



Effective Interviewing

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Brian Jewell, Trainer

Welcome to the Effective Interviewing workshop!

One of the biggest challenges managers face today is finding and hiring the right people for their open positions. With all of the available candidates out there with similar qualifications, how can you be sure you are finding the best candidate available? At times it can feel like looking for a needle in a haystack, or even a needle in a pile of needles.

My hope for you is that this course provides you some tools and information that you can use to help improve your interviewing skills and have confidence that you are asking questions that can help you determine the candidate's competencies, as well as their ability to mesh with the Availility culture and way of doing business.

Of course, it is not always about asking the right questions, but also listening to the responses, reading between the lines, trying to spot the warning signs, and recognizing our own personal biases that go into an interview. This course will spend some time in these areas as well.

I promise to make this a fun and interactive time together.

Let's get started and work to further develop our skills together!

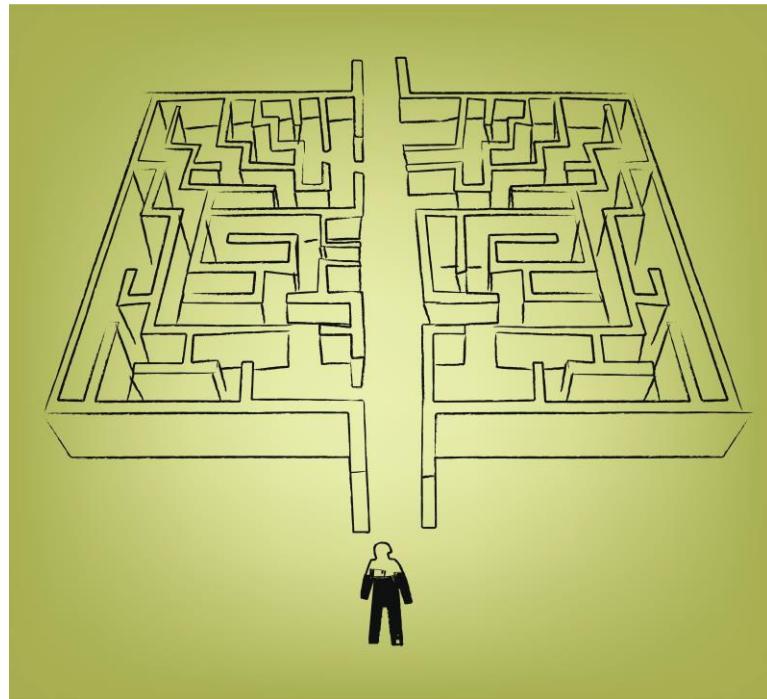
Sincerely,

Brian Jewell

Trainer, Availility

Objectives

1. Identify the impact ineffective interviewing hiring has on an organization.
2. Ask Candidates high-impact questions during an interview.
3. Identify potential red flags during an interview.
4. Avoid common pit-falls managers face during interviews.



Training Schedule

- 2:00 Introduction and Opening Activity
- 2:10 Impact of Ineffective Hiring
- 2:20 Questioning Styles: Competency and Behavioral
- 2:35 Looking out for Red Flags During an Interview
- 2:45 4 Common pit-falls for managers to avoid
- 2:55 Closing Summary

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Impact of Ineffective Interviewing

The interview is the most widely used and most misunderstood hiring technique. Every company uses some form of interviewing before making a hiring decision.

Unfortunately, for all the time and effort spent interviewing, the results are not always what we expected. At times, the best candidate walks away, while the “What were we thinking?” candidate starts on Monday.

Here are some quick facts about hiring employees:

- For each vacant position, HR staff and managers typically review _____ to _____ resumes.
- The cost of an employee making \$60,000 a year over 10 years is \$_____.
- Those employees making more than \$_____ per year will cost you more than \$_____ to replace.
- When an employee leaves, existing staff has to do more work, which in turn affects their productivity.

Klinvex, K. C., O'Connell, M. S., & Klinvex, C. P. (1999). *Hiring Great People*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Retaining Vs. Recruiting?. (2007). *T+D*, 61(8), 74.

Activity: Brainstorm the Impacts of Ineffective Interviewing

For this activity, you will break into groups and brainstorm additional impacts that ineffective interviewing can have on Availability.

Use these questions as a way to start your discussion:

“If I interviewed at an organization and had a bad experience I would....”

“If an employee is hired that is not able to perform the duties of the job the impact would be....”

Notes:

Why Do We Interview?

There are at least five purposes for almost any interview. The emphasis that you place on any one purpose can help you determine the structure of your interview.

1. Evaluate the candidate's _____.
The interview should allow you to collect information that will help you accurately evaluate the candidate's skills and abilities compared with those required for current and future job success.
2. Evaluate the candidate's _____.
The most highly skilled candidates are not necessarily those who will thrive in your environment or team. The interview helps you evaluate how the candidate's likes and dislikes mesh with the role, the culture, the environment, and the team.

