HirePro

The complete guide to interview process outsourcing

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Introduction

Recruitment is an on-going requirement for most organisations. Of late, with recruitment budgets and timelines getting leaner by the day, meeting recruitment needs has become quite challenging. Organisations have traditionally prefered in-house recruitment teams due to the preconceived notion that "No one understands us and our needs as best as we do" is part of the existing mindset everywhere.

Why has recruitment become so challenging? The pandemic contributed and continues to do so with rapidly changing working landscapes all around. And then there is Gen Z, with a very distinct outlook, to add to the complexities. In-house recruitment teams across industries are brainstorming and adopting new strategies to overcome these challenges.

The in-house recruiting challenges

Let us take a closer look at some of the complexities that keep challenging in-house recruitment teams.

- **Finding the right people** - Even after screening thousands of profiles, finding the right fit is not easy as getting access to large candidate pools, especially for specific skills, is very difficult. Finding good talent is like searching for needles in haystacks.
- **Speedy hiring** - Hiring managers are almost always unhappy with the speed at which recruitment happens.
- **Losing candidates to competitors** - Good candidates get picked up by competitors in no time.
- **Diversity hiring** - With Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) hiring becoming a must for building great teams, hiring has become that much tougher.
- **Unbiased selection** - Fully manual recruitment processes always leave scope for biases to creep in. Ensuring fairness in hiring is a serious challenge.
- **Candidate engagement** - The depth and efficiency of recruitment processes and teams are fully tested in the field of candidate engagement. From the time they are first contacted to the time they join, unless some great experiences are guaranteed, candidates tend to move on.
- **Lack of in-house interview expertise** - Interviews are an essential part of hiring and have to be executed by qualified experts. However, many organisations face either a time crunch of experts, or totally lack the expertise to conduct the interviews. This derails the complete recruitment process.
- **Lack of bandwidth for hiring at scale** - The recruitment team may not have the bandwidth to scout, assess and administer the process, especially for hiring at scale.
- **Inadequate candidate network** - Word-of-mouth recommendations by successful candidates are a powerful tool to attract similar talent. In-house teams have no way to influence candidate networking.
- **Insufficient budgets** - Funnily, organisations often cut recruitment budgets, even though it is common knowledge that it is people that fuel an organisation's growth. Recruitment teams struggling with leaner budgets do not have many options to play around with. This clips their wings badly.

With so many challenges playing spoilsport, it was only natural that solutions like RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing) and interview outsourcing services started gaining significance. RPOs are the perfect solution for organisations that want to completely outsource their recruitment to efficient agencies. A whole lot of the above-mentioned challenges will be taken off the plate of in-house recruitment teams if the organisation opts for RPO services.

However, some organisations would still like to rely on their in-house teams largely, but would like help to get the interview processes eased as that may be their biggest bottleneck. The solution – interview outsourcing services. The silver lining here is that some reputed agencies that provide interview outsourcing services can customise the offerings to eliminate many of the challenges mentioned above.

What is an interview outsourcing service?

Interview outsourcing service refers to the service that third party agencies provide to help get interviews done. This is extremely useful for organisations that don't have the in-house expertise or the bandwidth to get interviews done.

For example, a startup which is setting up its core team may not yet have the required in-house expertise to conduct interviews. In mid-size organisations, a common challenge is employee bandwidth to conduct interviews even as they juggle projects. And in large organisations, it most often is a problem of high-volume hiring. Apart from such scenarios, some organisations hiring for key positions may just want a second opinion about their choice to ensure a fair and unbiased opinion as a reassurance.

Interviews are an important aspect of assessing a candidate thoroughly before an offer is made. They can help you decide on the candidate fitment – whether the person is truly suitable for the role, team, organisation, etc. This step can be the deciding factor between a right hire and wrong hire. Therefore, many organisations feel they should be closely involved and are thus, naturally sceptical about outsourcing interviews. However, the way interview outsourcing works is that a panel of experts conducts interviews and presents their findings to the HR team. The job of HR is made much easier in completing one or two final rounds to pick the best from this ably filtered lot of candidates.

Indeed, interview outsourcing is an emerging trend. But, one that many organisations are taking note of. Some are experimenting, and some are convinced enough to have taken the plunge. Many factors need to be considered before this step can be taken and also to make it work. The foremost one is that of finding the right partner who can understand your needs as well as you do. The partner can then replicate your interview processes to the T to deliver desired results.

The kind of companies that are benefitting from this emerging trend are:

1. Large organisations with consistent high-volume hiring needs (both freshers and lateral hiring)
2. IT and associated services (driven by tech-oriented roles)
3. Start-ups with specific time and cost bound needs
4. Small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) with aggressive hiring timelines for tech staff

So, what is it that is making these organisations trust interview outsourcing services? Let's take a look at the multiple benefits on offer.

The benefits of interview outsourcing services

Outsourcing interviews can be beneficial for organisations irrespective of their size. Recruitment is a huge jigsaw puzzle, and the right people you find are the missing pieces to complete the picture! Interview outsourcing services offer a lot of flexibility to in-house recruitment teams to ensure that the most important piece of the hiring jigsaw puzzle falls in place seamlessly. When interviews are delayed, the picture remains incomplete or unclear, and that directly affects the productivity of the teams and in turn, the organisational performance. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that interviews happen on time, efficiently, to complete the recruitment process successfully.

