
MODULE 3: HIRING STRATEGIES

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TEMPLATES:

- A. Interview Preparation Form**
- B. Targeted Interview Questions**
- C. Candidate Assessment Form**
- D. Final Selection Spreadsheet**

1. INTRODUCTION

Time is a scarce resource for most employers. For this reason, effective hiring strategies are essential to *all* employers – small and large, urban and rural. Finding the best candidate for the job is a challenge. Résumés may not accurately represent a candidate’s skills and abilities, and sometimes interviews aren’t always the best indicator of a candidate’s typical behaviour.

While it may be difficult to uncover *all* of the needed information about each candidate, there are a number of skills that you can develop that will make the hiring process more effective. This module will explore the following areas: pre-screening, conducting effective interviews, making a hiring decision, and embracing diversity. Various forms and sample interview questions are included at the end of the module to help you in your human resource planning.

2. PRE-SCREENING APPLICANTS

When advertising for an employment position, an employer can be flooded with résumés. This is often overwhelming. Reading résumés and interviewing can be expensive and time-consuming. It is therefore critical that you are able to narrow the field to a select few. In fact, AEEL Career & Employment Services recommends that employers try to interview no more than six candidates and only interview those you would want to hire. ¹ (If you don't have any candidates that you want to hire, then keep looking!) With this in mind, you must begin a thorough process of résumé screening.

Try to interview no more than 6 candidates.

When screening applications, remember that your primary goal is finding the right person for the job you are offering. Look at a person's qualifications and past job performance. Focus on the objective requirements of the job in order to avoid the "just like me" trap; don't favour candidates just because they share similar educational backgrounds, are of the same age, gender, or race, and who enjoy the same pastimes as you. ²

2.1 "Knock-Out" Factors

In order to eliminate candidates from consideration in a time-efficient manner, look first for the major "knock-out" factors. When applicants lack certain skills or education essential to the job, they are most likely unsuitable for the position. Try using the following process to pare down the pool of applicants: ³



¹ Saskatchewan Community Resources & Employment Career & Employment Services, <http://www.sasknetwork.ca/html/Employers/workplace/screening.htm>

² Harvard Business School, *Harvard Business Essentials: Hiring and Keeping the Best People* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 8.

³ Franklin C. Ashby and Arthur R. Pell, *Embracing Excellence: Become an Employer of Choice to Attract and Keep the Best Talent* (Prentice Hall Press, 2001), 113.

- Decide on certain qualifications that the prospect *must* possess in order to effectively do the job. This may be a specific training course or a certain number of years of work experience. Those who lack the requested qualifications should be removed during the “first cut.”
- Applications that don’t fit all of the requirements, but may have transferable skills should be placed in a “second choice” pile. If few applicants possess all of the education or experience requested, you can further consider these applicants.
- If the background you are seeking is not clearly stated on the application and résumé, don’t automatically reject the candidate. Telephone the candidate to clarify and expand on the information in the résumé.



Word of Advice: *By requesting qualifications that are desirable, but not really essential, you may eliminate well-qualified applicants.*

When reviewing résumés, be on the alert for red flags that can indicate areas of weakness, such as employment gaps or a pattern of short-term employment. These can indicate undesirable personality traits, such as unreliability or reluctance to commit.

2.2 Optional/Additional Screening

If you still find yourself drowning in résumés after you have finished sorting and “weeding,” you may want to carry out additional screening activities. Phone the candidates you are still considering and let them know that they’ve made it to the “second phase” of the hiring process. At this point, you can request that each candidate provide you with additional materials/information such as

transcripts, samples of prior work, etc. The type of information you must gather depends on the nature of the job you are offering. If it is a retail job that requires math skills, you might ask candidates to complete a basic math test. If you are filling a receptionist position, you might request a handwriting sample to ensure that the candidates write legibly or proof of typing speed or word processing skills. If you are offering a sales position and want a confident and outgoing individual, you might request that the candidates fill out a personality test.

For more tips on screening applicants, in addition to other hiring guidelines, visit the website www.hrmanagement.gc.ca.

After the second screening phase, you should be ready to start calling candidates in for interviews.

3. CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS

The interview is one of the most important steps in the hiring process. Once you have selected applicants who seem to be most closely matched to the job, you can then add the human element—a face-to-face meeting between the individual and one or more people from your organization. A good interview provides a useful exchange of information between you and the applicant and allows both parties to judge if there is a good fit. ⁴



3.1 Pre-Interview Tasks

Before you sit down with the candidates you have selected, you should know exactly what you're looking for. Draw up an "employee profile" of *essential* and *desirable* skills and characteristics. What would distinguish an excellent candidate from an average candidate?

For a receptionist position, you would probably require the candidate to have strong telephone skills. A candidate who is good at handling phone calls but is also bilingual might bring a "bonus" asset to the organization. Use the interview to uncover information about candidates' competencies in areas related to the position you are offering.

An Interview Preparation Form is included on the following page. Filling out this form *before* an interview will help keep you on track *during* the interview. This will ensure that you acquire all of the pertinent information needed.

Draw up an "employee profile" of essential & desirable skills.

⁴ Alberta Human Resources and Employment, *Finders & Keepers: Recruitment and Retention Strategies*, 21.

