

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING



INSTRUCTOR GUIDE
1/2-DAY COURSE

HRDQ

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:






- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles



Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

Course timing

Chapter One: Finding Qualified Candidates

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Identify competencies associated with the position	20
	Exercise: Identify job competencies	20
	Where to find people	15
	Reviewing résumés	15
	Conducting the interview: Build rapport	15

Chapter Two: Behavioral Interviewing

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	What is behavioral interviewing?	15
	The STAR process	30

Course timing

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Hiring law	15
	Guidelines for asking interview questions	20
	Sell your organization	15
	Observer's checklist (practice activity)	40
	After the interview: Assess responses	15
	Common mistakes to avoid	5
	Reference checking	10
	Getting the new employee off on the right foot	20

Contents

Licensing agreement.....	iii
Instructional design and learning philosophy	v
Course timing.....	vi
Course objectives	x
Chapter One: Finding Qualified Candidates	
Identify competencies associated with the position	2
Where to find people	4
Reviewing résumés	5
Conducting the interview: Build rapport.....	6
Chapter Two: Behavioral Interviewing	
Behavioral interviewing	8
Explore.....	9
STAR process	10
Hiring law	11
Guidelines for asking interview questions.....	12
Sell your organization.....	14
Observer’s checklist	15
After the interview: Assess responses.....	16
Common mistakes to avoid	17
Reference checking.....	18
Getting the new employee off on the right foot.....	19

Appendix

Action plan22

Course review23

Course evaluation24

Trainer Supplement (legal and illegal interview questions).....26

Solutions for every training challenge.....28

Behavioral Interviewing

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Course objectives

- Identify competencies to screen for
- Write behavioral-based questions
- Conduct an interview effectively
- Avoid legal pitfalls
- Evaluate candidates' responses objectively
- Start new employees off on the right foot

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Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- ◇ Identify competencies to screen for
- ◇ Write behavioral-based questions
- ◇ Conduct an interview effectively
- ◇ Avoid legal pitfalls
- ◇ Evaluate candidates' responses objectively
- ◇ Start new employees off on the right foot

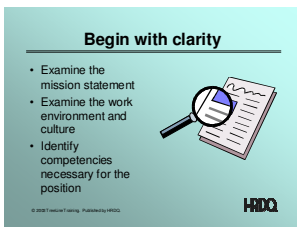
Chapter One



Finding Qualified Candidates

It is essential to have complete clarity about the exact duties and responsibilities you need fulfilled. Otherwise, a new hire will flounder.

If a job description already exists, review it prior to beginning a search. Make sure it is accurate and up-to-date. Pick several people who will interact with the person in this job and ask for their opinion about the necessary duties, as well as traits the person should have. Of course, if there isn't a current job description, now is the time to create one.



Job analysis is best done by a team of individuals. Include minimum levels of related experience and education requirements, if any. Tie these requirements directly to the duties of the position.

Knowledge, skills, and abilities: These are the competencies that are likely to stay the same even when the specifics of the job might change rapidly.

If no job description exists, or if you're writing one for a new position, the information on this page will help you get started.

Discuss: Ask participants how many can recite their organization's mission statement.

Ask if someone has a position for which they need to write a job description and use that example to work through some of these issues.

Identify competencies associated with the position

The Value of mission for the organization

- ◇ The mission drives the services
- ◇ In turn, the services drive the tasks (to produce the service)
- ◇ In turn, the tasks drive the competencies required to fulfill the tasks

Examine the work environment and culture of the organization.

- ◇ Write a description of the work environment and organization culture.
- ◇ Get input from the various departments to gain several perspectives.

Identify the competencies necessary for the job.

- ◇ Try to limit the core competencies to five or fewer.
 - The actual job duties and supporting skills can be longer and more specific.
 - Competency example: Communication skills
 - Answering incoming calls
 - Addressing client complaints
 - Accurately identifying client needs
 - Competency example: Innovation
 - Displays original thinking and creativity
 - Meets challenges with resourcefulness
 - Generates suggestions for improving work
 - Develops innovative approaches and ideas

Exercise: Identify job competencies

Instructions: Identify a job/position that you are responsible for filling. List the essential job functions, technical skills required, and competencies associated with these technical skills.

Job title: Job purpose:		
Essential job functions	Technical skills required	Competencies required

Have participants reflect on their own job description or one that is part of their team or one of a person who reports to them.

Exercise: Using this job description, have participants identify specific competencies which are necessary to be successful in that job. This is a more detailed look at the general information identified in the job description.

