

# Mentoring During Job Interviews

Mentoring during interviews is one of the nine cornerstone policies that companies can implement today to help untapped talent enter, thrive, and stay in the workforce. To access the rest of the policies, read the [full System Upgrade report](#) today.

## WHAT IS MENTORING DURING JOB INTERVIEWS?

Companies assign mentors to support job candidates by clarifying the process, answering questions, and providing insights on expectations to help candidates prepare for interviews. 70% of Fortune 500 companies have mentoring programs<sup>1</sup> and 76% of employees think mentorship is important for their careers—but only **37% of employees** actually have a mentor.<sup>2</sup> And this doesn't even consider mentors assigned to support interview candidates.

Mentoring ensures your talent strategy has an edge: even before talent enters the door. While this is a newer practice, our research not only shows that mentoring works, but that you don't have to strain your resources to do it effectively.<sup>3</sup> It's possible to pilot this practice's efficacy for certain roles, collect insights and iterate, and then plan a broader rollout.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### 01 Support interviewees

Mentoring during job interviews provides **much needed support** to Black, Latina, and Native American (BLNA) women interviewees who typically don't have it—and are the ones who seek information and community the most. Women of color in college tech programs are more likely to participate in women's networks than other women in tech at the same school (63% vs. 50%).<sup>4</sup>

### 02 Level the playing field

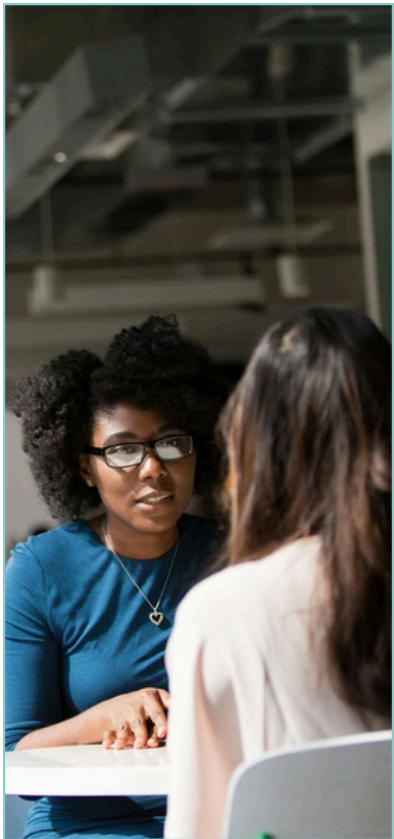
A diverse candidate slate matters because when hiring teams are able to interview more people who don't look like them, it lowers unconscious bias and they are more likely to hire someone from a different background.<sup>5</sup> That's just step one—mentoring during interviews **levels the playing field** for candidates and ensures they all have resources to navigate the recruitment process.

### 03 Thorough candidate assessment

Mentoring during job interviews ensures **a more thorough assessment** of your candidates. Almost 60% of new hires fail because the company did not have a clear view of the candidate's skills.<sup>6</sup> Mentoring can ensure companies don't just fill a role, but that they intentionally bring talent on board who can excel.<sup>7</sup>

### 04 Cost effectiveness

Failed searches can cost companies **up to 30%** of the employee's first year annual salary.<sup>8</sup> Those costs include time spent on recruitment, candidates who leave the process midway, and resources spent on unsuccessful hires. Assigning a mentor into an interview process can indeed help curate a talent pipeline that matches the right people to the right roles.



**13 PERCENTAGE POINTS**

More likely to be considered impactful for Black, Latina, and Native American women compared to other technical employees.<sup>9</sup>

**92%**

Of employers value candidates' human or durable skills (like communication) as much as their technical skills. Mentors can assess candidates' these skills by engaging with them beyond the formal interview process.<sup>10</sup>

**90%**

Of hiring managers believe job interview preparation is a key factor in a candidates' success. Mentors can play a huge role in clarifying the interview process and supporting candidate preparation.<sup>11</sup>

1. [Forbes](#) (2022).  
2. [Forbes](#) (2023).  
3. [Dear Tech Companies](#) (2023).  
4. [Resetting Tech Culture](#) (2020).  
5. [How Effective Is the Diverse Slate Approach to Hiring?](#) (2020).  
6. [Talent Lens](#) (2024).

7. [Dear Tech Companies](#) (2023).  
8. [Breezy HR](#) (2023).  
9. [System Upgrade: Rebooting Corporate Policies for Impact](#) (2023).  
10. [LinkedIn Global Talent Trends](#) (2023).  
11. [Zirtual](#) (2023).

## POLICY IN PRACTICE



**"When I applied for a job at a leading tech company, I was connected to a sherpa—a current employee who would mentor me through the process from start to finish. He helped me navigate organizational culture, identify opportunities I was interested in and suited for, and complete job application materials. He also made sure there was a job I could and should apply for.**

My sherpa's role extended to advocating for me in case I didn't meet all the job requirements. It helped me realize that recruitment isn't just about hiring. It's about matchmaking employees and employers to build sustainable, enduring careers."

**—Linda Calvin, Chief Impact Officer, Reboot Representation**

## POLICY PAIRINGS

If you're looking to supercharge your interview mentoring strategy, consider also implementing the recommended cornerstones to better democratize access:

- Share salary ranges
- A central and accessible internal jobs board

### 6 DESIGN QUESTIONS

It's not just about mentoring during job interviews—it's about intentional design. Organizations can ensure their policies and practices are accessible and effective—and thereby efficient—by asking six key design questions:

1	<b>How can we use quantitative and qualitative data to identify how pain points differ for each group?</b>	Conduct listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys that collect disaggregated data from interviewees by race, gender, and level, and lived experience (e.g. prior exposure to mentoring) to identify unique pain points around interviews.
2	<b>How can we offer employees multiple relevant options?</b>	Provide a range of support options to interview candidates (e.g. practice answering questions, Q&A opportunities about the company and position, connect to current employees with shared lived experience or similar technical interests and to employee resource groups).
3	<b>Have we ensured that all options are accessible and easy to use?</b>	Provide multiple mentoring platform options (e.g. in-person, virtual), assign mentors who speak multiple languages, and assign mentors across levels, career paths, and technical areas.
4	<b>How are we communicating frequently and clearly about this practice?</b>	Consistently communicate across multiple channels about interview candidate mentors (e.g. email, phone, verbally at several points during the interview process) and mobilize employees through employee and business resource groups.
5	<b>How are we promoting a culture that encourages adoption?</b>	Train mentors in acknowledging their own privileges/bias, ensure mentors are able to reflect interview candidates' identities when possible, compensate or provide benefits to mentors, and create new roles dedicated for mentors if there are capacity constraints.
6	<b>How are we continuously measuring impact and iterating as needed?</b>	Ask interview candidates (both with and without offers) and mentors across different segments of the population and workforce what is useful about mentoring during job interviews or what continued pain points they are experiencing.

## Questions?

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