Interview Preparation Form ⁵

Job Title:		
Key Responsibilities & Tasks	Associated Training and/or Experience	
1.	1.	
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
Personal Attributes to Look For:		
.....		
.....		
.....		
Key Areas to Explore	Questions to Ask	Notes
Education	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Previous Experience	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Job Accomplishments	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Skills & Knowledge	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Personal Attributes	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Previous Appraisal or Rating	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....

⁵ Hiring & Keeping the Best People, 13.

In some cases, it might be beneficial to ask interviewees to complete a pre-interview test. AEEL Career & Employment Services suggests testing as a useful option for deciding whether an applicant is able to do the job. The following page includes a listing of the sort of skills that can be assessed by testing, along with examples of the kind of tests that can be given: ⁶

SKILLS	TESTS
Clerical and Bookkeeping	Date entry and spreadsheet skills tests for speed and accuracy
Language	Conversational or written exam
Problem-solving	Ask an individual to solve a problem
Writing	Give the applicant a typical work-related document to write
Selling and Presentation	Give the individual a well-known product and ask the person to prepare and deliver a sales presentation to you after five minutes' preparation time
Knowledge of products, field, or regulations	Written multiple choice test
Computer Programming	Write or correct some code to carry out a function for a typical situation
Personality or Temperament	Personality or temperament test
Job Specific Skills	ie: For a teller, counting cash accurately and quickly

⁶ <http://www.sasknetwork.gov.sk.ca/html/Employers/workplace/screening.htm#test>

Testing can be done by other people and agencies (for a fee). Temporary agencies can test for clerical and secretarial skills. Counselors can test for aptitude and attitude to work. The website www.queendom.com offers 105 professionally developed and validated psychological tests, including honesty tests, self-monitoring tests, and creative problem-solving tests.



Remember: *The right education + the right experience + a compatible personality = a good fit.*

3.2 Interview Environment

In order to get a feel for an applicant's natural behaviour, it is important that you make them feel comfortable. Almost all interviewees are nervous, so you can help them relax by creating the best interview environment possible. Here are some helpful tips:⁷

- Start the interview with good eye contact and a genuine smile. Smiles work wonders to break the ice.
- Spend a few minutes making small talk about the weather, traffic, sports, etc.
- Offer the applicant a beverage.
- Interview in a distraction-free environment. Forward the phone to voice mail and leave instructions not to be interrupted. Interruptions make an applicant feel less important.
- Explain the interview format, explain that you will be taking notes, and let the applicant know when he/she will have the opportunity to ask questions.

⁷ Carol Quinn, *Don't Hire Anyone Without Me: A Revolutionary Approach to Interviewing and Hiring the Best*, (Franklin Lakes: The Career Press, 2002), 74.

- Provide a realistic time line for when a decision will be made on filling the job. And remember, sooner is better.

3.3 Effective Interview Questions

There are a variety of interviewing strategies and techniques available to employers. Choose the method that makes most sense for the job you are offering. Keep in mind that the type of questions that you ask will determine the sort of information about the candidates that you are able to uncover. This, in turn, impacts your ability to identify who would be the best fit for your organization.

Interviewing is not a “one size fits all” process. The nature of the job you are offering has a direct bearing over how much time you should spend interviewing. For example, a short-term labour position may only require a 20 minute interview. On the other hand, a management position may merit two hours of your time.

There are two common types of interviews: ⁸

Behavioural Descriptive Interview	Situational Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Premise: A person’s past performance is the best predictor of how they will perform in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Premise: How a person would behave in certain situations is the best predictor of future performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions focus on how the applicant has applied his or her skills, attitudes, or expertise in past experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions focus on future, hypothetical situations.
<p><u>Examples:</u> Give me an example of a workplace change or improvement you initiated. What were the reasons or context for that change? What were the benefits of this change? To the organization? To individuals? What did you learn that you would apply to a similar situation?</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> How would you respond to a customer who told you he was unhappy with his order? What would you do if you came across a liquid spill on the shop floor? How would you manage a situation where you had to supervise employees who were in conflict with each other?</p>



Interviewing is not a “one size fits all” process.

⁸ Finders & Keepers, 22.

Remember that the best interview questions are usually open-ended, and therefore require interviewees to elaborate on their answers. Take the time to probe and find out more. Questions should be preplanned and job-focused. The purpose of the interview is to help get a clear picture of the individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes as they relate to the job under consideration.

The best interview questions are open-ended.

The Do's and Don'ts for Interviewers

Canada-Saskatchewan Career & Employment Services lists the Do's and Don'ts that employers should follow when conducting interviews on their website. Here are a few of them:⁹

Do's:

- Do take the time to put the person you are interviewing at ease.
- Do prepare a list of interview questions and ask every candidate these questions.
- Do prepare any special questions you want to ask individual applicants to help you understand their experience or knowledge.
- Do ask questions that are open-ended. For example, ask how the candidate's education would help the person do this job better, rather than ask what education the person has.

Don'ts:

- Don't talk too much during the interview.
- Don't make a decision too early. Listen carefully to what the candidate has to say through the whole interview.
- Don't ask leading questions, which tell the applicant what answer you want to hear. For example, if you want to know the applicant's philosophy of customer service it would be better to ask an applicant to give you an example of how he or she has handled a difficult customer than to ask whether the applicant thinks customer service is important and why.
- Don't use stress interviews, designed to see if you can upset the applicant. You can find out if an applicant can handle a stressful job through role-playing, situational questions (see Questions that work), or by checking with references.

