Behavioral Interviewing
Concept & Sample Questions
Typical Selection Problems

- Lack of clarity on what we’re looking for
- “Just like me” and/or “Love at first sight”
- Lack of higher-level interviewing skills
  - Conversational interviewing - no plan, little rigor
  - Too much talking on the interviewer’s part
  - Interviews don’t identify strengths and weaknesses
  - Interviews focus on “what a person might do” vs. what they have the “demonstrated ability to do”
Typical Interview Flow Chart

Step 1: Pre-interview Preparation
Step 2: Introduction
Step 3: Technical Skills Questions
Step 4: General Skills Questions
Step 5: Closing the Interview
Technical Skills vs. General Skills

- **Technical Skills**
  - Entry ticket to the job
  - Enable solid performance
  - Consistently demonstrated

- **General Skills**
  - Key element in future potential
  - Lead to superior performance
  - Consistently demonstrated

- **When used for selection:**
  - Ensure candidates have the necessary functional abilities
  - Ensure candidate can handle the technical part of the job
  - Help determine if candidate can get up to speed fairly quickly with day-to-day work

- **When used for selection:**
  - Identify better/best talent
  - Hires are more likely to stick around
  - Help determine if candidate can quickly contribute beyond day-to-day work
Key To Gathering Technical Skills Data

- Some people love getting “techie” – be clear about depth of technical detail you want before you start
- Use open-ended questions and follow-ups
- Be succinct: should be confirming technical skill levels
  - As such, you need to ensure you confirm/spot issues fairly briskly; otherwise, you will run out of time
What is a Behavioral Interview?

- Focus on past behavior
  - Best predictor of future behavior
  - What people *really* do

- Lets people “tell their own stories” in great detail

- Detailed information = hard to fake

- Creates personal case studies
  - How they actually handled situations

- Provides objective data
  - Can map the case studies to the behavioral model
How Do I Do One?

Be an investigative reporter

- Build rapport
- Listen to the story
- Dig for the details
- Record the facts
Investigation Tools

5 best questions:

- What did you do?
- What did you/he/she say?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?
- What happened next?
Getting Meaningful "Evidence"

Usable facts:
What the person *actually*
- Did,
- Said,
- Thought, or
- Felt

Not usable:
- Opinions
- Generalizations
- Future intentions
- What a *group* of people did
- Current reflections on the past
- "Leading the witness"
DOs and DON'Ts

Focus on:
• First person
• Past tense
• Action details
• Dialogue
• Thoughts behind actions **at the time**

Watch out for:
• “...we…”
• “My philosophy…”
• “Generally, I…”
• “I think that…”
Tips Recap

Try to:

• Ask clarifying questions
• Encourage the person when providing good level of detail
• Elicit detailed “pictures” of how the person acted
• Let things flow as long as the person is on track
• Take brief notes to keep track of key behaviors
Tips Recap

Try not to:

• Accept generalizations
• Let too much time pass before getting specific information
• Ask leading questions
• Summarize or paraphrase
• Assume you know what’s happening
• Focus too much on note taking