Suits organisations of any size

For SMEs, interview outsourcing is a blessing in disguise. Whether in expertise or bandwidth, interview outsourcing services help them immensely to keep their recruitment going. **For large organisations**, the problem, mostly, is of scale, as they hire tens of thousands of candidates every year. Here too, interview outsourcing services can help plug the delay and improve the access and timelines by leaps and bounds. Not to mention the objectivity and fairness that can be brought into the whole process. **For startups,** interview outsourcing services are a blessing in disguise, as they have investor-dictated strict budgets and performance KPIs to meet.

The benefits of interview outsourcing services

The technology edge

Some third party interview outsourcing agencies have comprehensive online platforms that can conduct the whole process and provide detailed feedback reports. Such interview outsourcing service providers can conduct online coding assessments through interactive expert panels to assess candidates' technical depth. The interview panels can be finalised based on specific requirements. The interview could be video-taped for HR record purposes. Multi-faceted interview panellists can be engaged to ensure the candidate is assessed for non-technical aspects such as attitude, problem-solving approach, commitment to the team and role, etc.

With technical aspects taken care of, the organisations have to cross-check only for final fitment. This approach has been ensuring high success rates in joining and also nullifying wrong hires. Additionally, this also ensures great candidate experiences overall.

Flexibility of customised models

Various **interview outsourcing models** can be explored to suit the unique needs of different organisations. Organisations can outsource the sourcing of profiles and initial filtering to speed up the process to directly get candidates to the final interview stage. The other way is to complete initial filtering in-house and then opt for interview outsourcing services to get the technical or functional interviews done. This would mean that only the final HR interviews need to be done to finalise candidates and roll out offers.

The benefits of interview outsourcing services

Campus hiring made easy

Interview outsourcing services are highly beneficial in **campus hiring** as the scale of interviews involved are mostly high. To find the best talent from lakhs of students passing out every year across India is not an easy task. Credible interview outsourcing services can help immensely in turning this rather tedious task into a highly productive one. The key is to choose an interview outsourcing partner with campus experience who can understand Gen Z aspirations and manage those dynamics.

Speedy and effective lateral hiring

For **lateral hiring,** especially for roles requiring intense technical skills or niche tech competencies, conducting interviews can be a cumbersome task. This is true even if the volumes are less. Hence, interview outsourcing is the perfect solution to streamline the hiring process by replacing the interview block with the interview outsourcing services module rather seamlessly. Technical skills like Java, Python, Cloud-related technologies, etc. require more than mere technical knowledge, especially at higher levels. Interview outsourcing can help make such hiring more effective, with intuitive interview panels drawn from the best in the industry, with relevant experience.

Cost-effective, fast and bias-free

Interview outsourcing services can improve operational efficiencies of recruitment teams greatly. The cost per hire for the organisation will be much lesser, whereas the speed will be much more as compared to in-house recruitment efforts. The saved employee bandwidth due to interview outsourcing services, can contribute to increased productivity in other strategic areas of operations. With the use of interview outsourcing services, biases are fully eliminated and chances of wrong hires are nullified. It is as if in-house hiring teams can replace that one huge troublesome block of the recruitment process with a reliable partner who has the required expertise.

Ensuring great candidate experiences

Every organisation wants to provide great hiring experiences as it adds to their brand value. Whether candidates get hired or not, the hiring process creates an impression of the brand. This is where interview outsourcing services can add a lot of value. The right interview outsourcing partner creates impactful branding throughout the process with the right messaging through various means. Interview outsourcing services help create great candidate experiences.

Let's now take a look at the various building blocks that make up interview outsourcing services.

The building blocks

Nothing that succeeds happens by chance. Finding success with interview outsourcing services also is not by chance, but by design. There are various building blocks that go into the making of this service. Only if one understands these blocks and evaluates the partner on these aspects, can interview outsourcing services become a positive experience. Here is the complete chain of workflow for interview outsourcing services.

1. Choosing the right partner
2. Constituting the interview panel
3. Conducting the interviews
4. Using tools and technologies

1. Choosing the right interview outsourcing partner

If an organisation has to rely on a third party to interview candidates, then that partner should be able to understand the organisation's requirements comprehensively. Hence, this one step of choosing the right partner is of prime importance and the most crucial building block in using interview outsourcing services. A detailed discussion with the interview outsourcing partner on the expectations is a must. Discussions should cover the requirements, recruitment processes (in-depth on interviews), their expertise with customer testimonies, flexibility to customise offerings, and a clear understanding and demarcation of responsibilities on either side. Ensuring great candidate experiences should also be a vital point in the discussions. It is important because candidates associate their hiring experiences with the brand, irrespective of who conducts the interviews. The bottomline is that ownership still lies with the organisation that is hiring. Hence, it needs to get a successful working relationship going with the interview outsourcing services partner to make it a success. The wrong partner can create more havoc instead of solving the problems.

