
The war on talent is alive and well

At the height of the pandemic, a single open position could yield hundreds—even thousands—of applicants, many of them strong, viable candidates. With expanded talent pools combined with the ability to hire talent from anywhere in the world, it was easy to assume employers had the upper hand.

But make no mistake: the war for talent is alive and well. We're back in a candidate's market and recruiters must be ready to compete.

We all love a good comeback story, and the global economic comeback is well underway. Poised to accelerate beyond pre-pandemic levels, the economy is gearing up for a run of the best economic growth we've had in decades. The job market is exploding and the U.S. unemployment rate is plummeting. Nationally, across all industries, hiring in the U.S.

was 15.2 percent higher than in March 2020,[4] and the first four months of 2021 alone brought in over 1.8 million new jobs.[5]

A candidate-driven market is a sign of a healthy economy, but it does make recruiting more challenging. Top talent is no longer beating down the doors of companies looking for work. The tables have turned and candidates are back in the driver's seat. To attract and win over the best candidates, you need to deliver an exceptional candidate experience.

And it starts by creating a great interview experience.

The interview is a pivotal point in the candidate journey and it has a major impact on a candidate's final decision to join your company—or not. Research by LinkedIn found that 83 percent of candidates say a negative interview experience can change their mind about a role or company they once liked, while 87 percent say a positive interview experience can change their mind about a role or company they once doubted.[6] Getting the interview right will win you top talent, while getting it wrong can cost you your best candidates.

So, how can you provide every single candidate—including those you'll never meet in person—with a stand-out interview experience? By understanding what modern candidates expect from the hiring process and tailoring your interview strategy to meet those expectations.

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Candidate expectations are at an all-time high

Today's candidates, especially the digital natives, have high expectations. They expect a fair, seamless, and positive hiring process. Candidates are socially conscious and digitally savvy and will turn down jobs due to a poor experience.

In response to cultural and economic events of 2020, for example, we saw major movements in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I). Take a look at these statistics that highlight the growing importance of DE&I in the hiring process:

33%

of recruiters report that job seekers are inquiring about DE&I initiatives more than they did in the previous year.[10]

42%

of job seekers would turn down an offer if the company lacked diversity or had no clear goals for improving diversity in hiring.[8]

70%

of candidates value a commitment to diversity in potential employers.[7]

83%

of candidates say diversity is a consideration when deciding whether to accept a job—up from 64% in 2018.[9]

Candidates are more aware, educated, and purpose-driven. They want to work for companies whose values align with theirs—and whose companies allow their values to drive their decisions and operations. Organizations need to be transparent with candidates about their DE&I initiatives, practices, and values—and that starts during the interview process.

But creating a great candidate experience that mirrors your company's values is exponentially harder in a remote recruiting environment. By adapting your interviewing strategy to meet the expectations of today's candidates, you can deliver an interview experience that shortens time to hire, improves quality of hire, and gets top talent to say "yes" to your offer—and "no" to your competition.

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5 biggest mistakes to avoid in interviews

Relying on traditional recruitment processes to support your remote interviewing strategy is akin to the "square peg, round hole" conundrum. It's a complete mismatch. Instead of clinging to outdated interview practices that don't work or, even worse, drive candidates away in the new era of remote recruiting, organizations need to adjust their interviewing strategies to the actual needs of a virtual workforce.

When hiring remotely, here are five common interviewing mistakes that can torpedo the candidate experience and cost you the ideal candidate:

1. Expecting hiring managers to know how to interview

Conducting an interview is an art form. But ask a room full of senior leaders how many of them have received training on how to conduct great interviews over the course of their careers, and not many hands will go up.

HR and talent acquisition leaders often assume hiring managers have the interviewing skills to identify and hire the best qualified candidate. But that's not necessarily the case. Hiring managers often have little or no training in interviewing but are tasked with making hiring decisions based on a one-hour conversation.

Hiring the right people for the right roles is the single biggest driver of any company's success. And yet, most companies don't devote the time or resources needed to ensure their hiring managers know how to make the most of the interview process and are equipped to make well-informed hiring decisions.

How to fix it:

- Recognize that interviewing is not a natural skill. There's a big difference between being a great conversationalist and a great interviewer.

- Coach hiring managers and panel members on how to be better interviewers. Be sure you're also providing post-interview feedback.

- Train hiring teams on complex interviewing techniques like combating biases, using structured interviews, & avoiding cliché questions.