⁹ <http://www.sasknetwork.ca/html/Employers/workplace/screening.htm#interview>

Targeted Interview Questions

Try using some of the following targeted interview questions to help you assess your candidates based on different subject areas or themes.



Targeted Interview Questions ¹⁰

Introduction

- What attracted you to our company (this position)?
- How did you hear about the job opening?

Learn about a Candidate's Most Recent Job

- What were your areas of responsibility at your last job?
- What did you find most satisfying about the job? Why?
- What did you find most frustrating about the job? Why? How did you deal with these frustrations?
- If we were to ask your last employer about your abilities, what would she or he say?

Work Experience

- How has your work experience prepared you for this job?
- Describe for me one or two of your greatest accomplishments and biggest disappointments.
- What has been the most significant challenge you have managed? How did you manage it?
- What qualities can you bring to this position?

Assess a Candidate's Skills

- Do you consider yourself a self-starter? If so, explain why. Give examples.

¹⁰ Hiring & Keeping the Best People, 145-149

-
- What is your greatest strength that would benefit our organization?
 - How have you positively influenced others to get a job done?
 - Tell me about a time you made a decision quickly.

Assess a Candidate's Style

- Of all the jobs you have had, which did you like the most? Why?
- Do you prefer working in groups or alone?
- How much direction and feedback do you need to be successful?
- Describe a work group experience that you found rewarding.
- What things frustrate you the most at work? How do you cope with them?

Career Aspirations and Goals

- Why are you leaving your present job?
- How does this job fit into your overall career plans?
- Where do you see yourself three years from now?
- What would you most like to accomplish if you got this job?

Education

- What special aspects of your education, experience, or training have prepared you for this job?
- In what areas would you most need (like) additional training if you got this job?
- What aspects of your education or training will be useful for this job?
- What are your educational goals?

Closing

- Are there any additional aspects of your qualifications that we have not covered that would be relevant to the position we are discussing? What questions do you have about our organization?
-

Interpreting Responses

Knowing how to interpret your candidate's responses is *as* – if not *more* – important than knowing the right questions to ask. Listed below are explanations of responses to three very common interview questions.¹¹

1. Tell me about your greatest strengths. What's the greatest asset you'll bring to our company?

This question is a good icebreaker because most people are fairly comfortable talking about their interests and abilities. Watch out for people who give long lists of “fluffy” adjectives that they think you want to hear. It is important that you probe in order to get more mileage out of the question. If a candidate says that she is proud of being a hard worker, you might respond: *“Hard workers are always good to find. Give me an example of how hard you work compared to your co-workers.”*

2. What's your greatest weakness?

Interviewees often find this question uncomfortable to answer. No one wants to discuss shortcomings. Claiming not to have weaknesses, however, is a poor answer. It could point to poor communications and a lack of openness. Look for replies that centre on the person's impatience with his/her own performance. This typically points to a candidate's commitment to quality results.

3. Where do you see yourself in five years?

While this question often gives interviewees an opportunity to talk about lofty dreams and wishes, it can also be a source of useful information about the candidates' career ambition and potential commitment to your organization. If a candidate responds with an

¹¹ Paul Falcone, *96 Great Interview Questions to Ask Before You Hire*, (New York: American Management Association, 1996), 3-11.

answer such as; “I would like to retire to Tahiti”, first acknowledge their response. Then bring them back to today’s reality by requesting that they tie their responses to your business and your industry. A good answer will express the candidate’s desire to be given greater responsibilities and develop their career *within* your organization during those five years.



Note: Things You Cannot Ask: *Based on the Canadian Human Rights Act, questions regarding the following points may not be asked on the application or during the interview:*

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Race | ▪ Disability | ▪ Age |
| ▪ Colour | ▪ National origin | ▪ Citizenship |
| ▪ Religion | ▪ Ancestry | ▪ Marital status |
| ▪ Creed | ▪ Record of offences | ▪ Family status |
| ▪ Gender | ▪ Sexual orientation | ▪ Receipt of public assistance |



Examples of Inappropriate Questions ¹²

- How old are you? What year were you born? When did you graduate from high school?
- Are you married? Are you planning on having children in the next few years? Can you make adequate provisions for childcare?
- Would your religion prevent you from working weekends?

¹² 96 Great Questions to Ask, 190.

For further information, contact the Department of Justice (www.justice.gc.ca/eng/index.html) or the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (www.shrc.gov.sk.ca). It is important that you clear up any questions that you may have. Violation of this legislation could potentially have legal consequences.

3.4 Interview Errors

An interview is an opportunity to learn more about each candidate and determine whether or how they will fit in with your organization. The following tips should help you get the most candidate information out of each interview:¹³

1. Do not talk too much

This often results in telling people far too much about the job and the company or talking about the interviewer's experience and not giving the interviewee a chance to share information about their own relevant experience or competencies.

2. Do ask all the candidates the same questions

It is easy to get sidetracked from a line of questions, or to become bored with it. However, it is very difficult to make comparisons between applicants if you haven't asked them all the same questions.

3. Do not ask useless questions or accept general answers

Many questions asked by unprepared interviewers are wasteful and are often just a rehash of what is written on the candidate's résumé. It is important to use that résumé to develop a specific and detailed list of additional things you need to know in order to determine whether or not this person is right for your business.

