What is a panel interview?

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A panel interview occurs when an interview is conducted with more than one interviewer at a time. The interviewers on the panel should be individuals who have job relevant experience for the position they are evaluating. The panel can consist of supervisors, colleagues and they may take turns asking a set of prepared questions which all candidates will be asked. This is done in order to ensure that the responses between candidates can be compared. Previous research has shown that using a panel of two or more interviewers during the selection process is more reliable and valid in predicating job performance than pre-employment tests.

Panel interviews are useful as they are more reliable and job related because two or more people are used to assess one candidate, therefore more information can be gained from one candidate. Panel interviews are also useful in assessing how well a candidate handles stress while facing a number of people and assesses how a candidate interacts with different people (such as bosses, work peers or future clients). This would be especially useful in jobs which require this sort of interaction with people.

However, panel interviews can be time consuming because several people are needed to assess just one candidate and panel interviews can sometimes last longer than an individual interview as perhaps more questions would be asked. Panel interviews are useful though as a wide variety of information can be gained from one candidate. Previous research has also shown that structured interviews are better at predicting job performance than unstructured interviews. The choice of conducting a panel interview is dependent upon the organisation, resources, the job role and the competencies being evaluated.

Reference

Roth, P.L., Campion, JE., (1992). An analysis of the predictive power of the panel interview and pre-employment tests. Journal of occupational and organisational psychology, 65 (1), pp.51-60