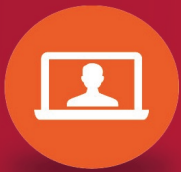


The Importance of Training Interviewers

eBook



SUPERIOR SOLUTIONS, POWERFUL RESULTS.

Introduction

In this eBook you will learn the importance of training interviewers and hiring managers before candidate interviews begin. The training tips and techniques included in this eBook have been utilized by hundreds of organizations to streamline their interviewing process and ensure that they are conducting accurate, efficient and legally defensible interviews.

We hope this eBook helps to make your hiring process more efficient and successful.

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Why Hiring Managers Need Interview Training

If you have a tough question, or need advice, you often look to internal “experts” within your organization. If you have a question about taxes, you probably know just the person to go to within your accounting department; if you have a benefits question, hello, benefits manager; and if you need some advice on local trade shows and events -- your marketing manager may be just the person you need to see. While all of these people are experts in their own areas, they are also tasked with hiring folks to fill the seats in their departments. Often times, we think that because we have the best IT manager around, that of course he will be able to hire the best IT people for his team. This may not be the case. These “experts” have special talents and training in their fields but when it comes to finding the right people to fill positions, they may need some “expert” advice of their own.

It is important that we equip our hiring managers with the right training and tools in order to find the best people to fill open positions. By giving them two simple tools, interview training and competency based interview guides, they will be on their way to hiring top talent. These individuals are very skilled at identifying the skills and qualifications needed to perform the job at hand, but some guidance and training will help them to perfect their interviewing and hiring abilities. While technical skills and past experience are very important for most jobs, hiring managers would benefit from a greater understanding of how to get at those skills and behaviors that they may not be able to see on paper. By providing behavioral based interview training and interview guides, these hiring managers will be able to find the person who is the best fit for their position and the organization.

Behavioral interview training will give hiring managers a better understanding of the importance of consistency and job relevance when interviewing candidates. They will also learn how to ask past behavior questions and collect complete behavioral responses. Understanding the importance of motivational fit is something that is invaluable for a hiring manager. They will learn that even though someone may have all of the right technical skills, without job and organizational fit, they may not succeed in the open position. By providing them with structured interview guides that include behavioral anchored rating scales, hiring managers will have approved questions to ask and a set of guidelines to follow when rating the candidates’ answers. Interview guides give them a roadmap to follow and the structure they often desire when interviewing candidates. While some managers may be comfortable in interview situations, many hiring managers welcome the idea of a structured process and training.

We often take for granted that because we have an awesome manager they will also be an awesome interviewer. With a little training, guidance and practice, any hiring manager can be the “expert” interviewer you expect them to be.



Training

Knowledge
professional develop
teaching of vocation
practical skills provi
• On-the-job tra
• Off-the-job tra

The Bold and the Not So Beautiful: Avoid Hiring a Narcissist

In a clinical setting, a person with Narcissistic Personality Disorder is fairly easy to pick out. They are excessively pre-occupied with their own adequacy, constantly involved in struggles for power and prestige, and vain to the extreme of their namesake from Greek mythology. They project overblown self-confidence and self-esteem when in fact they are fragile in both regards. They promote their own self-worth and superiority by attacking that in others. They lack modesty about themselves and empathy for others. Short of being clinically diagnosed with this disorder, one can still find narcissists "in the wild." In fact, they are particularly astute at wiggling their way into your organization. And here's how they do it:

Step 1 - Impression Management. Narcissists have an almost magical ability to present themselves favorably to strangers. Their skills have been honed for years in an obsessed struggle for power and esteem. They know exactly what you want to hear, feel and see in a candidate. They will show you extraversion, social boldness, solid decision making abilities and a proactive stance to addressing problems. They focus you on their track record of innovation, creativity and accomplishments, and they skillfully mask their shortcomings. So directed are they that the skilled interviewer may get a "too good to be true" feel about the interview with the narcissist. Their self-descriptions may sound like you are reading from a textbook and their stories of work experiences may resonate like tales of epic heroism. Yet, without some measures of personality, correctly diagnosing a narcissist in an interview is close to impossible.

Step 2 - Exploiting Power Differentials. And now it gets worse. You make the decision to hire them and then the dark underbelly of this personality flaw enters into the relationship. Narcissists will attempt to exploit, manipulate and deceive those that are around them. They make those who do not worship them feel bad about themselves. At times, it may seem like the narcissist would rather work on destroying relationships than on getting any work done in your organization.