¹³ Margaret Butteriss, *Help Wanted: The Complete Guide to Human Resources for Canadian Entrepreneurs*, (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 1999), 76.

4. Do not lose focus

Don't allow yourself to be led into off-topic discussions. Talking about vacations or sports, or asking questions about interests that have little or no bearing on the kinds of things you need to discover about the candidate. You need to make sure you gather enough job-related information before the end of the interview in order to assess the candidate's fit with the position and your company.

3.5 Candidate Assessment

While conducting interviews, it is a good idea to take notes. You will need to review these comments in order to compare candidates objectively and remember the unique perspectives and abilities that each candidate brings to the table. A sample Candidate Assessment Form follows.

Candidate Assessment Form

Name _____		Position _____	
Interviewer _____		Date _____	
REQUIREMENT	NOTES		RATING (1-5)
Education/Training		
Previous Experience		
Job Accomplishments		
Skills & Knowledge		
Personal Attributes		
Final Comments/ Total Score		

4. MAKING A HIRING DECISION

After completing the interview process, you are left with the most important decision to make: To which candidate will you offer the job? Now it is time for you to dig deeper in order to find out more about your top picks.

4.1 Reference Checking

Reference checking provides employers with an opportunity to uncover additional and perhaps more objective information about the remaining candidates. References from past employers are incredibly important. Telephone interviews are preferable to letters of reference. They are less likely to be biased and telephone interviews enable the interviewer to probe deeper into relevant experience and issues.



MANAGEMENT MAXIMS

Be sure to ask former employers about: ¹⁴

- The quality of the applicant's work
- The applicant's ability to get along well with others
- Whether or not the applicant had a good attitude and was motivated
- Whether or not the applicant was honest
- The reason the applicant left that job
- Whether or not the past employer would hire the applicant again

¹⁴ Help Wanted, 91.

Good Questions to Ask Past Employers ¹⁵

Administrative Support Staff

- Does the individual typically adhere strictly to job duties, or does he/she assume responsibilities beyond the basic, written job description?
- Please comment on the person's ability to accept constructive criticism.
- How does he/she handle interruptions, breaks in routine and last-minute changes?

Professional/Technical Candidates

- How would you grade the candidate's capacity for analytical thinking and problem solving?
- Does the individual need close supervision to excel, or does he/she take more of an autonomous, independent approach to work?
- How effective is the candidate at delivering bad news? Will he/she typically assume responsibility for things gone wrong?

4.2 Making the Right Choice

After the process of interviewing and reference checking is complete, you must ask yourself if you have enough information. Do you know enough about each candidate to make the right choice? If no, you can contact the candidate and request a follow-up interview. If yes, it is now time to decide which candidate will be your new hire.



Remember: *You are not simply looking for the most qualified candidate in all cases. The new hire must also have:*

- a. *A personality that will be compatible with existing employees*
- b. *Values consistent with your organization*

¹⁵ 96 Great Questions, 129-141.

If you are having difficulty choosing between the remaining candidates, you may want to jot down key hiring points in a table. It will refresh your memory and enable you to compare the candidates objectively. A final selection spreadsheet is demonstrated as follows.

Final Selection Spreadsheet¹⁶

Job Specs:	Applicant 1	Applicant 2	Applicant 3	Applicant 4
Education:
Experience:
Intangibles:
Other:

¹⁶ Embracing Excellence, 177.

Hiring Mistakes

Review the following common mistakes made by many employers so that you don't make a costly hiring mistake:¹⁷

MANAGEMENT MAXIMS	<p style="text-align: center;">Avoiding a Hiring Mistake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Do not</u> be overly impressed with maturity or experience, or overly unimpressed by youth and immaturity ▪ <u>Do not</u> mistake a quiet, reserved or calm demeanor for lack of motivation ▪ <u>Do not</u> mistake the person's ability to play "the interview game," or his or her ability to talk easily, for competence; take the time to probe deeper during your discussion to clarify whether or not he or she is genuine ▪ <u>Do not</u> allow personal biases to influence your assessment ▪ <u>Do not</u> look for a friend or for a reflection of yourself in the candidate ▪ <u>Do not</u> assume that graduates of certain institutions or employees of certain organizations are automatically better qualified
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4.3 The Offer Letter

The offer letter formalizes your offer of employment. Make sure that there are no surprises. The letter should simply reiterate the job details as advertised and as discussed during the interview. Be sure to cover the following points:¹⁸



- Date and time the job starts
- Describe terms and conditions of employment (work hours, travel, etc.)
- Give details of the salary, benefits, holidays and vacation allowance, and bonuses, including any incentives, profit sharing, or other instruments that have been agreed upon

¹⁷ Hiring and Keeping the Best People, 23.

¹⁸ Help Wanted, 94

- Outline the probationary period (if used) and the process for performance review
- Describe the terms of leaving – notice required, etc.

After receiving your letter, the candidate will either accept or reject your offer. If you receive a positive reply, the hiring process is complete. The next step will be preparing the workplace for your new employee. If you receive a rejection, you'll have to either "sweeten" your offer, or decide on one of the other candidates.

There are a number of actions that employers can take to increase the likelihood that candidates will be willing to accept your job offer.

