What Good Interviewing Looks Like:
A Guide to Interview Maturity

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Why interviewing still isn't working— and how to fix it

Interviews could be one of the most powerful tools in your hiring process. But for many organizations, they remain the most inconsistent, unmeasured, and subjective stage—leaving room for bias, missed talent, and slow or unclear decisions.

There's often no shared definition of what "good" looks like in interviewing. Hiring managers run things their own way. Guides are inconsistent. Interviewers aren't trained. Decisions are made on gut feel—and no one can tell if it's working.

This guide introduces our Interview Maturity Model: a practical framework to help you benchmark your current approach to interviewing and take clear steps toward a more consistent, fair, and effective process.

You'll explore five core principles—each representing a critical part of interviewing. For each principle, you'll be able to assess where your organization stands on a four-level maturity scale—from ad hoc and inconsistent to optimized and continuously improving. These insights will help you understand what's working, where the gaps are, and how to move forward with clarity and confidence.

We've designed this guide to help you reflect on your current practices, start more focused conversations with your team, and take practical steps forward—whether you're building structure from scratch or looking to scale best practice.

This guide isn't about prescribing one right way to interview. It's about helping you build a shared understanding of where your organization is today, and what better could look like.

Each section includes clear signs to help you identify your current state, plus a "How to level up" section offering actionable, realistic ways to improve—at your own pace.

1 Interview content

Are your interview questions helping or hurting your hiring decisions?

Interview content determines whether you're assessing what really matters. But in many organizations, questions vary widely—some are too generic, others irrelevant or biased, and most aren't clearly tied to job success.

When questions are well-structured, role-relevant, and grounded in evidence, interviews become powerful decision-making tools. You can evaluate candidates more consistently, reduce bias, and make better, faster hiring decisions—again and again.

Pulse check
Quick questions to evaluate your process

Do all interviewers ask the same questions for the same role?

Are questions tied to what success looks like in the job?

Is scoring structured—or based on gut feel?

Are our interview guides easy for any interviewer to understand and use, even without formal training?

How often do we review and improve our question sets?

1. Interview content
Where you might be—and how to improve

	Level 1 **Built on the fly**	Level 2 **Some order, still chaos**	Level 3 **We've got a process – now let's stick to it**	Level 4 **Hiring excellence on repeat**
Signs you are here	No interview guides exist. Questions differ by interviewer. Final decisions rely on gut feel.	Guides live in email chains or shared folders. Managers tweak or skip questions. No one checks consistency. No clarity on what skills are being assessed.	Guides are used and partially aligned to role requirements. Scoring rubrics vary or are vague. Skills being assessed are not always clear to interviewers.	Guides are built around job-relevant skills. Interview content is regularly reviewed and refreshed. Scoring is structured, fair, and consistent across teams.
How to level up	Introduce basic interview guides for frequently hired roles. Use clear, easy-to-follow questions that don't assume expert interviewing skills. Add simple guidance prompts (e.g., "look for examples of teamwork or initiative") to support consistent evaluation.	Link each interview question to one or more role-relevant skills. Move all interview guides into a shared, easy-to-access library. Add simple 3 point scoring scale with clear example responses to make evaluations easy and consistent—even for less experienced interviewers.	Build guides around a defined set of skills for each role or job family. Include structured scoring for each question with behavioral anchors. Brief hiring managers on the skills they're assessing and why they matter.	Use performance data or skills frameworks to understand which skills predict success. Refresh guides based on business changes or emerging skill needs. Calibrate scoring and question usage across teams for fairness and consistency.

2 Process and administration

Are your interviews running like clockwork—or spinning out of control?

Strong interview content is just one part of the picture. Without smooth processes and clear coordination, even well-designed interviews fall apart. Scheduling breaks down. Candidates are kept waiting. Notes go missing. Decision-making drags.

This principle is about everything that surrounds the interview itself: how interviews are scheduled, how information is shared between recruiters, hiring managers and candidates, how interviews are documented, and how decisions get made. A mature approach ensures your interview operations are consistent, streamlined, and scalable—with clear ownership and infrastructure to accelerate best practice across the organization.

Pulse check
Quick questions to evaluate your process

Is scheduling fast, efficient, and consistent across teams?

Do interviewers know what's expected of them before and after the interview?

Are interview notes and scores tracked in one place?

