What Candidates Want From Your Hiring Process

Insights from 246 South West based finance professionals* | 2026

*we surveyed candidates across AP, AR, Credit Control, Payroll, Accounts / Finance Assistant, Management Accountant and Financial Accountant

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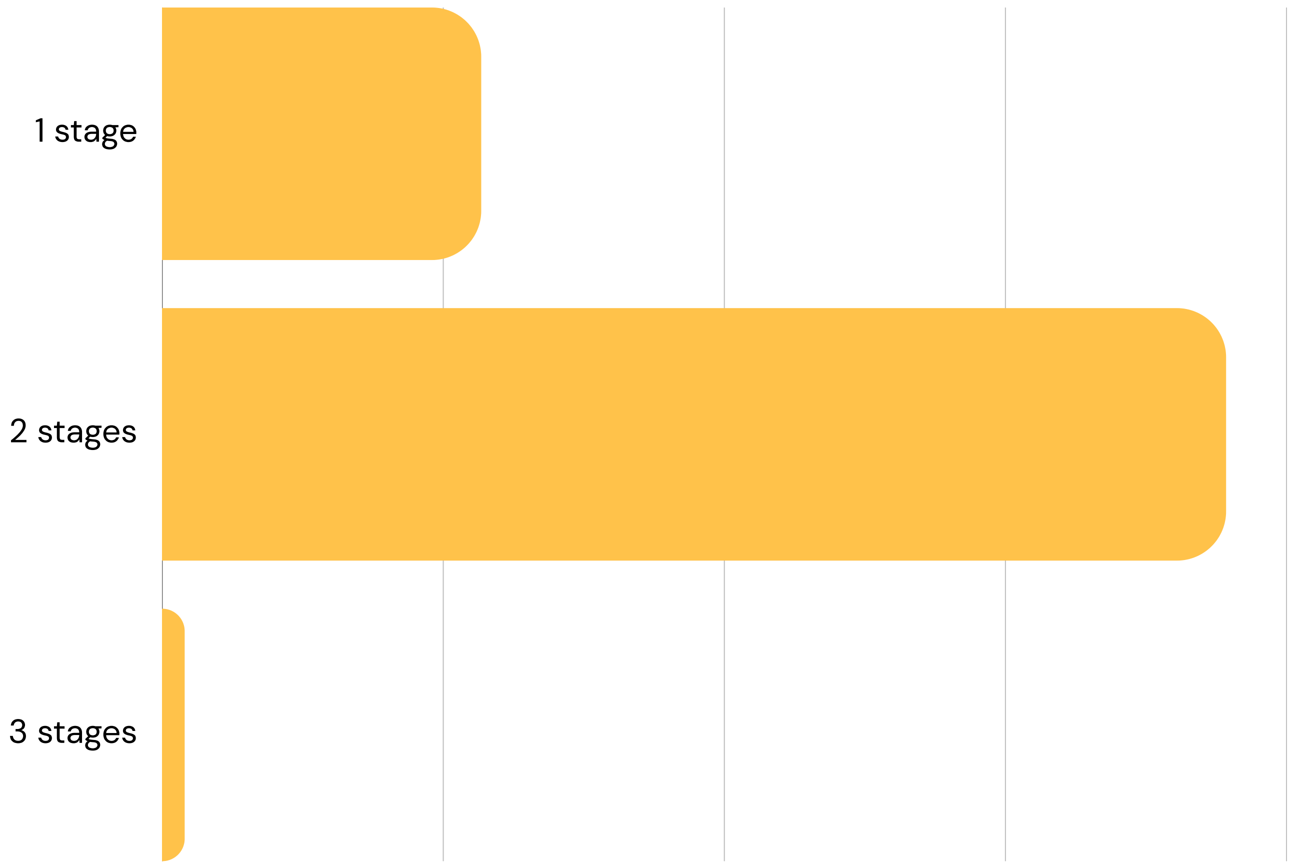
The Big Picture

What do candidates have to say?