Additional Perks

Sometimes it's not the tangible benefits – such as wage or cost of living – that win a person over. Quite often it's the perks or "little extras" that can make candidates quite excited about working for you. If you really want your top pick to accept your offer – and you have some money to spend – you may decide to "roll out the red carpet" by treating the candidate to a dinner meeting, or flying him or her to your office for an interview.

**"Little extras"
can make
candidates
excited about
working for
you.**

Regardless of your financial situation, be sure to let the potential candidates know all about any benefits or perks that you offer. Explain any health and/or dental plans you provide. If you have an opportunity, introduce the candidate to co-workers in order to create a welcoming environment.

Ideas for cost-effective workplace perks will be discussed in Module 4: Remuneration Strategies.

5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Many employers in small communities in Saskatchewan experience difficulty finding quality employees who are willing to stay for the long-term. As the labour market continues to change, employers have the opportunity to tap into new pools of potential employees. Such groups include: persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, foreign workers, visible minorities, older workers, and youth.

5.1 Hiring Persons with Disabilities

An often overlooked group of potential employees are persons with disabilities. The North East Community Partners for Inclusion and the Newsask Community Futures Development Corporation have partnered to produce a very comprehensive handbook on this issue titled *Guide to Hiring Persons with Disabilities for Saskatchewan Employers*. It is available for you to download at www.sarcsarcan.ca/links/Employer_Guide.pdf. Key portions of the guide are included in this section.

An often overlooked group of potential employees are persons with disabilities.

Talking about Disabilities: Current Terminology

The following listing of terms and their definitions provided by the Guide serve as general guidelines for how you should talk about disabilities:



Please Note: “Impairment,” “Disability,” and “Handicap” do not mean the same thing. They each have specific meanings and are not interchangeable.¹⁹

Impairment	Disability	Handicap
A physical or mental limitation or restriction	The impairment interferes with some aspect of daily living	A barrier created by the environment or by others’ attitudes
<u>Example:</u> a hearing impairment	<u>Example:</u> Inability to hear the T.V. set	<u>Example:</u> no access to close captioning on the television

Do Not Say

- “The disabled”
- “The blind”
- “The hearing impaired”

Do Say

- Persons with disabilities
- Person with a visual impairment
- Person with a hearing impairment

— *Put the person first* —

The Economic Benefits of Hiring Persons with Disabilities

Why hire persons with disabilities? Studies show that tapping into this labour pool is not only good for society at large, but also has a positive impact on the bottom line:²⁰



¹⁹ North East Community Partners for Inclusion, “Guide to Hiring Persons with Disabilities for Saskatchewan Employers,” <<http://www.sarcsarcan.ca/guide.pdf>>.

²⁰ www.sarcsarcan.ca/guide.pdf

1. Turnover Rates Reduced

A study completed by Pizza Hut in the United States showed that retention rates for their employees with disabilities were 22% higher than the average for all employees.

Higher retention rates mean reduced costs relating to:

- Hiring: advertising, time for interviewing, checking references, and so on.
- Training new employees
- Reduced productivity when positions are vacant
- Low employee morale. A stable workforce is a strong indicator of employee satisfaction.

2. Higher Productivity

Research studies have shown that employees with disabilities work as hard or harder than employees without disabilities. It is possible to achieve higher productivity and for the person with a disability to have a good influence on other workers.

3. Employees with Disabilities Can Do the Job

In 1990, Dupont conducted an internal survey and discovered that their employees with disabilities were equivalent to employees without disabilities for performance of job duties.

The North East Community Partners for Inclusion conducted a survey of Saskatchewan businesses that confirmed the findings of the Dupont survey. The results indicated that 81% of employers who hired workers with disabilities reporting successful employment. In many cases the employment has been long term.

4. Improved Work Attendance Rates

The Dupont survey showed that 86% of employees with disabilities had an average or better rate of work attendance.

5. Good Safety Ratings

Dupont found that 97% of workers with disabilities had an average or better safety rating.

Interviewing Persons with Disabilities

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has outlined acceptable language for employers to use when interviewing persons with disabilities. Employers are allowed to ask: ²¹

1. Whether the applicant has a disability that will interfere with his/her ability to perform the job; and
2. If the answer to the above question is “Yes,” they must ask what functions cannot be performed and what accommodations could be made that would allow the applicant to do the work adequately.

Guide to Interviewing Persons with Disabilities	
Do	Do Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that directions to the interview are easily understandable. ▪ Plan to interview in a room that is accessible to all interviewees. ▪ Interview in a quiet environment – avoid noise and distractions (even if that is the work environment). ▪ Plan for time between interviews in case an interview runs long. ▪ Ask only questions that are job-related. ▪ Demonstrate acceptance. Shake hands and greet an interviewee with a disability as you would any job candidate. ▪ Ask if the individual requires your assistance before you step in to help. ▪ Ask about disabilities that directly affect job tasks. ▪ Discuss job accommodations at the end of the interview once you have determined the individual can do the job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not assume she/he cannot do the job because of a disability. ▪ Do not try to interview when distracted by your environment. ▪ Do not try to squeeze in as many interviews as possible, allow time for interviews to run over. ▪ Do not ask personal questions – including questions regarding the nature or severity of a disability. ▪ Do not show reluctance to greet the candidate. ▪ Do not assume the individual requires your assistance with opening doors, etc. simply because he/she has a disability. ▪ Do not assume that you have license to ask personal questions just because an interviewee brings up his/her disability.