Participants can work in pairs or small groups. Share with the group at large when finished.

Segue: You've done some necessary prep work so you know what you're looking for—now you need to find them!

Traditional methods will get you traditional results. You will get a large pool of candidates with varying levels of interest in the jobs you have and with varying levels of skill.

Creative sourcing is more likely to get the attention of job seekers and capture their interest. Many organizations are now rewarding employees for referring a candidate that is hired. This can be a win-win, as the organization gets a referral and the employee gets rewarded.



Relationship recruiting: Nurturing relationships with potential candidates that aren't quite ready to join your organization. Get to know them, their interests, etc.

High-leverage sourcing: Contact individuals who will know of several high-caliber candidates – people who have interacted professionally with people you might want to hire.

Business-to-business exchanges: Maybe your slow time of year is a busy time of year for another business in town—could you cross-train and share employees?

Search organizations: In general, use them only for high-level positions, or when a search needs to be confidential or unusually fast.

Where to find people

Sourcing talented candidates can be difficult. Using more imaginative hiring practices to identify candidates will contribute to moving your organization forward.

Traditional recruiting methods	Non-traditional recruiting methods
Newspaper advertisements	Relationship recruiting
Radio advertisements	High leverage sourcing
Trade or professional journal advertisements	Direct mail
Internal hiring, transfers or promotions	Vendor referrals
Job board postings	User group referrals
Job lines	Business association referrals
Internet postings	High school alumni offices or internship programs
Job services	Business-to-business exchanges
College campuses	People leaving the military
Search organizations	Talk to your neighbors about who they know

Reviewing résumés

How to dissect a résumé

- ◇ Look for vague terms or accomplishments and ask them to explain.
“I developed and implemented a three-part training program.”
“I was responsible for interviewing and hiring new employees.”
- ◇ Ask them to clarify “insider” terminology.
“I developed key indicators for our main software program.”
“I headed the Strategic Coordination Task Force.”
- ◇ Ask them to specify unclear dates and time frames.
“I increased sales by 150%.”
“I decreased costs by 10% in 18 months.”




**Don't be afraid to write on
the résumé.**

As you collect résumés, you need a system for analyzing the information they contain. This page will give you pointers.

The main point is: Don't be afraid to question anything and everything. Write notes all over the resume to remind yourself of questions. Your goal is to thoroughly understand the information it contains, and the information it doesn't!

Reviewing résumés



- Don't be afraid to question anything
- Mark up the resume with notes and questions
- Your goal: To understand the information it contains and the information it doesn't

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Trainer demo: Begin this section by asking for a volunteer to role play with you (you'll be doing all the work). The volunteer will be the candidate about to be interviewed, and you will be the interviewer. Do everything you can to NOT build rapport with the candidate. Some suggestions:

Say: "Sorry I was so late, you know how it is."

Don't shake the person's hand.

Don't use the person's name, or use the wrong name.

Don't smile or make eye contact.

Use closed body language (arms crossed, body positioned away from the other person, lean away, purse your lips, etc.).

Sigh or huff or roll your eyes.

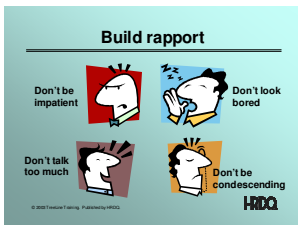
Don't make any small talk, just start asking questions.

Take a phone call, or have another person interrupt you.

Don't offer anything to drink.

Act distracted – can't find the person's resume, etc.

Debrief by asking participants to identify the things you did that discouraged building rapport. Then discuss the points listed in the workbook.



Conducting the interview: Build rapport

Create a welcoming environment

Physical space

- ◇ Create privacy
- ◇ Provide equal seating
- ◇ Eliminate interruptions and distractions

Emotional setting

- ◇ Avoid stiff and formal presence
 - Make eye contact
 - Project open body language
 - Begin with small talk
- ◇ Make necessary introductions
- ◇ Make the candidate feel important
 - Example: "I'm pleased you were able to meet with me."
 - Example: "This position is important to us, and I'm pleased that you've decided to pursue it."
- ◇ Make the candidate feel supported
 - Use the candidate's name
 - Offer a beverage
 - Example: "I've reviewed your résumé extensively, and you have a wide variety of experience."

Chapter Two



Behavioral Interviewing

The basis of effective interviewing is asking behavioral questions. Let's face it. If you ask candidates hypothetical questions you will get hypothetical answers. Most job seekers are savvy enough to know what you would want to hear and will shape their answer accordingly. Personality preferences and work style can still come through in this style of questioning, but not as readily as they will with behavioral questioning.



