

Hot seat hints

Hire for attitude. Train for skills.

I've said this many times, but I can't reinforce it enough. A management candidate should have all of the basic skills required to run the business. However, just because they've worked in a different segment of the business (family dining vs. white tablecloth) or have managed a much smaller operation doesn't mean that they won't make a great manager for you.

Adjustments in management duties can be made easily. Adjustments in values and personality are nearly impossible to make.

Get more than the facts

A resume is basically a listing of data. While important, I recommend asking for a letter of application. This will help to gauge an applicant's basic communication and writing skills, and give you a better sense of how they position their own history, qualifications, and why they want the job.

Go beyond the application

Conduct the interview without the application or resume in front of you. This will keep you from spending additional time confirming the "facts." Instead, use the interview time to ask the open-ended questions that reveal more about the applicant's values and feelings. Take notes about what you hear, but don't get so engrossed in your notes that you stop listening. Also, be sure to ask all candidates the same questions so that you can compare their answers.

On a scale of 1 to 5...

In addition to the notes you take, do a quick rating of each candidate once they've left the room. After the candidate has left. Rank them on the desired personality characteristics and attributes that you decided upon when defining your management position. We've used the sample characteristics from [Star Search](#) in the downloadable [Manager Interview Questions](#).

A few more...

- Ask lots of "Why's?"
- Listen for lots of We's, not I's.
- Keep a straight face, even if you hear something you don't like.
- Always end the interview on a positive note. It's a sign of professionalism and respect.
- Don't forget to sell the job, especially to a candidate you like.

Bonus hint

We're in the hospitality business, right? Invite your top candidate(s) to lunch or dinner in your restaurant for their second interview. Observe their interactions with your waitstaff, their table manners, and conversational skills in a more relaxed (hopefully) setting. Listen for their observations about your operation and your menu, and allow them to ask questions.