²¹ http://www.sarcsarcan.ca/links/Employer_Guide.pdf

5.2 Hiring Aboriginal Peoples

Another source of potential employees available to employers is Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population. This is one of the fastest growing segments of the population in Canada – increasing in every province and territory. There are more than 1.3 million Aboriginal peoples across Canada, over 125,000 of which live in Saskatchewan.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has developed the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) to address issues associated with Aboriginal employment and promote the participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals in the labour market. AWPI has developed an Employer Toolkit to help employers with Aboriginal employment. Key portions of the AWPI Employer Toolkit are included in the following sections.

Talking about Aboriginal Peoples: Current Terminology

The following are general definitions based on Aboriginal peoples' interpretations and terminology used by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. They can be found in the AWPI Employer Toolkit.

- *Aboriginal peoples* - The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people – Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
- *First Nation* - A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples

have also adopted the term “First Nation” to replace the word “band” as in the name of their community.

- **Indian** – Indian peoples are one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the Constitution Act, 1982. It specifies that Aboriginal people in Canada consist of Indians, Inuit and Métis. Indians in Canada are often referred to as: Status Indians, non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians.
 - Status Indians are registered or entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*.
 - Non-Status Indians are not entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*.
 - Treaty Indians belong to a First Nation whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits.
- **Inuit** – Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living above the tree line in the Northwest Territories, northern Québec and Labrador. Inuk is the singular form of Inuit (refers to an individual) and Inuktitut is the language spoken by the Inuit.
- **Métis people** – People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis people and are accepted as such by a Métis leadership. The Métis history and culture draw on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibway, and Cree.
- **Native** – General term used to describe people of Aboriginal ancestry.

The Benefits of Employing Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal peoples offer employers a number of diverse skills and many long-lasting benefits. Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) notes the following potential benefits: ²²

Aboriginal peoples offer employers a number of diverse skills.

²² Aboriginal Workplace Participation Initiative, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/tln_e.html

- **Find new market opportunities.** By employing Aboriginal peoples you'll enjoy increased exposure to Aboriginal clientele, opening up valuable new market opportunities.
- **Gain a better understanding of your customers.** Aboriginal staff will enhance your ability to better serve Aboriginal peoples by improving your business understanding of customers as well as co-operative partnerships and collaborative community development.
- **Introduce diversity to your workplace.** Aboriginal peoples bring more than skills to the workplace; they offer new perspectives. That's as good for business as it is for the workplace.
- **Develop a stable and dedicated local workforce.** Increasing the number of Aboriginal employees, particularly in remote areas, has proven to be a wise move. The turnover rate for Aboriginal employees at workplaces near Aboriginal communities is well below the national average.
- **Form positive relationships with a future workforce.** The Aboriginal population is growing rapidly, creating a new profile for the workplace. It's estimated the number of Aboriginal peoples will increase by 50 percent in the next 25 years.

Myths Versus Realities ²³

Myth: All Aboriginal peoples are the same.

Reality: The Aboriginal population is very diverse:

- The Aboriginal population is composed of First Nations, Métis Nations and Inuit peoples – each with a different history, culture and society.
- Over 50 Aboriginal languages are spoken in Canada today.
- Aboriginal peoples live in geographically diverse locations, such as urban centres, rural communities and remote locations.

²³ AWPI Employer Toolkit, 5-4 – 5-10

Myth: Aboriginal peoples do not have a good work ethic; they have high rates of turnover and absenteeism.

Reality: Aboriginal peoples are skilled, productive and reliable employees who are valued by their employers:

- Aboriginal peoples participate extensively in work-oriented education and training programs.
- Aboriginal peoples work in all parts of the economy and in many different occupations.
- Aboriginal peoples are valued as stable, reliable employees who contribute in many ways to corporate performance.

Myth: There are no qualified Aboriginal peoples to hire.

Reality: Aboriginal peoples have the education, skills, and expertise required for jobs in all economic sectors:

- An estimated 44% of the Aboriginal population were post-secondary graduates in 2006. An estimated 14% had trade credentials, 19% had a college diploma and 8% had a university degree.²⁴
- Aboriginal peoples work in many occupations. They are obtaining qualifications and experience in business, management, social sciences, natural and applied sciences, and health.
- Many services are available to help employers find qualified Aboriginal employees.

Employers' Challenges & Options

It is necessary for employers to consider the challenges and options associated with employing Aboriginal peoples. It is recommended that employers:

Address negative attitudes towards Aboriginal workers

- Ensure no racial discrimination in Human Resources Management practices regarding:
 - Recruitment
 - Training and Retraining
 - Work Arrangements
 - Retention

²⁴ <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/education/proportion.cfm>

- Address the main barrier: perceptions and attitudes
- Do not make assumptions
- Provide accommodations where feasible
- Create supportive workplace culture promoting respect towards all employees, regardless of age, race, gender, etc.

Training & Retraining Workers

- Offer challenge and opportunity
 - Broaden the range of employees' work experience
 - Stimulate employees' interest and creativity in their work
- Provide training
 - Design appropriate training program to help older workers learn
- Utilize Aboriginal workers as trainers/mentors
 - Transfer of knowledge and corporate memory
 - Excellent source of trainers/mentors for younger workers
 - A trainer who is an Aboriginal worker may facilitate training for other Aboriginal workers

AEEL Career & Employment Services also offers specific supports for employing and maintaining Aboriginal staff.

