Interview Boot Camp

Topics

- Purpose of an Interview

- Competency-based Behavioral Interview Overview

- Interview Questions & Answers

- Reading Your Body Language & the Interviewer's Body Language

- Common Interview Errors

- 2nd Interviews and Company Visits

Purpose of an Interview

The interview is one of the most important phases of the job search process. Your resume and cover letter are simply tools to get you to the interviewing stage. The interview is your opportunity to convince an employer that you are the right person for the job.

As the *interviewee*, the main purposes of the interview are to:
- Communicate information about yourself, your experience and your abilities
- Seek further information about the position and the organization
- Evaluate the match between your needs and what the job offers

Purpose of an Interview

The main purposes of the interview for the *interviewer* are to gather relevant information about the candidate's:

- Interview preparation - interest in and knowledge of the industry, the position and the organization
- Communication skills - oral presentation skills and the ability to interact with others
- Qualifications - academic, work, volunteer and other experience
- Leadership potential and teamwork - demonstrated ability to work with others and to get others to work together
- Clear and realistic career goals - future plans and awareness of career paths
- Self awareness - realistic appraisal of self
- Motivation and success potential - enthusiasm for the position; demonstrated patterns of accomplishment
- Work ethic - acceptance of responsibility, ability to keep commitments and attitude of the importance of work, and
- CAN YOU ACHIEVE RESULTS --- MAKE OR SAVE THE ORGANIZATION MONEY!!

Key Terms

- **Competency/Behavioral-Based Interviews -**
  Interviews which are structured and use behavioral based questions to help the interviewer assess candidates based on critical competencies identified for the position.

- **Competencies –**
  A cluster of knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) or personal characteristics an individual must possess and appropriately use for optimum success performing specified work.

Why Do Employers Use Competency-Based Questions When Interviewing?

Reason 1

- Companies realize that skills and knowledge can be taught, but there are varying opinions whether certain attributes can be developed, or whether employees must be selected who already demonstrate the appropriate use of those attributes.

Why Do Employers Use Competency-Based Questions When Interviewing?

Reason 2

- Organizations are moving or changing so fast that there is less time than ever to hire "green" talent and develop those employees to meet company expectations and fit the company culture over several years.

Reason 3

- Hiring the wrong person today is costly in recruiting and hiring costs and in lost productivity.

Skills and Competencies for Competency-Based Interviews

- 'Natural' competencies - personality traits and characteristics

- 'Acquired' competencies - those that the individual has attained or developed such as qualifications and experience

Competencies (partial list)

• **Adaptability**	• **Independence**
• **Compliance**	• **Influencing**
• **Communication**	• **Integrity**
• **Conflict management**	• **Leadership**
• **Creativity and Innovation**	• **Leveraging diversity**
• **Decisiveness**	• **Organizational awareness**
• **Delegation**	• **Resilience and tenacity**
• **External awareness**	• **Risk taking**
• **Flexibility**	• **Empathy**
	• **Team work**

Competency-Based Behavioral Interview Question

"Give me an example of an important goal you had to set and tell me your progress in reaching that goal."

Competency Quiz

- How many (and which) competencies can you identify in the interviewee's answer?

"Give me an example of an important goal you had to set and tell me your progress in reaching that goal."

Adaptability /Flexibility

Communication/Sensitivity to Others

Risk taking

Org. Awareness

Influencing

Creativity/Innovation

As a budget analyst, I was responsible for monitoring our ever changing budget situation. At one point, my supervisor told me that while we had three more months in our fiscal year, our budget was set to run out in two weeks. I then had to identify the amount necessary to survive till the end of the fiscal year, as well as set a higher goal of what the division would like to have. I then met with the department heads to look over individual budgets and where the money could be cut. Through this meeting we identified an issue in our supply ordering. Each individual department ordered supplies separately, which meant we were paying shipping and handling charges for five different departments. Each department also tasked their lead administrative assistant with the supply tasks. Through consolidating the supply issues throughout the division, we were able to save a couple thousand dollars. Because of the crunch time, many in the division were working overtime. I worked with HR to devise a plan to pull us through the end of the fiscal year. Instead of employees receiving pay for overtime, comp time was given, with the understanding that it would not be taken until after the start of the next fiscal year. The department heads then called me back in to discuss the possibility of combining all the comp leave into an extended holiday break. Employees are now able to take off the full week between Christmas and New Years. This change in comp leave versus overtime has been adopted company wide so employees can choose to bank their comp time and after accumulating enough to cover that extra week off, they then are eligible for overtime.

Proven Method for Structuring Interview Answers

• The STAR Method of Interviewing –

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral/competency based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.

<u>S</u>ituation: Set the stage for the interviewer by providing an overview of the situation and any relevant background information. Be specific and succinct.

<u>T</u>ask: What goal were you working toward?

<u>A</u>ction: Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

<u>R</u>esult: Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. Your answer may contain multiple positive results.

STAR Method Quiz

Situation: Set the stage for the interviewer by providing an overview of the situation and any relevant background information. Be specific and succinct.

Task: What goal were you working toward?

Action: Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

Result: Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. Your answer may contain multiple positive results.

"Give me an example of an important goal you had to set and tell me your progress in reaching that goal."

S

T

A

R

Adaptability/Flexibility

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Your Body Language – Do's

1

Sit up straight, and lean slightly forward in your chair. In addition to projecting interest and engagement in the interaction, aligning your body's position to that of the interviewer's shows admiration and agreement.

2

Show your enthusiasm by keeping an interested expression. Nod and make positive gestures in moderation to avoid looking like a bobblehead.

3

If you have more than one person interviewing you at once, make sure you briefly address both people with your gaze (without looking like a tennis spectator) and return your attention to the person who has asked you a question.

Your Body Language – Do's

4

99% Eye Contact – Remember this isn't a staring contest!

5

When you're speaking, let your hands do some of the talking. Great speakers use hand gestures more than on average.

Your Body Language – Don'ts

1

Rub the back of your head or neck. Touch your face, tug on jewelry. Even if you really do just have a cramp in your neck or an itch, these gestures make you look disinterested and nervous.

2

Swivel in your chair or click/tap your pen. Avoid clicky-ticky-taps!

3

Sit with your armed folded across your chest. You'll appear unfriendly and disengaged.

Your Body Language – Don'ts

4

Slouch back in your seat. This will make you appear disinterested and unprepared.

5

Look at your watch, the clock on the wall, or the materials in front of the interviewer.

Common Interview Errors

Error 1

Lack of research & understanding of company business functions, purpose and future

Error 2

Overselling teamwork – Too much focus on "We", "Our"

Not enough "I"

Error 3

Not taking the 1st impression serious enough

- Remember, no personal information!

Error 4

Too few, well thought-out questions from you

The 2ⁿᵈ Interview

- A Test of Consistency
  - **Behavior, Performance, Interest, Professionalism**

- A Test of Personality
  - Do you fit in with the team

- A Test of Endurance

- The 2ⁿᵈ Interview Allows You to Perform Better than You Did in Your 1ˢᵗ Interview – *Continue to Do Your Homework*

Remember…

The interview is your opportunity to convince an employer that you are the right person for the job.

Best of luck in your interview!