Note: A partner with a proven reputation in providing recruitment solutions with offerings other than interview outsourcing services, to complement other hiring needs when required, may prove to be a good choice.

2. Constituting the interview panel

It is essential to know how the third party interview outsourcing partner is forming the interview panel. This is an important cog in the wheel of the interview process. Does the panel meet the criteria needed to evaluate the candidate

The building blocks

2. Constituting the interview panel

completely and ensure a fruitful exchange of thoughts? This needs to be ascertained. Most often, panellists are drawn from the industry as freelance interview experts and are not in-house experts of the interview outsourcing services provider. Therefore, a full disclosure from the partner on how they choose, from where they choose, how they can maintain confidentiality and integrity, etc., needs to be understood. Some partners may not accept customer participation in the interview panel selection, which can be worrisome. Ideally, the interview outsourcing services partner should accomodate customer participation in the interview panel selection. It helps build trust and ensure a win-win situation. It should be a part of the partner evaluation checklist. Mere subject matter expertise cannot help find the best talent. Interviewing is the art of eliciting information out of the candidates to gauge their various competencies. Interviewers should not go in with a fixed set of questions and expected responses. They need to have an open mind and be able to innovate as they go. They should be able to provide fair and equal chances to all candidates. The capability of the interview outsourcing services partner to get the right and the best interview panel for each role will be a key building block in the success of these services.

3. Conducting the interviews

Structured interviews help in creating great interview experiences and should be treated as a branding opportunity. Ensure that the interview outsourcing services partner follows the pre-interview brief with all stakeholders, especially the candidates. Getting some things right before the interview can help reduce wastage of interview time by leaps and bounds. Ensure that the pre-interview brief is spot-on. This should cover role, skills, experience, and interview panel members roles and coverage. The panel should be able to explore the capabilities of the candidate in-depth, fairly, by allocating enough time to the candidate. Various modes can be used for doing so, including the use of technology. Every interview should also have a debrief process to wind it up completely. If suitable, then the complete gamut of reasons why the candidate was found suitable should be detailed. If not, a checklist to indicate where and what the candidate lacked should be made available. This feedback process should happen both ways. The customer should also share with the service provider feedback on any subsequent rounds conducted independently by them. This two-way feedback methodology facilitates continual improvement of processes at both ends, thus ensuring a fruitful and long-term relationship.

4. Using tools and technologies

Interviews are no longer mere question and answer sessions. To beat all forms of constraints and biases, interviewers should make use of the various tools and technologies available. Online interactive platforms, that enable candidate assessments that are as good as in-person assessments, are great options. This will save time and cost both. Even coding tests can be conducted online through video interviews in real-time. These sessions can be recorded for proof. Some reliable online platforms provide various facilities such as AI-based fraud detection, comprehensive feedback and reports, comparison analytics to aid decision making and so on. These become the value-adds to the interview outsourcing services and enable better hires.

Conclusion

In the Indian hiring landscape, interview outsourcing services is an emerging industry trend, but one that is slowly and steadily making strides. The reason for this positive movement is the tectonic shift that the recruitment industry is going through. The transition to remote and hybrid hiring and working models, mostly dictated by the pandemic, is now an accepted phenomenon for future working. The use of state-of-the-art technologies to make hiring more effective is another key trigger. Also, traditionally, outsourcing succeeds in areas where we can see considerable impact on cost and quality. Interview outsourcing services combine all these aspects to provide organisations with **a measurable positive impact on many hiring KPIs.** While it may not be an easy decision, credible offerings from reputed companies with possibilities of customisation make it worth the while.

The HirePro advantage

HirePro was born out of the desire to provide technology-enabled hiring solutions to the unfulfilled needs of the industry stakeholders. Since its inception in 2004, HirePro has enabled more than 500 clients to conduct over 10 million assessments. These have been powered by AI-enabled solutions that guarantee quality, speed, accuracy, safety and security. It goes without saying that the success of HirePro is aided by the industry expertise passed on from its parent company, Careernet Technologies, founded in 1999.

HirePro's interview services have been designed to help organisations find the best talent in a lesser time, without any biases. It is powered by industry experts and academia who are maestros in the art of interviewing. HirePro's unique way of approaching every customer's needs to understand all the nuances of the role and the skills needed, makes it more efficient. Also, HirePro welcomes customer participation in interview panel selection to ensure the panel suits the customer's needs. All the interviews are conducted through its interview platform that has multiple AI-backed features to aid a comprehensive assessment. Apart from ensuring great candidate experiences, our platform makes it easy to conduct interactive technical interviews with live coding editors. The interviews can also be recorded. Multi-faceted analytics, which can help with decision making, generated by the AI-powered platform can be easily assessed by all stakeholders. This is in addition to the in-depth feedback on various aspects given the expert interview panel.

HirePro has an edge in campus hiring as it shares a good rapport with many campuses across India and is experienced with remote hiring at scale. The advantage of scale is immensely beneficial for large organisations needing high-volume hiring. For lateral hires, whether coding assessments or functional roles, HirePro experts have the advantage and expertise to ensure our customers find the best talent.

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