Brief descriptions and contact information for Aboriginal organizations in Saskatchewan are available in Module 7: Contact Information.

5.3 Hiring Foreign Workers

While employers can recruit workers from other countries to fill employment needs, the Government of Canada requires employers to follow certain procedures in order to safeguard the employment or career opportunities of Canadian citizens. However, in an effort to attract immigrant business persons, skilled workers and labourers, the Province of Saskatchewan has introduced the Saskatchewan

**Employers
can recruit
workers from
other
countries.**

Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), which provides immigrants with an expedient means of entry to Canada.²⁵

SINP operates under an agreement with the federal government that allows Saskatchewan to nominate a set number of applicants who will make a significant economic contribution to the province.

For immigrants, SINP offers:

- Application processing times that are substantially faster than normally occurs through federal immigration procedures; and
- Assistance from Immigration Advisors, who are readily available to explain program requirements and processes:
 - Telephone: (306) 798-SINP (7467)
 - International Telephone: (Canada 001) (306) 798-7467
 - International facsimile: (Canada 001) (306) 798-0713
 - In-person for individuals who visit Saskatchewan.

For more information on the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program, visit www.immigration.gov.sk.ca/sinp/.

If you are interested in hiring foreign workers on a temporary basis, the offer of employment to a foreign worker generally must receive a confirmation by a Service Canada Centre.²⁶ The “Temporary Foreign Worker Application” and other information on required protocol are available at the “Hiring Foreign Workers in Canada” page on the Human Resource and Social Development Canada (Service Canada) website.

(www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml)

²⁵ Immigration, Province of Saskatchewan, <http://www.immigration.gov.sk.ca/sinp/>.

²⁶ Human Resources and Social Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/temp_workers.shtml

5.4 Hiring Older Workers

Older workers are another pool of workers often overlooked by employers. Unfortunately, many employers have biases and make assumptions about this age group's skills and abilities. Consider the following myths about older workers – and the corresponding realities:²⁷

Myths Versus Realities

Myth:	Older workers are biding their time until retirement.
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Reality:	Many older workers want to continue to work.
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- Working until age 65 then retiring is becoming less common:²⁸
 - The average retirement age declined from 63.2 years in 1989 to 61.0 years in 2000, remaining about the same in 2008. Just 6% of workers work full time after age 65.
 - Two thirds of Canadians retire before the full CPP/QPP age of 65.
 - Between 1987 and 1990, 29% of people retired before the age of 60. Between 1997 and 2000, that rate grew to 43%. The number of workers in Canada for every retired person is expected to fall to two in 2031, from five in the 1980s, as a wave of baby boomers retires from the workforce.
- But some workers are opting to work later :
 - 11.8% of population aged 65 to 69 were active in the labour force in 2001, i.e., were employed, self-employed or actively looking for employment. (Statistics Canada, "Labour Force Historical Review"). Older workers retire from their first career earlier, leaving more time for a second career.

²⁷ Human Resources and Social Development Canada,
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/aw/09overview_analysis.shtml .

²⁸ Perspectives on Labour and Income, February 2003, Volume 4, no. 2.

Myth: Older workers are less productive.

Reality: Older workers can be as productive as younger workers.

- There is no significant overall difference between the job performance of older and younger workers. In almost every study, variations within an age group far exceed the average differences between age groups.

Myth: Older workers will retire before the investment in training pays off in the long-term.

Reality: The term for return on investment in training is getting shorter.

- All workers, both older workers and younger workers need to upgrade their skills on an ongoing basis to be productive in the rapidly changing knowledge-economy.
 - The occurrence of new technologies and the pace of change is accelerating
 - Skills and knowledge become obsolete faster if not upgraded

Myth: Older workers are unwilling or unable to adapt to new technologies.

Reality: Older workers have the ability to learn new knowledge and keep pace with younger workers.

- Older workers generally recognize the need for continuous learning
- Most effective training can be achieved by following principles and guidelines that facilitate adult learning:
 - Relate new skills to past experience
 - Allow for self-paced learning
 - Provide social support
 - Provide opportunities for practice

When considering whether or not employing older workers would benefit your company, be sure not to generalize or oversimplify. Try to remain as open-minded as possible and view all applicants as individuals with unique skills, abilities, and experiences.

Employers' Challenges & Options

The Human Resources Development Canada (HRSDC) website contains a section titled *Overview of the Aging Workforce Challenges* (www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/aw/09overview_analysis.shtml). It provides a general overview of this issue, some key studies, and a list of recommendations for employers. HRDC notes the following challenges and options associated with employing older workers.

Address Negative Attitudes Towards Older Workers

- Ensure no age discrimination in Human Resources Management practices regarding:
 - Recruitment
 - Training and Retraining
 - Work Arrangements
 - Retention
- Address the main barrier: perceptions and attitudes
- Do not make assumptions; if in doubt, ask how the person can do the tasks, accomplish the functions
- Provide accommodations where feasible
- Create supportive workplace culture promoting respect towards all employees, regardless of age, race, gender, etc.