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...focus on the reason you got into recruiting in the first place: people.
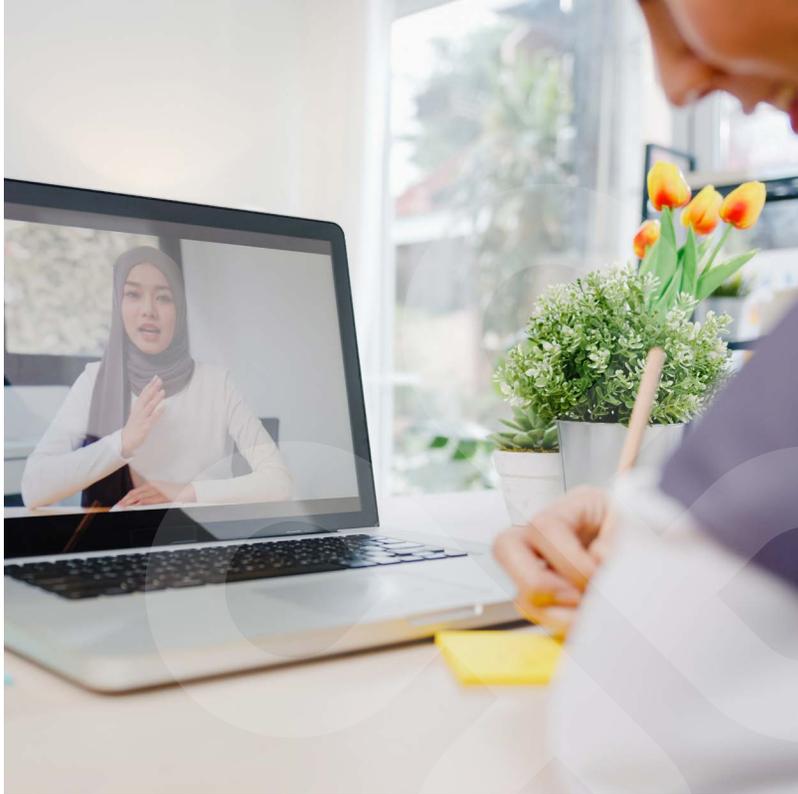
2. Using recruiting technology that inhibits efficiency

From applicant tracking systems (ATS) to candidate relationship management (CRM) software and everything in between, there is no shortage of recruiting tools and technologies promising to improve your hiring process.

The bells and whistles of that new recruiting tool you're considering might look good now, but if it doesn't integrate well with your existing

recruiting technologies, it's going to cause more headaches than it's worth. Any new recruiting or interviewing technology should make your hiring processes easier, not more complicated. When the tools in your talent acquisition tech stack operate in silos, it can lead to slow, inefficient hiring processes that are frustrating for the candidate and costly for employers.

The right technology will allow you to focus on the reason you got into recruiting in the first place: people. To achieve this, HR and talent acquisition teams need technology that adapts to the way they work, not the other way around.

How to fix it:

- Consider how each component in your recruiting tech stack works together— or doesn't—to identify opportunities for integration.

- Choose video interviewing solutions that natively integrate with the video conference platforms you already use, such as Zoom and MicrosoftTeams.

3. Spending too much time finding candidates

Sourcing candidates is a vital part of the recruiting process—but it's not what recruiters should be spending all their time on. Unfortunately, nearly half of recruiters say they spend most of their workweek—at least 30 hours—on sourcing alone.[11] That doesn't leave recruiters much time for the other critical aspects of the hiring process, such as building meaningful relationships with top candidates or training hiring teams to be great interviewers.

If talent acquisition teams focus all of their time filling the top of the funnel, they can't give the interview experience the attention it requires. This will cause you to lose great candidates as they filter through the interview process and even cause future job seekers to think twice about applying for your next open position. After all, with just a quick search on Glassdoor anybody can read all about the interview experiences—both positive and negative—that previous candidates have had with your company.

When sourcing is a time-consuming and tedious process, requisitions stay open longer and hiring teams run the risk of making bad hiring decisions. And not hiring the right person for the job the first time around only brings you back to the start of the vicious cycle.

How to fix it:

- Prioritize a positive interview experience and top candidates are much more likely to refer other candidates with similar qualities.

- Leverage artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technology to automate the process of manually sourcing qualified candidates, as well as to streamline the candidate selection process.