Is ownership of interview scheduling, documentation, and follow-up clearly centralized?

How are final hiring decisions made—and by whom?

2. Process and administration
Where you might be—and how to improve

	Level 1 **Built on the fly**	Level 2 **Some order, still chaos**	Level 3 **We've got a process – now let's stick to it**	Level 4 **Hiring excellence on repeat**
Signs you are here	Scheduling is manual and slow. Roles and responsibilities across stakeholders are unclear. Notes and outcomes aren't tracked centrally. Hiring managers operate individually.	Candidate notes, interview guides, and logistics live in email threads or shared folders. Interviewers don't always know who's asking what. Final decisions are hard to coordinate.	Standard scheduling and prep processes exist. Feedback is collected, but tools and approaches vary Notes are stored, but not always accessible or consistent.	One system manages scheduling, prep, note-taking, and scoring. Teams collaborate seamlessly pre- and post-interview. Final decisions are made efficiently with full visibility.
How to level up	Define who owns each part of the process. Set clear expectations for scheduling, documentation, and follow-up. Use consistent templates for prep and debrief.	Store guides and templates in a shared, central location (e.g. ATS or intranet). Use a shared tool or document for notes and scoring. Introduce a standard prep checklist for recruiter-to-manager handoffs.	Consolidate tools and automate where possible (e.g. calendar integration, email triggers). Centralize ownership of scheduling, prep, and documentation within TA or HR to avoid complex permissioning and support consistency across teams. Train teams on how to prep, document, and debrief consistently.	Manage everything in one integrated platform. Enable real-time collaboration between recruiters and hiring managers. Monitor process adherence and continuously refine based on feedback and outcomes.

3 Candidate experience and feedback

Do your candidates leave the process feeling informed, respected, and engaged?

Candidate experience isn't just a nice-to-have—it shapes your reputation, your ability to attract top talent, and how seriously people take your brand. But in many organizations, the experience still depends entirely on who's running the process. One candidate gets a detailed briefing and follow-up. Another hears nothing after a final round.

This principle is about making candidate experience consistent, thoughtful, and measurable—and using feedback not just to fix problems, but to make the process better over time.

Pulse check
Quick questions to evaluate your process

Do candidates receive clear information before and after their interviews?

Do we consistently collect feedback from candidates?

Are we using candidate feedback to improve interviewer performance over time?

Are hiring teams trained to deliver a positive experience?

Do we act on candidate insights—or only react when something goes wrong?

3. Candidate experience and feedback
Where you might be—and how to improve

	Level 1 **Built on the fly**	Level 2 **Some order, still chaos**	Level 3 **We've got a process – now let's stick to it**	Level 4 **Hiring excellence on repeat**
Signs you are here	No feedback is collected from candidates. Candidates aren't told what to expect. Interview experiences vary depending on who's involved. Some never hear back at all.	Feedback is collected in some roles, but no one reviews or uses it. Interviewer behaviors vary—some overrun, some cancel last minute. Candidates rarely receive meaningful follow-up.	Feedback is collected and reviewed regularly. Common issues (e.g. late interviews, unclear expectations) are flagged and addressed. Some hiring teams are coached on delivering better experiences.	Feedback data is used to improve both interviewer training and process design. All candidates receive timely, structured follow-up. Candidate experience scores are reported alongside other hiring KPIs.
How to level up	Send confirmation emails with clear interview details and next steps. Train interviewers on basic candidate care (e.g. be on time, give space to ask questions). Introduce a simple post-interview feedback form.	Use a standard process for collecting and storing candidate feedback. Track common complaints (e.g. unclear interview structure, no feedback given). Share top insights with recruiters and hiring managers in debriefs.	Set a target for candidate NPS and report on it monthly. Add candidate experience to interviewer training modules. Review feedback at the interviewer level and coach individuals based on recurring themes (e.g. poor prep, rushed interviews, lack of clarity).	Automate feedback collection and flag low scores for follow-up. Include candidate sentiment in quarterly hiring reviews. Use real feedback examples to coach interviewers and improve consistency across hiring teams.

4 Governance and accountability

How do you know interviews are happening the way they're meant to?

Most TA leaders aren't short on interview guidelines—but many lack visibility into whether those guidelines are being followed. Are interviewers turning up prepared? Are they asking the right questions? Is scoring fair and consistent?