In order to determine the best behavioral questions to ask, you must first determine the behaviors or competencies you want the ideal candidate to possess.

Behavioral interviewing

What is behavioral interviewing?

- ◇ This interviewing style focuses on actual experiences and situations candidates have experienced and how they responded
- ◇ Behavioral interviewing seeks situational answers given in three parts:
 1. The problem they experienced
 2. The action they took
 3. The result attained

The characteristics of behavioral interviewing

- ◇ Behavioral-based information is **concrete**. Rather than containing labels such as reliable, assertive or creative, behavioral based information contains specific information about a real work situation.
- ◇ Behavioral-based information paints a **clear picture**. Rather than providing a vague overview like, “participated in the development of a new process,” behavioral-based information explains the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a situation.
- ◇ Behavioral based information can be **documented**. Because specific details such as names, dates, times, locations, and numbers are provided, behavioral-based information can be verified.

Explore

- ◇ Ask about the candidate's current position
- ◇ Ask behavioral based questions
- ◇ Probe for details
- ◇ Take notes
- ◇ Listen effectively

The STAR process

Situation _____

Task _____

Action _____

Result _____



Probe for details

- ◇ First question: "How"
"How did you establish a new process for tracking sales data?"
- ◇ Second question: "Why"
"Why did you choose that particular method?"
- ◇ Third question: "What"
"What would you hope to gain by this?"

You'll be using the **STAR** process to conduct the behavioral based interview. This process requires that a candidate identify a specific **Situation or Task** related to a work habit that you've identified. The candidate is then asked to identify the specific **Action** taken in this particular situation, and finally, to outline the **Result** of that particular action.



This is where you'll use your prescribed set of questions.

It's usually common to have to probe for details in order to get sufficient information. You may need to ask a second or even third question as a follow-up. Refer to the examples in the workbook. You can also use a general question such as, "Is there anything else you'd like to add?" or "Tell me more about ..."



STAR process

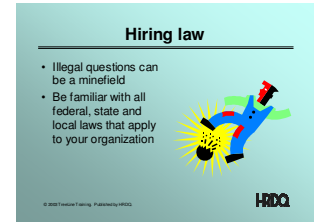
Have participants try writing behavioral based questions using a competency from the previous exercise. Use the examples on the left to help guide them.

<p>Competency Question: Tell me about a time when you initiated a change within an organization.</p> <p>Situation/Task: What led up to this situation? When did it occur? Where did it occur? What individuals were involved?</p> <p>Action: What were your responsibilities in this situation? What role did you fulfill in this instance? Walk me through the event step-by-step Explain to me the process you used in this situation</p> <p>Result: What was the outcome? How did it all turn out? Explain the final outcome to me. How did everyone feel in the end? What lessons did you take away from this experience?</p>	<p>Competency Question:</p> <p>Situation/Task:</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>Result:</p>
--	--

Hiring law

- ◇ Title VII of the Civil Rights Act addresses discrimination in the workplace, including the hiring process. This law states that race, color, religion, gender, and national origin cannot be used to eliminate a person from a job.
- ◇ The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) is the agency that investigates and enforces workplace discrimination. Thorough documentation of the hiring process and how decisions were reached can safeguard against violating discrimination laws.
- ◇ Be certain to know how state and local laws apply to hiring as well. They typically mimic federal laws and may also have additional categories of nondiscrimination. For instance, some states prohibit discriminating based on sexual orientation, mental disability, marital status, HIV-positive condition, and arrest record
- ◇ The employment laws on the books do not prohibit specific questions from being asked, however the EEOC cautions that “inquiries that either directly or indirectly disclose information related to discriminatory topics may constitute evidence of discrimination prohibited by Title VII.”

These points cover the most common laws applying to interviewing and hiring employees.



Guidelines for asking interview questions

In your quest to find the perfect candidate, you may inadvertently ask an illegal question, based on a genuine desire to gather more information about the person. Don't put yourself (or the candidate) in that awkward position.

To avoid asking discriminatory questions at any phase in the hiring process, use the table below that outlines what questions are acceptable and which are not, in categories that have the potential to be problem areas.


The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that employers cannot discriminate against an individual "with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position."