Training & Retraining Workers

- Offer challenge and opportunity; this can benefit both the employer and the older workers:
 - Broaden the range of employees' work experience
 - Stimulate employees' interest and creativity in their work
- Provide training to older workers
 - Design appropriate training program to help older workers learn
- Utilize older workers as trainers/mentors
 - Transfer of knowledge and corporate memory
 - Excellent source of trainers/mentors for younger workers
 - A trainer who is an older worker may facilitate training for other older workers

Rethinking Work Arrangements

- Flexible work schedules
 - Flexible hours: (reduced, compressed, extended work weeks)
 - Job sharing
 - Part time
 - Self-funded leaves

- Adapting workplaces
 - Environment, ergonomics, lighting, heat
 - Working at home
- Re-organization of work, job redesign
- Family care support
 - Spousal care / eldercare
- Health and wellness initiatives
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Fitness facilities/promotion (e.g. aerobics, tai chi)

5.5 Hiring Youth

In an effort to address the challenge of youth employment, Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) has introduced a number of initiatives targeting the 18-24 age group. Employment programs for youth include more than 60 free Government of Canada programs, services, and resources, which include internships and subsidies, as well as co-operative and work experience programs.

For more information on programs offered through the federal government, visit the Service Canada website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/audiences/youth/employment.shtml.

Summer Work Experience creates summer employment for secondary and post-secondary students, and supports the operation of summer employment offices. This program is delivered in partnership with various private, public and not-for-profit groups.

Summer Work Experience helps students find career-related summer jobs by providing wage subsidies to employers. It also funds information and promotional activities. Summer Work Experience initiatives include:

Canada Summer Jobs an initiative that provides funding for not-for-profit organizations, public-sector employers, and small businesses with 50 or fewer employees to create summer job opportunities for students between the ages of 15 and 30. These jobs provide students with the opportunity to acquire skills, gain valuable work experience, and help finance their return to school.

Service Canada Centres for Youth (SCCY), which help youth and employers with their summer employment needs, are located across Canada and open to the public from May to August. Free of charge, these offices:

- help students find summer jobs
- offer group information and one-on-one sessions on resume writing, preparing for job interview, and looking for a job
- offer services to find motivated employees for the summer months
- offer up-to-date information on wage rates, labour laws, health and safety in the workplace, other federal, provincial, and territorial youth employment programs.

5. CONCLUSION

Think of hiring as a business process – a set of activities that turn inputs into outputs. Just as with other business processes, employers must focus on efficiency. By learning how to effectively screen and interview applicants, you will waste less time and produce better results by hiring the *right* person.

By learning the best questions to ask in an interview – and avoiding employer mistakes and traps – you will be able to find out as much about your top applicants as possible. The tips and guidelines discussed in this module should help you become better equipped to make an informed hiring decision and draft an effective letter of employment offer.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION FORM

Job Title:		
Key Responsibilities & Tasks	Associated Training and/or Experience	
1.	1.	
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
Personal Attributes to Look For:		
.....		
.....		
Key Areas to Explore	Questions to Ask	Notes
Education	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Previous Experience	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Job Accomplishments	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Skills & Knowledge	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Personal Attributes	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....
Previous Appraisal or Rating	1. 2. 3. ....	..... ..... .....

TARGETED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

- What attracted you to our company (this position)?
- How did you hear about the job opening?

Learn about a Candidate's Most Recent Job

- What were your areas of responsibility at your last job?
- What did you find most satisfying about the job? Why?
- What did you find most frustrating about the job? Why? How did you deal with these frustrations?
- If we were to ask your last employer about your abilities, what would she or he say?

Work Experience

- How has your work experience prepared you for this job?
- Describe for me one or two of your greatest accomplishments your biggest disappointments.
- What has been the most significant challenge you have managed? How did you manage it?
- What qualities can you bring to this position?

Assess a Candidate's Skills

- Do you consider yourself a self-starter? If so, explain why. Give examples.
- What is your greatest strength that would benefit our organization?
- How have you positively influenced others to get a job done?
- Tell me about a time you made a decision quickly.

Assess a Candidate's Style

- Of all the jobs you have had, which did you like the most? Why?
- Do you prefer working in groups or alone?
- How much direction and feedback do you need to be successful?
- Describe a work group experience that you found rewarding.
- What things frustrate you the most at work? How do you cope with them?

Career Aspirations and Goals

- Why are you leaving your present job?
- How does this job fit into your overall career plans?
- Where do you see yourself three years from now? Five years from now?
- What would you most like to accomplish if you got this job?

Education

- What special aspects of your education, experience, or training have prepared you for this job?
- In what areas would you most need (like) additional training if you got this job?
- What aspects of your education or training will be useful for this job?
- What are your educational goals?

Closing

- Are there any additional aspects of your qualifications that we have not covered that would be relevant to the position we are discussing? What questions do you have about our organization?
-

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT FORM

Name _____	Position _____	
Interviewer _____	Date _____	
REQUIREMENT	NOTES	RATING (1-5)
Education/Training	..... ..... ..... .....
Previous Experience	..... ..... ..... .....
Job Accomplishments	..... ..... ..... .....
Skills & Knowledge	..... ..... ..... .....
Personal Attributes	..... ..... ..... .....
Final Comments/ Total Score	..... ..... ..... .....

FINAL SELECTION SPREADSHEET

Job Specs:	Applicant 1	Applicant 2	Applicant 3	Applicant 4
Education:
Experience:
Intangibles:
Other: