

The Limitations of Telephone Interviews

Of all of the assessment tools available in the market today, the interview has been universally adopted. Over the last twenty years the method of interviewing has evolved: moving from meeting every candidate in-person, to pre-qualifying candidates using telephone interviews and more recently pre-qualifying candidates using video interviews.

The shift from meeting candidates in-person to pre-qualifying them over the telephone was driven by a need for organisations to become more efficient as the recruiting landscape became more challenging.

In recent years video interviews have replaced telephone interviews in many organisations. For some the driver has been the need to further increase efficiency, while for most it has been the need to increase the effectiveness of their first round interviews.

So why are video interviews so much more effective than telephone interviews?

It's simple - as humans we rely heavily on nonverbal communication, hence why we insist on meeting candidates in-person. Yet we are unable to interpret nonverbal communication in a telephone interview.

Video interviews are far more closely aligned to the structure of an in-person interview and are a much better predictor of candidate performance.

More specifically...



Telephone interviews are conducted on a one-to-one basis, meaning the candidate can only be evaluated by the person on the call.



Telephone interviews are one-dimensional, meaning only verbal communication can be assessed.



Telephone interviews typically aren't recorded and cannot be revisited, meaning the evaluation has to happen immediately.



Evaluations tend to be brief notes made in the moment, which provides limited information for other stakeholders.



Lastly telephone interviews offer zero economies of scale - in order to interview 100 candidates the same process must be repeated 100 times.

In summary, telephone interviews can't capture all of the verbal and nonverbal information we need to determine whether a candidate is a good fit for the organisation.

Furthermore, the process relies on an individual evaluating the candidate on the fly and accurately portraying them to other stakeholders.