3. Provide a realistic job _____.

The interview is a unique opportunity to provide a candid look at the job and our organization. This is also the time for the candidate to ask questions about the job and the organization. Open discussion encourages applicants who fit the job pursue employment and discourage those who don't. There is nothing worse than a new hire saying, "If only I'd known that, I wouldn't have accepted the job."

4. _____ the job.

Competition is extreme for the best people. During the interview you can effectively share selling points that might attract a candidate.

5. Complete the _____.

The interview provides a perfect opportunity to follow up on areas of interest and fill in missing information from the résumé. Candidates complete applications with varying levels of detail and accuracy. Often, what appears to be meaningful is much less significant when you hear the rest of the story, while other items that appear insignificant may turn out to be quite meaningful.

Klinvex, K. C., O'Connell, M. S., & Klinvex, C. P. (1999). *Hiring Great People*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Questioning Styles

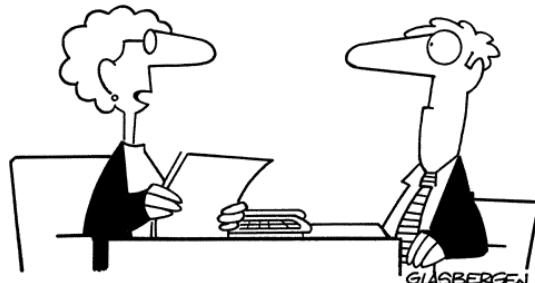
When it comes to interviewing, there are two main styles of questions that are primarily used, competency and behavioral. Each style has its own purpose in an interview and can be used interchangeably to help you discover the information you need from the candidate.

Competency/Skill Questions

Competency/Skill questions are focused on a candidate's:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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"According to your résumé, you were an Egyptian Pharaoh in a past life. Have you updated your leadership skills since then?"

Pharaoh Cartoon. (1999). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.glasbergen.com/?count=1&s=job interview>

Sample Competency/Skill Questions

Competency Questions (Skills/Abilities)

- What qualities or experience make you the best candidate for this position
- Can you describe how you go about solving problems? Please give us examples.
- Describe some basic steps that you would take in implementing a new program
- Tell us how you go about organizing your work.
- Describe an improvement you initiated and implemented. What were the results? (cost, productivity, accuracy, defects, responsiveness, cycle time)
- What trait or competencies are most important for a person to be successful in this role?
- Describe your most valuable learning experience related to managing others. How did it change the way you manage now?
- What is your favorite part of your current job and why is it your favorite part?
- What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?
- What experience or skills will help you manage projects?

Experience Questions (Skills/Abilities)

- Tell us a little more about your professional experience particularly those not mentioned on your resume.
- What is your most significant, professional accomplishment? Please be sure to quantify it.
- How do you propose to compensate for your lack of experience?
- Could you describe your current job for me?

Education Questions (Knowledge)

- What new skills have you learned over the past year?
- Tell us how you would learn your new job in the absence of a formal training program.
- What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?

Motivation Questions

- Why are you interested in leaving your current assignment and why do you feel that this assignment would be better for you?
- Why did you choose this profession?
- What motivated your career changes?
- Your career has been a mix of technical and non-technical. What responsibilities have given you the most personal satisfaction?
- Can you share with us your ideas about professional development?
- What is your philosophy towards work?

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“I think you’ll be impressed with my technical skills, especially after you realize I’m a hologram.”

Availity. (2014). Interview Process V.2, Internal Document

Hologram. (2001). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.glasbergen.com/?count=1&s=job interview>

Behavioral Questions

A process that is based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

Behavioral interviewing focuses on examples of past behavior that can be used to predict future actions, attitudes, and/or needs.

In behavioral interviewing, we ask questions relating to something the person has done or something that happened to him or her, as opposed to hypothetical examples.

Writing Behavioral Questions

When creating behavioral questions, remember that our brains think in pictures. Try to create a question that can help them picture an actual event in their mind.

“Tell me what you did when you had a coworker who didn’t get their part of the project done.”

Vs.

“If a coworker doesn’t get their part of a project done, what will you do?”

Use descriptive phrases:

- Describe a time...
- Tell me about when you...
- Have you ever had...

Avoid hypothetical phrases:

- Imagine if you...
- What would you do if...
- When someone does this, what would you...

Descriptive phrases help the candidate feel more comfortable because they are talking about something that they know...themselves and their own experiences.

They answer the questions faster, which means they are more accurate.



Comfort = Speed = Accuracy

Thompson, C. B. (2002). Interviewing Techniques for Managers. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Activity: Write Behavioral Questions

Rewrite the following hypothetical questions as behavioral questions.