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4. Hiring based on "gut feeling"

Humans are instinctive creatures. And while our instincts have evolved to protect us from danger—think woolly mammoths and saber-toothed tigers—relying on them in the hiring process can lead to bad hires and discriminatory hiring practices.

Most people, when interviewing candidates, decide if they like someone or not almost immediately. It's natural to gravitate toward people with whom you instantly connect, but relying too much on gut instinct in the hiring process allows unconscious bias—also known as implicit bias—to seep in and influence hiring decisions. It's why, according to one study, 93 percent of companies recognize the need to reduce bias in their talent acquisition process.[12]

We all have bias. But often, we're not even aware of the biases we subconsciously hold. If recruiters and hiring managers let their heart rule their head, their preconceptions may lead them to miss out on the best candidate for the position.

How to fix it:

- Take the Implicit Association Test developed at Harvard University to learn what implicit biases you may have and encourage hiring teams to do the same.

- Train employees to recognize unconscious bias, microaggressions, and other conduct that can lead to unfair hiring decisions.

- Track and report on diversity metrics to drive accountability and action around equitable interviewing practices.

- Standardize interviews with an AI-powered video interview solution like Clovers that can help reduce unconscious bias in the interview process.

5. Trusting your interview teams know what *not* to ask

HR and talent acquisition teams often assume that in today's day and age, we all know what not to ask during an interview. But a CareerBuilder survey found that 20 percent of hiring managers have asked a question in a job interview only to find out later that it was illegal to ask.[13] *Yikes.*

Laws regarding job interview questions vary by state and it's important that every member of the interview team understands what they can't ask during an interview. It's not that hiring interviewers purposely ask illegal questions; it's that these questions—to an untrained interviewer—can feel just like an innocent, natural part of conversation.

A person mentioning their family, kids, or where they live isn't unusual and often seen as getting-to-know-you small talk. But all these topics can land employers in hot water—even if the interviewer doesn't initiate the conversation. Not only do interview teams need to be aware of what not to ask—they also need to know how to gently redirect conversations that are getting pulled off-track by the candidate.

How to fix it:

- Ensure interview teams have an up-to-date list of questions and topics they must avoid, especially since hiring laws can change and vary by location.

- Give hiring managers timely post-interview feedback to improve their interviewing skills and ensure they know how to most effectively probe for fit while remaining compliant.

- Use intelligent video interview technology that can provide real-time alerts to the interviewer if they—or the interviewee—start treading on potentially problematic topics.

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How technology can support remote interviewing

Interviewing can sometimes feel a bit like the Wild West. With so much variation in interviewing experience, styles, and skills across hiring teams, it can be difficult for HR and talent acquisition leaders to ensure every interview is compliant, fair, and impactul—especially now that interviewing is virtual.

Fortunately, new technology can help.

To connect with, screen, and evaluate candidates through video requires a different approach to interviewing. Using an intelligent video interview solution like Clovers helps hiring teams conduct better, more equitable interviews to get the insights they need to hire the right people, for the right roles, every time.

Some video interview solutions even integrate directly with the video platforms you already know and love, like Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This means you and your hiring teams don't have to waste time switching between multiple platforms or add yet another new piece of technology to your have-to-learn list.

By leveraging a video interview solution powered by machine learning and AI, employers can keep biases and guesswork out of hiring decisions. As a result, organizations can build more diverse teams, improve the candidate experience, and successfully compete for top talent in a hot job market.

Fortunately, new technology can help.

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Great interviews lead to great hires

Only 11 percent of recruiters believe video interviews will not be the default moving forward.[14] Recruiting has gone digital, and it's not going back. Live video interviews are the way recruiters and hiring managers will evaluate and select job candidates, now and in the future. To adapt to and compete in this new world of remote recruiting—where a candidate's only interaction with you may be through a computer screen—you need to deliver an exceptional video interview experience to every candidate.

Great interviews matter—a lot. Your interview process speaks volumes about the internal workings of your company and who you are as a potential employer. A fair, equitable, and consistent interview process is key to hiring the best-fit candidates, building a more diverse workforce, and delivering the candidate experience today's job seekers expect. With a strategic, well-designed remote interviewing strategy—backed by AI-powered video interviewing technology—recruiters and hiring teams can quickly and precisely identify, engage, and hire the right talent for every open position.

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Deliver impactful interview experiences
that lead to the right hire, every time.

Ready to find your Clovers?

Schedule a demo at clovers.ai.

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