

## INTERVIEWING FUNDAMENTALS

A job interview, managed correctly, is a structured, focused, and legal conversation that provides the interviewer with the necessary information to evaluate whether or not the candidate has the ability and motivation to successfully perform in the job, as well as how the candidate will "fit" with the organization.

### Interview "Dos" and "Don'ts"

- DO maintain a conversational, two-way flow throughout the interview. Use the candidate's name, maintaining eye contact and nodding or smiling in response to the candidate's answers in order to provide encouragement.
- DO employ active listening skills. Listen to what the candidate says and how it is said.
- DO use "follow-up" questioning techniques to gather in-depth information.
- DO give the interviewee your undivided attention during the interview. It is easy for an interviewer to "fade" in and out during an interview,. Interviewers often fall into the trap of assuming they know what the candidate's response to a question will be and therefore do not listen. Other interviewers allow themselves to be distracted and rush the interview.
- DO take notes. Record the interviewee's responses, as well as your own evaluation of those responses. If you're interviewing a number of candidates, note taking will be your only means of ensuring that you remember all the relevant information. Documentation is also essential in the event that a hiring decision is challenged.
- DON'T feel that your primary job as the interviewer is to communicate information to the applicant. You're there to listen. Remember the "80/20" rule: the interviewer should talk for 20% of the time, the interviewee for 80%.
- DON'T answer your own questions! This is a common interviewer mistake. Give the candidate an opportunity to answer the question as you have posed it.



## Starting the Interview

When starting the interview, make an introductory statement. The statement is an opportunity to establish the ground rules, informing the candidate of how the interview is scheduled to proceed, and the types of questions that will be asked. For example:

"TODAY, I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE SO I CAN DETERMINE WHETHER YOUR SKILLS ARE SUITED TO THE JOB REQUIREMENTS . I'LL BE ASKING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS, TO IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES AS THEY MATCH THESE REQUIREMENTS. AT THE END, YOU'LL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT THE JOB, THE DEPARTMENT OR THE ORGANIZATION."

## Questions to Anticipate from the Candidate

Candidates can ask some pretty challenging questions too. Below are examples of the questions you can anticipate being asked by interviewees. It is good practice to prepare answers for them in advance so you are not at a loss for words. Providing well articulated answers to these questions will demonstrate your preparedness and will keep the interviewee informed.

"What is the salary range (benefits package, vacation) for this position?"

"How did this job come to exist? Is it a replacement?" [If it is a replacement] "If so, why did the previous incumbent leave?" [and possibly] "What skills did the previous incumbent have (not have), which you think I might have (not have?)"

"Are there any requirements of the job that you think I may be deficient in?"

"Is there any area of my qualifications as they pertain to the job that I haven't covered?"

"Am I still a candidate for the job?" "What are my chances?"

"Where do we go from here?" "When will I hear from you?"

## Closing the Interview

At the conclusion of the interview, thank the applicant for his/her time and information. This is also the time to "market" the opportunity to the best qualified candidates, by providing additional information about the position or organization and promoting the benefits of your working environment. A cordial parting is essential, regardless of your degree of interest in the applicant. Close the interview in a professional manner and inform the candidate of the next step(s) in the selection process.



## Candidate Evaluation

After you have concluded the interview and the candidate has left, review your notes for each interview question asked. If you were interviewing in a panel, discuss the candidate's performance with the other interviewers. If you did not assign a rating for each competency during the interview, do it now. Total your rating scores for each question asked in the Selection Partner and record the number in the space provided.

## Behavior Based Interviewing

**Behavior Based Interviewing** is based on the premise that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior that took place in either in a same or similar situation. Behavioural based interviewing is an approach to interviews based on the basic concept that the best predictor of future behaviour (performance) is past behaviour (performance) in similar situations. The more recent the behaviour described, the greater is it's predictive ability and the more frequent or regular the behaviour, the greater is it's predictive power.

Behavioural-based interviews focus on specific events in a candidate's past which relate to how the candidate is likely to perform on the job in the future. Therefore, asking questions about past behaviours help determine required competencies and attributes. Decisions based on a behavioural based interviewing strategy have been found to be far more valid (valid or successful??) than those based on the traditional interviewing techniques.

Behavioural-based interviews can take longer than those more traditional (as in looser??) in style. Consequently, careful preparation and note taking are very important.

The broad nature of behavior based questions makes it likely that the interviewer will have to clarify the candidate's responses to score them accurately.

Follow up questions or **probes** are used to guide the candidate's descriptions of situations or events until sufficient information is obtained to permit scoring. Remember, probing should not give away the content of the ideal response.

In general when you ask a candidate the lead question, they need to:

- Describe the situation/example from their own experience
- Tell you what they did or how they responded
- Let you know the outcome

Use some of the following probing questions to solicit necessary responses:

- What did you do next?
- What was the outcome?
- What were you thinking?



- What was your response?
- How often did you do that?
- What problems/challenges did you encounter?
- What did you learn?
- What did you enjoy?
- What would you have changed?
- How did you handle that?
- What adjustments were necessary?
- What contributed most to your success?
- In what areas do you need to develop?