1. Some people have trouble getting all their work done. Why do you think that is?
2. What would you do if you were on a project and did “all the right things” and it was still unsuccessful?
3. If you had a worker that you didn’t get along with, how would you resolve the issue?



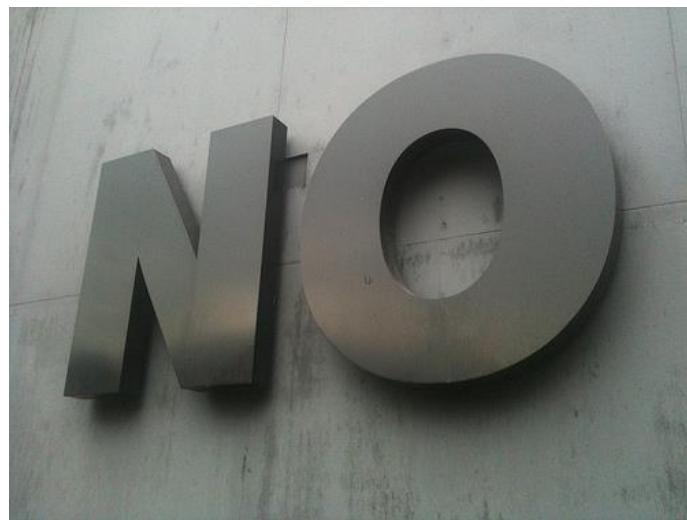
Sample Behavioral Questions

- Describe an improvement you initiated and implemented. What were the results? (cost, productivity, accuracy, defects, responsiveness, cycle time)
- Provide an example of a process you've owned and managed. How did you define and improve the process?
- Describe your most valuable learning experience related to managing others. How did it change the way you manage now?
- Describe a situation where you've had a conflict with a peer or colleague. What was the source of the conflict and how was it resolved?
- Tell me about a time that you were under enormous pressure on the job. How did you handle yourself? What was the outcome?
- Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you thought you would not be able to complete. How did you accomplish the assignment?
- Describe the most difficult customer problem you've faced. What steps did you take to resolve the problem? (techniques for uncovering root cause, structure approach to problem solving)
- Describe a time when you had an unhappy customer. What was the source of the customer's unhappiness and how did you resolve the situation?
- Describe the best boss and the worse boss you have ever had. What made them the best? What made them the worst?
- Think about the people you've reported to in the past. What traits have you found frustrating?
- Describe a situation in which you did "all the right things" and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
- Tell me about a time when you have had a great idea but were told that you could not implement it? How did you react? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.

Topics to Avoid

Avoid putting yourself at risk by asking questions about:

- Religion
- National Origin/Race
- Citizenship
- Disabilities
- Marital/Family Status/Children
- Religion
- Arrests and Convictions
- Bankruptcy/Financial/Garnishments
- Car/Home Ownership
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical Characteristics/Grooming
- Pregnancy



Availity. (2014), Interview Process V.2, Internal Document

Sample Questions to Avoid

Nationality

- Where were you born?
- Are you a U.S. Citizen?
- Where is that accent from?
- How long have you lived here?

Religion

- What religion do you practice?
- What religious holidays do you observe?
- Will you need time off for any religious holidays?

Age

- How old are you?
- How long until you plan to retire?
- What year did you graduate high school?
- How old are your kids?

Marital/Family Status

- Are you married?
- Is this your maiden name?
- Do you have kids?
- Can you get a babysitter if you needed to work late or travel?
- How old are your kids?

Activity: Create a List of Questions

Review the sample questions in the guide (pages 10-11, 15) and pick the 4 or 5 questions that can work for your hiring situations.

Work with your group to create at least 2 new questions you can add to the list.



Adams, S. (2011, August 20). Interview Question. Retrieved February 19, 2015, from <http://dilbert.com/strip/2011-08-20>

Common Red Flags

One of the biggest challenges interviewers have is trying to go “beyond the words” to determine if the candidate is accurately representing themselves during the interview. There are thousands of books that coach what to say in an interview and how to answer questions. It is up to the interviewer to look out for things that may be considered red flags.

Common red flags are:

- 1. Using the word ____ to describe their accomplishments.**
Candidates use this deceptive, but truthful tactic often.

“We planned and implemented a program.”
“We succeeded in increasing profits.”

You are not trying to hire a group of people, so try to uncover what role they individually played in the success.

“I understand that you did this project with other people. However, I'm particularly interested in what you did on the project. What was your role?”

2. Speaks in _____ and does not give details.

Candidates may gloss over details in an interview by using phrases like “I succeeded in implementing the program.”

Some interviewers may accept this as an answer and move on, but others can see that this generality may not tell the whole story. Use follow up questions to get to the specifics.

“Tell me what you did to implement the program”

“What results did you achieve?”