76%	57%	88%	78%
Want a two-stage interview process	Think 3-4 days is an acceptable time to wait between interviews	Prefer conversational vs technical interviews	Believe a poor agency service negatively impacts your business

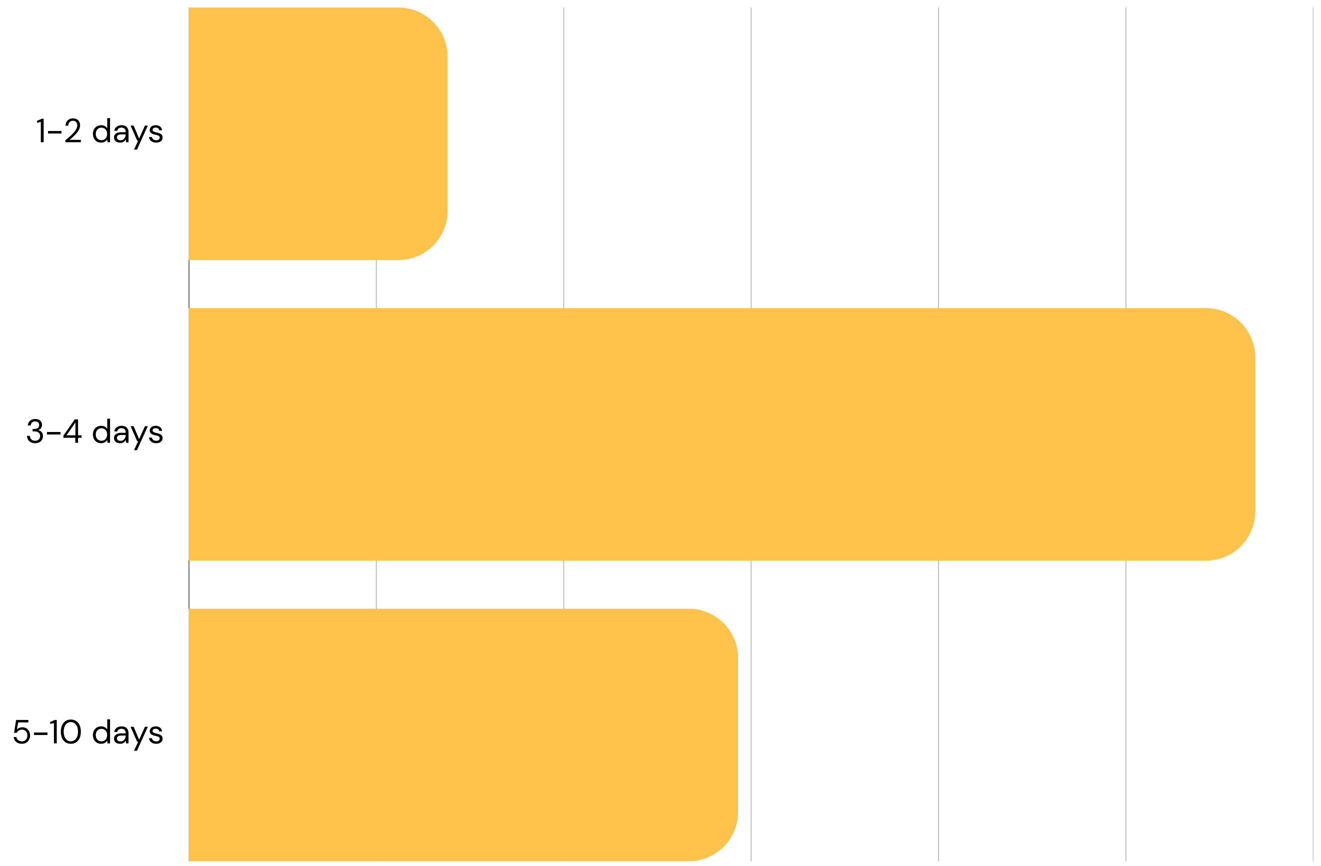
Keep it short, keep it moving.

Number of Interview Stages



75% of respondents believe a two stage interview process is best to make a decision. Given the option, nobody selected four or more.