Here are a few ways to spot a narcissist in the wilds of your organization:

- If you criticize narcissists, they will likely act as if their feelings are hurt and they're humiliated, or they'll become extremely angry and lash out (never in between).
- If you ask about developmental opportunities when talking to a narcissist, you will likely find them unable to come up with anything tangible or believable. They might say something like, "I just give too much to the organization and sacrifice my home life to do so."
- If you team up with narcissists, you will find they exaggerate their own importance and talents while denigrating yours; they will systematically try to take advantage of your good will.
- If you ignore narcissists, they will become jealous and demand your immediate attention and positive regard.
- If you focus on others around a narcissist, you will find them redirecting you to their self-obsession and unrealistic goals while displaying a tangible disregard for the feelings of others.

Equipped with how to spot one once they are in your organization does not really help with how to keep them out. As a career derailer for professionals, the narcissistic executive is a particularly nasty problem. Perhaps the only reliable and scientific means of identifying and avoiding the selection of a narcissist into the ranks of your Executive Team is to conduct a thorough multi-measure Executive Assessment.

Use an Executive Assessment to explore the narcissist's lack of openness to feedback, limited emotional intelligence, and poor team orientation. In addition, research has also found narcissists to have a high need for recognition, excessive exhibitionism, social dominance and boldness or arrogance in social settings. Add to that an exploration of those areas that are lacking in the narcissist by looking for unrealistic thinking, immodesty and a disinterest in being liked by others.

If you find these patterns in a candidate you're considering for your Leadership team then watch out! You might be blinded by the beauty of these fragile souls.

Stripping Away the 'Date Face' in Pre-Employment Interviews

Researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln published a study in which 72 subjects, with varying degrees of narcissism but similar résumés, participated in simulated job interviews with expert interviewers. Then, the researchers asked 222 raters to evaluate their taped performances. The results of the study revealed that narcissists perform better in pre-employment interviews, because narcissists seemingly come across as more “self-confident and capable.” To paraphrase one of the researcher’s comments, interviews present an environment where it is okay to talk about yourself in self-promoting and aggrandizing ways; in short, it’s where narcissists tend to shine.

The implications are pretty clear. Without good interviewing skills and established rating standards, the pre-employment interview can be awash with evaluation error.

The study attested that the interviewers were “expert.” I do not know how they measured or established that expertise. However, I do know a lot of people with a lot of interviewing experience who are far from experts. But, I also know, with some easy interviewing training tips, everyone can become a more skilled interviewer.

That’s what this article is about: How do you become a better interviewer, so you are not fooled by a narcissist or anyone else who truly isn’t a good fit for the job? It’s actually quite simple: Ask effective probing questions and then, ask more probing questions.



When I train people to interview, I talk about stripping away the “date face.” Pre-employment interviews are like first dates. They’re a little awkward. Each person is trying to get a feel of the other person, without revealing too much. And, most importantly, if there is any interest, they’re trying to impress. To impress, sometimes a little embellishment or little evasion is used. At the risk of a costly “divorce” later, the pre-employment interviewer must be adept at stripping away the date face and getting at the truth. You do that by using the commonly used phrase of peeling the onion, by probing. This is particularly important for higher-level positions, where the stakes of making a mistake are higher and the interviewee’s evasive skills are more refined. But, back to the subject of the study, it’s equally as effective at detecting blow hard narcissists.

Thankfully, with the proper skill and practice, it’s pretty easy to do. Again, think of your first date. When your date says something like, “I love to travel.” It’s completely natural to ask follow up questions. You might ask, “Where was the favorite place you traveled? What did you like about it? What was the most interesting thing you learned/did/ate, etc.?”

These first date questions apply the same way to the pre-employment interview. For example, you should be prepared to follow the question, “What was the most complicated problem you solved?” with probes such as: “Why was this problem important? Who brought the problem to your attention? Who was involved in solving the problem? What would be the implication of leaving the problem unresolved?” Additionally, I like to toss in some seemingly tangential questions, just like on a date. For instance, if they’re describing a problem they were facing at the factory, I might ask, “What does a place like that smell like? Is it hot? How do the employees like working there?”