This principle is about building real oversight—not to police, but to improve. Mature organizations monitor how interviews are being delivered, spot patterns in scoring or behavior, and use those insights to improve quality, fairness, and speed. It's the foundation of scalable, trusted hiring.

Pulse check
Quick questions to evaluate your process

Do we know if interviewers are following the process?

Are interviewers trained and supported to deliver quality interviews?

Can we spot scoring inconsistencies or bias?

Do we review how interviewers and hiring teams are performing over time?

Do we regularly report on interview quality and fairness to senior stakeholders?

4. Governance and accountability
Where you might be—and how to improve

	Level 1 **Built on the fly**	Level 2 **Some order, still chaos**	Level 3 **We've got a process – now let's stick to it**	Level 4 **Hiring excellence on repeat**
Signs you are here	There's no visibility into what's happening in interviews. No one checks whether interviewers follow the process. Outcomes aren't reviewed beyond whether a hire was made.	TA has expectations, but no mechanism to enforce them. Interviewers aren't held accountable for quality or fairness. Process gaps only come to light through complaints or delays.	TA tracks interview delivery and usage of guides. Interviewer training is available and sometimes followed up. Outliers in scoring or behavior can be flagged.	Interviewer activity and scoring are fully visible. Interview quality is reviewed regularly. Insights are used to improve training, fairness, and hiring outcomes.
How to level up	Define what "good" interview execution looks like. Make interview process expectations visible to all interviewers. Encourage team-level accountability (e.g. shared scoring, post-interview check-ins).	Assign clear ownership for tracking interview compliance (e.g. TA team or HRBP). Use simple dashboards or reporting to monitor usage and fairness. Flag and follow up with interviewers who skip steps or provide incomplete feedback.	Monitor patterns in scoring and time allocation (e.g. are some interviewers always lenient or always rushed?). Provide targeted coaching or reminders based on interviewer behavior. Share team-level interview performance reports with TA and hiring leaders to drive accountability.	Use analytics to track fairness, scoring patterns, and adherence at scale. Run regular interviewer performance reviews. Define a clear set of interview quality KPIs and share them quarterly with a senior governance group. Use those reviews to drive cross-functional accountability and continuous improvement.

5 Interview intelligence

Is your interview data helping you make better decisions—or just disappearing into the void?

Most interviews still operate in the dark. Even when interview data is captured, it's rarely structured in a way that can be used to improve hiring outcomes or inform strategy.

This principle is about capturing the right data—on both candidates and interviewers—and using it to improve decision quality, reduce bias, and drive strategic insight. When done well, it helps TA leaders see what's working, what's not, and where to focus.

Are candidate notes recorded in a structured way?

Can we track and compare scores across interviewers or roles?

Do we analyze interviewer behavior to improve fairness or consistency?

Is interview data used to improve hiring decisions or inform talent strategy?

5. Interview intelligence
Where you might be—and how to improve

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Built on the fly	**Some Order, Still Chaos**	**We've Got a Process – Now Let's Stick to It**	**Hiring Excellence on Repeat**
Signs you are here	Interview notes and scores are scattered across interviewers and handwritten in notebooks. Hiring decisions rely on memory and discussion. TA can't compare candidate performance across interviewers.	Some scoring happens, but formats vary. Feedback is stored inconsistently across roles or systems. Data is only reviewed if a hire goes wrong.	Candidate scores are tracked and stored in one shared system. Trends in interviewer scoring and behavior start to emerge. Some data is used to improve processes or training.	Interview data is structured and centralized. Scoring patterns and interviewer effectiveness are regularly analyzed. Data informs hiring decisions, workforce planning, and continuous improvement. AI tools are starting to support note capture and insight extraction during interviews.
How to level up	Introduce a shared template or form to capture scores and notes. Align on basic evaluation criteria for key roles. Encourage documentation of hiring decisions in one place.	Use consistent scoring formats for all interviews. Store feedback in a central, searchable system. Review interview outcomes when evaluating hiring success.	Analyze scoring patterns to identify bias or inconsistency. Use data to inform interviewer training and guide updates. Start reporting on interview metrics alongside time or cost to hire.	Automate data capture across interviews. Link interview data to quality of hire and onboarding success. Use insights to inform broader talent strategy and workforce planning. Prepare to implement AI note-taking tools that can capture, summarize, and structure interview feedback automatically.