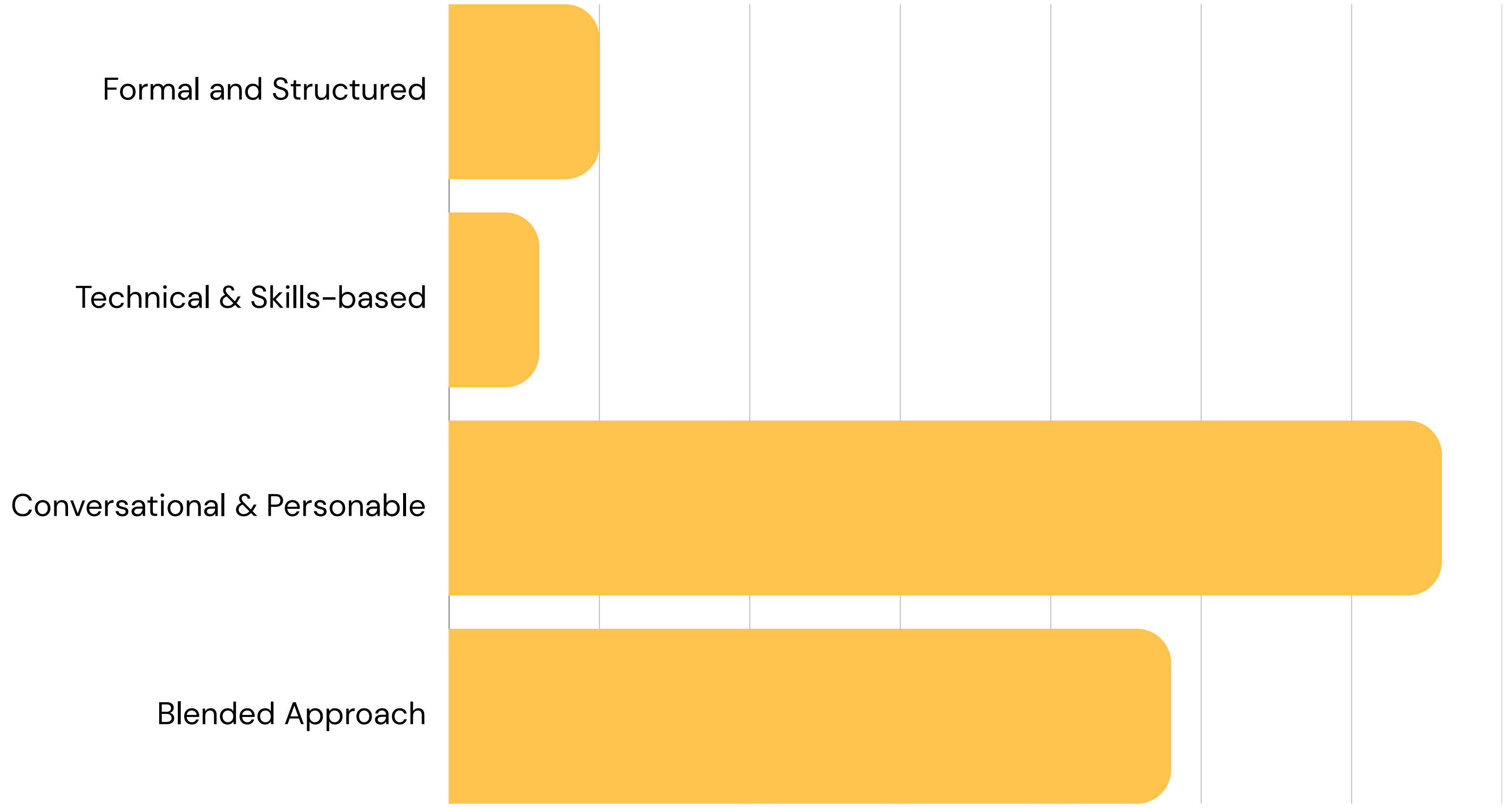
Wait Time Between Interviews



57% said 3-4 days was acceptable to wait between interviews. Given the option, nobody considered a wait of 11+ days acceptable.

Make it human.

Most Effective Interview Style



86% believe either a Conversational & Personable interview, or a Blended Approach, is the most effective interview style.

The Feedback Gap

2.97/5

Candidates rating general quality and depth of feedback received after interview

3.82/5

Candidates rating how total lack of feedback negatively impacts employer perception

Candidates report receiving above-average levels of useful feedback, while a lack of feedback has a noticeably stronger negative effect on how they view the hiring organisation.

Representation IS your brand.

How does the recruiter impact your business?

3.89/5

Candidates rating how a poor recruiter service influences their decision to discontinue with a hiring process

69% of respondents rated the impact 4 or 5. The quality of service delivered by a recruitment agency can directly influence whether someone continues engaging with the opportunity in question, even if they have already completed a first stage interview / are engaged in the process.

Our Summary

"Recruitment processes are designed around internal schedules, stakeholder availability and business priorities. Whilst these are all important considerations, this survey is a useful reminder that the candidate experience should remain at the heart of every hiring process.

The findings show that finance professionals value a recruitment process that is simple, moves at pace and allows them to build genuine relationships with the people they'll potentially be working alongside.

None of these findings came as a surprise to us and it's encouraging to see them reinforced so clearly by the professionals we speak with every day.

We hope the insights within this report provide you with practical ideas to refine your own hiring processes and, ultimately, improve your ability to attract and secure the very best talent in an ever-changing market."

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