

Behavioral Interviews Lead to Better Hiring Decisions

Lately we have been blogging about a variety of hiring topics, including how to create an [effective job description](#), how to [screen for cultural fit](#), and how to [use behavioral assessments](#). Ultimately, the decision to hire even the most qualified job candidate hinges on the interview, which also is usually the weakest and least thought-out part of the hiring process. Too often, companies rely on department managers who don't know how to interview or effectively screen candidates to make the hiring decision. As with all things related to your operation, hiring needs to be a systems-based process that uses standards of measurement and proven processes to promote success.

We advocate using a [behavioral interview](#) to determine whether a candidate is a good fit. With a behavioral interview, the objective is to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities; the competencies that are reflected from past experience. The idea is that past performance is a good predictor of future performance. [Here is a list of sample behavioral interview questions.](#)

Before conducting a behavioral interview, you need to do some preparation. Here are some tips that will promote better results:

1. Determine specifically what the candidate needs to achieve to succeed in the job.
2. Create a list of open-ended questions.
3. Seek contrary evidence by using rapport-building questions.
4. Use silence to control the interview; let the candidate talk and listen carefully.
5. Keep all the questions related specifically to the job.
6. Be sure to use the same set of questions for all candidates to aid comparison.
7. Know your own biases and stereotypes so you can weed them out of your evaluations.

Look for behavior that will be an indicator of how the candidate will perform on the job. We use the acronym P.O.I.S.E. to guide behavior assessment:

- Personal growth – what are the candidate's growth objectives as they related to the job?
- Oriented to the future – what are his or her aspirations?
- Integrity – what work ethic and personal standards does he or she offer?
- Service-focused – does he or she have a focus on helping others; is he or she a team player?
- Entrepreneurial attitude – is the candidate self-motivated and do they bring fresh ideas and attitudes?

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However, when interviewing, be sure to avoid areas that are irrelevant and could lead to legal or discrimination concerns. Avoid topics related to sex and sexual preference, race, religion, nation of origin, height, weight, or veteran status.

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Once you have done your prep work, you are ready to start the interview with a greater confidence that you will come out with a solid assessment of the candidate's ability to do the job. Be sure to download our list of sample interview questions to get a better understanding of how the behavioral interview works.