3. Gives only _____ answers to questions.

Nobody is perfect. We are all aware that not everything we do is successful. If a candidate is answering everything in a positive, glowing terms, the negative information could be hidden or downplayed. This is where asking negative questions can help uncover the humanity, flaws and all, of the candidate.

“You described your success on the project, but what problems did you encounter?”

“Tell me about a time that you goofed up. Describe it in detail”

This will help you determine if the candidate is able to candidly and openly discuss problems.

4. Speaks _____ about their previous employer or reveals _____ information.

As we discussed earlier, past performance is a good predictor of future success. The same goes with behavior. When a candidate speaks poorly about their previous employer, they may do the same for you.

Try to get the candidate to think differently about what they are saying. This can help you determine if there is a reason for their negativity, or if they are just generally negative.

“You have stated some things that you did not like about your previous employer. Tell me about a situation you were in that caused you to feel this way. What did you do to try and change the situation?”

“What are some things that your organization did well? How did you contribute to the situation?”

5. Body language. Shifts their weight or avoids _____.

How a candidate reacts to questions can be more telling than their answers themselves. Watch their body language. If they suddenly shift their weight or avoid eye contact, they may be avoiding telling you something or are uncomfortable with the question.

Four Common Pit Falls

Every interviewer is influenced to some degree by personal preferences and past experiences that are unrelated to selecting the right candidate. If you are aware of the common pit falls interviewers face, you can work to overcome them and select the right candidate regardless of the situation.

The four most common pit falls are:

1. bias

We all feel more comfortable with people who are like us and share similar characteristics and backgrounds. Have you noticed how easy it is to talk to someone who has the same interests? This familiarity can often cause you to overlook important weaknesses in a candidate.



"You'll fit in just fine."

Lynch, M. (2011, October 1). Cartoon. Retrieved February 19, 2015, from <http://mikelynchcartoons.blogspot.com/2011/10/interview-cartoons.html>

The opposite of this is when the person, at least on the surface, appears to be very different from us. This may cause you to overlook the positive aspects of the candidate and focus on the negative.

2. _____ error.

We often let one characteristic of a candidate influence our perception of the entire person. Just because the candidate excels in three of the qualifications, does not mean that they will exceed in all of them.

3. Pressure _____ bias.

Imagine that you are a manager of a team that has two open positions and you have just been handed a high-visibility project. You might be tempted to hire the first person who is remotely qualified just to get another body in to assist.

It is better to wait for the right person instead of the “right now” person. You may get a body, but do you get a performer or performance problems?

4. _____ effects.

You have just finished interviewing three terrible candidates and the next person through the door is an average candidate, but better than the others. In contrast, the candidate may seem acceptable, but beware of your bias.

Create a structure where you are interviewing each candidate individually, instead of against each other.

Bias	Issues and Problems	How to Control it
Similarity	Weaknesses are overlooked in similar candidates and strengths are discounted in dissimilar candidates.	Ask yourself how similar or dissimilar you are to the candidate and how it is affecting your judgment.
Halo Effect	Most positions have several separate competency areas. Ability in one area is generally a poor predictor of success in all competencies.	Evaluate each position competency separately. Be careful not to let the ratings from one competency influence ratings in other competencies.
Pressure to Fill Positions	Lowering standards to fill positions results in tremendous cost to the organization.	Create awareness of those conducting interviews about the cost of poor selection.
Contrast Effects	Comparing candidates can cause you to lower or raise your expectations from one candidate to the next. This usually results in an otherwise unacceptable candidate being hired.	Establish performance standards for each competency area you are evaluating. Make an effort to compare each candidate to the standards and not to each other.

Klinvex, K. C., O'Connell, M. S., & Klinvex, C. P. (1999). *Hiring Great People*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Reflection

Effective interviewing takes practice. We have just scratched the surface today and provided a few items that you can start to work on.

Now it is your turn to create a personal action plan.

What are two things that you can take away today and implement in your next interview?

How will you implement them?

References

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Pharaoh Cartoon. (1999). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from
[http://www.glasbergen.com/?count=1&s=job interview](http://www.glasbergen.com/?count=1&s=job%20interview)

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Lynch, M. (2011, October 1). Cartoon. Retrieved February 19, 2015, from
<http://mikelynchcartoons.blogspot.com/2011/10/interview-cartoons.html>

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Evaluation

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING EVALUATION FORM

Date: _____

Trainer: _____

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The objectives of the training were clearly defined.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Participation and interaction were encouraged.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. The content was organized and easy to follow	<input type="radio"/>				
4. The participant guide was helpful.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. The activities during the training were relevant to the content.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. The training objectives were met.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. The trainer was well prepared.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. The trainer was knowledgeable about the topic.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. This course will help me improve my skills.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. I would recommend this course to a coworker.	<input type="radio"/>				

11. What aspects of the training would you improve?

12. What did you like the best about the training?

13. What did you like the least?

14. What is the one thing you will take away from this course?