Stopping short of grilling the person, you are simply learning more, by asking about relevant details... and more details. That’s the critical essence of the approach. It’s easy to lie in general, but it’s hard to do it in detail. Someone who’s answering honestly can easily recall details. Someone who is answering less than truthfully cannot. That is unless they’re a sociopath, and good luck catching them in a short interview. That’s a whole other study.

Are Individual or Panel Interviews Better?

Individual interviews refer to interviews conducted by a single interviewer whereas panel interviews involve more than one interviewer. In the past, some researchers have suggested that panel interviews are superior to individual interviews because they allow more than one person to provide ratings (Warmke & Weston, 1992).

However, this argument doesn't stand up to either practical or empirical scrutiny. In the first place, many organizations use multiple, individual interviews, which allow multiple raters to provide ratings.

Secondly, empirical research indicates that individual interviews are more valid than panel interviews (McDaniel, 1994). That meta-analysis, which was able to evaluate 144 validity coefficients across 23,308 people, in both panel and individual interviews, found that individual interviews were more valid than panel interviews for all types of interviews (i.e. both structured and unstructured) (.43 vs. .32), for structured interviews (.46 vs. .38) as well as for unstructured interviews (.34 vs. .33). The superiority of individual interviews seems to be greatest for structured interviews, whereas panel and individual interviews perform approximately the same for unstructured interviews.



While panel interviews are not really any more accurate, and may in fact be less accurate, there are some possible advantages to conducting multiple, individual interviews. Panel interviews may, in some cases, be easier for an organization to schedule. There is also the perceived value of having everyone in the same room, hearing the same things from the candidate. It may also improve the ability for interviewers to share their perceptions, ratings, etc. immediately after the interview is completed and therefore make faster decisions.

An organization may therefore prefer panel interviews from a stakeholder buy-in standpoint. From a pure accuracy standpoint, though, you would be better off conducting multiple, one-on-one interviews and then integrating the ratings.

Do Bizarre Interview Questions Really Find the Best Candidate?

Imagine that you're interviewing for a job and the interviewer asks you, "If you were shrunk to the size of a pencil and put in a blender, how would you get out?" How would you answer? What is the right answer? Have you ever thought about being the size of a pencil? Why are you in a blender anyway? According to glassdoor.com, that is #1 oddball interview question. #2 is "How many ridges are there on a quarter?" Do these seem odd questions for someone to ask you during an interview? They should. They are odd. That's probably the point.



These types of questions are designed to see how well you can think on your feet. There isn't necessarily a right answer to these types of questions. But there is definitely a wrong answer. It goes something like, "Uh... I don't know." If you're faced with one of these questions the first thing you should do is relax and think it through. I don't know how many ridges are on a quarter, and anyone who does has been focusing on the wrong things in life. But, I would probably try to reason it through by looking at the size of a ridge, the diameter of a quarter and hope that I recall the formula for circumference of a circle (it's $\pi * D$ just for reference). The key here is to: (a) not get flustered; and (b) try and think logically and come up with a reasonable answer.

I guess the real question here is the usefulness of such questions. They probably are pretty good at seeing how someone responds to an uncomfortable situation and how quick they are on their feet. After that, I think they are potentially worthless and maybe worse. There are a lot of very smart people who aren't particularly quick on their feet. That doesn't mean that they aren't excellent when faced with a difficult problem and some time to think about it. There are also some people who aren't particularly good at in-depth analysis but who are good at coming up with pithy responses to weird questions.

There are many jobs that require someone to think quickly and handle themselves with aplomb in stressful situations. Salespeople have to do this every day. But there are many that don't. Many brilliant engineers and scientists aren't particularly glib or even quick on their feet. They don't really need to be. You don't solve complex problems in 30 seconds. In any case, it's only one aspect of performance and shouldn't overly influence your decision on the quality of that candidate. It's one factor. Take it for what it is and then move forward. For interviewees, the lesson is to try and remain calm and understand that the reason they are asking you crazy questions isn't to see if you know the answer, it's to see how well you handle yourself.

What Do I Do Now?

Interviewing is a unique and complex portion of the hiring process. We hope this eBook has helped clarify some of the major problems in interviewing and interview training and the ways to go about analyzing and fixing those problems.

Check out a quick overview video on Select Interviewing training:



Learn more about how to effectively interview [here](#).

Have questions? Contact Select International at (412) 358-8595 or email info@selectintl.com.