Moving from insight to action:
choosing the right partner

Understanding your maturity is one thing—building the right solution is another. Many TA leaders reach a point where they need external support: to help embed structure, scale best practice, or get the right data in the right place.

Whether you're improving interviewer training, designing new content, or introducing interview analytics, choosing the right partner is critical to doing it well—and doing it once.

We've created a simple **10-question checklist** to help you evaluate any potential provider and make the best choice for your goals.

Download now

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10 Questions to Ask When Choosing an Interviewing Partner

Improving your interview process—whether you're introducing structure, scaling consistency, or optimizing for fairness—takes more than just tools. It requires a partner who understands the complexity of interviewing and can support your teams with the right combination of guidance, data, and technology.

This checklist is designed to help you ask the right questions when reviewing potential vendors or solutions, so you can make an informed choice based on what your organization truly needs.

1. **Can they help you define the right skills for each role, or map to frameworks you already use?**
   Look for partners with validated skill frameworks that cover both role-specific and transferable skills—and can align with your existing models if needed.

2. **Do they provide interview questions that are mapped to those skills?**
   The best solutions go beyond templates. They help you select role-relevant questions and provide structured scoring guidance for consistency.

3. **Is their solution built to scale across teams, regions, and interview formats?**
   You need a process that works everywhere, not just in one hiring manager's inbox. Ask how they support repeatability and rollout.

4. **Can they help reduce interview chaos, not add to it?**
   Avoid adding complexity. The right partner should simplify your scheduling, prep, note-taking, and decision-making process—ideally in one place.

5. **How do they support interviewer accountability and fairness?**
   Do they offer analytics that show how interviewers are behaving, such as scoring patterns, adherence to guides, or speaking time?

6. **Will their platform capture structured data you can actually use?**
   Data should be tracked, visible, and linked to hiring outcomes. Ask how they help you move from gut feel to informed decision-making.

7. **Do they offer real-time guidance to help interviewers stay on track?**
   Structured interview guides are great, but are they used in the moment? Look for tools that support interviewers as they interview.

8. **Can their platform evolve with your hiring needs?**
   You don't want to buy a static tool. Ask how they support continuous improvement, analytics, and changes in job requirements over time.

9. **Do they help you improve candidate experience, not just efficiency?**
   Experience matters. Look for partners who support consistent communication with candidates and collect candidate sentiment at scale—with insights that you can act on, not just report.

10. **Do they bring deep expertise in hiring science—not just software?**
    A strong platform is important—but so is the thinking behind it. Look for partners with proven methodology, validation, and a track record in hiring outcomes.

Ready to see what a 'yes' to all 10 looks like?
Learn about Smart Interview Professional.

Putting it all together –
how SHL helps

Every organization is somewhere on the maturity curve. Some are just starting to bring consistency to their interview process. Others are looking to optimize at scale with better data, smarter tools, and stronger accountability.

Wherever you are today—whether you're introducing interviewer training, improving candidate experience, or simply trying to get interview guides out of inboxes and into one place—there's always room to grow.

That's where SHL can help.

Smart Interview Professional is built to help you scale structured interviewing—without losing speed, agility, or candidate experience. It gives you the tools to:

- Design role-relevant interview guides with structured scoring
- Deliver consistent interviews across teams and geographies
- Capture interviewer behavior and candidate data in real time
- Build fairness and accountability into every stage of the process
- Continuously improve based on real-world insights—not guesswork

Follow Alex's story to see how a TA leader transforms their interview process using Smart Interview Professional.
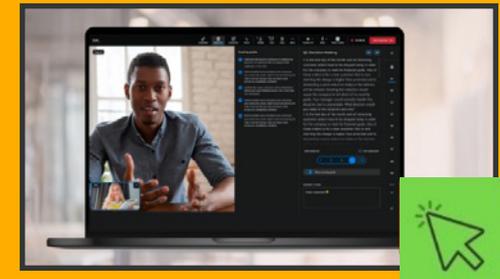
Then, take a test drive and explore how we help you measure the skills that matter and improve interviewing with real-time analytics.

SHL brings powerful and transparent AI technology, data science, and objectivity to help companies attract, develop, and grow the workforce they need to succeed in the digital era.

We empower talent strategies to unlock the full potential of your greatest asset—people.

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