Reasonable accommodations typically include:

- Adapting existing facilities to be readily accessible
- Restructuring the job
- Creating part-time or modified schedules
- Modifying equipment
- Providing an interpreter

Ensure nonbias

- Don't ask illegal questions
- Make certain that your body language and tone of voice maintain neutrality for all candidates interviewed



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Category	Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name • Different name used and worked for this organization • Relative information attached to a different name in the applicant's work history; if yes, ask for an explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different name of applicant whose name is changed (court-ordered or otherwise) • Maiden name • Relative information attached to a different name in applicant's work history
Birthplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been a resident of this state? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthplace • Parents' birthplace • Requiring a birth certificate or naturalization records
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you 18 years old or older? (only to determine if applicant is legal age for position) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old are you? • What is your date of birth?
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any inquiries about religious affiliations, holidays observed, etc.
Race or color	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexion or skin color
Photograph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any requirement for a photograph prior to hiring
Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any inquiry about height
Weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any inquiry about weight
Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your spouse employed by this employer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement of documentation of marital status • Are you married or single? • Do you have children? • Is your spouse employed? • What is your spouse's name?

Category	Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you a citizen of the United States? • If not a citizen of the United States, do you have the legal right to remain permanently in the United States? • If not a citizen of the United States, do you intend to become one? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless part of the I-9 process do not ask: • What country are you a citizen of? • Are you naturalized or a native-born citizen? • When did you acquire citizenship? • For naturalization papers • Are your parents citizens of the United States?
National Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What language(s) do you speak and write fluently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your lineage or descent? • What is your parents/spouses nationality? • How did you learn to read/write/speak a foreign language?
Arrests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been convicted of a crime? • Are there any felony charges against you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been arrested?
Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of relatives currently employed by this organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address of any relative
Notice in case of Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and address of person to be contacted in case of an emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and address of nearest relative to be notified in case of an emergency
Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations belonged to, excluding any that may indicate race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List all clubs, societies and lodges you belong to

Hiring decisions need to be based on an individual's ability to do the job, period!

Although the nature of job interviews is subjective, your goal is to make the process of hiring as objective as possible. For that reason, focus on information that is based on fact in the selection process. Job interviews should be as uniform as possible, interviewers should take detailed notes, and the interview needs to focus on job requirements, candidate qualifications, and work experience.

Your safest approach



- Be certain that every question you ask is related to the candidate's ability to do the job

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Activity: As a fun review, divide participants into two teams and ask them to close their workbooks. You will read a series of potential interview questions. Each team will take turns answering "legal" or "illegal." Award one point for every correct answer. Give a prize to the winning team (candy, etc.). Ideas for questions include...

As you close the interview, make sure both the interviewer and the candidate have had all their questions answered.


Sell your organization: Many highly qualified candidates will be recruited by several organizations. You want your organization to shine. Take the time to prepare some brief comments about why you enjoy working for your organization, and why you think the candidate will enjoy it, too. Think about what the candidate mentioned that was important to him or her, and tie those items to your organization, if at all possible.

Close the interview

- Explain the remaining steps in process
- Provide phone number for questions or concerns
- Thank the candidate



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Sell your organization

- ◇ Answer questions
- ◇ Tell candidate about your organization

Exercise: List the selling points of your organization

Close the interview

- ◇ Explain the remaining steps in process
- ◇ Provide phone number for questions or concerns
- ◇ Thank the candidate

Observer's checklist

Instructions: Use this sheet to record observations during the practice activity.

Interviewer	Comments
Built rapport	
<input type="checkbox"/> Greeted applicant with a smile	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shook hands	
<input type="checkbox"/> Invited applicant into office/conference room	
<input type="checkbox"/> Held phone calls and other interruptions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Closed office/conference room door	
<input type="checkbox"/> Offered beverage	
<input type="checkbox"/> Made small talk to break the ice	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicated that he/she had reviewed the resume	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked for permission to take notes	
Followed the STAR process	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked behavioral based question	
<input type="checkbox"/> Probed for details by asking second and third questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Led candidate through Situation/Task, Action, Result	

Exercise: Interview practice. Work in groups of three: one person will be the interviewer, another will be the candidate and the third will serve as observer. Use the behavioral based questions previously developed, plus the other question types, and follow the guidelines to practice conducting an interview. The observer can use the checklist in the interviewer's workbook to record his/her observations. Allow 5–10 minutes, then debrief within the small groups by having the observer share his/her feedback. Switch roles and repeat two more times so every participant has a chance to practice interviewing.

Hiring is more of an art than a science—no formula guarantees success. But, using a structured approach will lead to better results and decrease the chance of making common blunders in the hiring process.


One of the keys to making a good decision is to objectively rate the candidates. The best way to do that is to use a “score sheet” to record thoughts and observations immediately after each interview. If more than one person is in the interview session, each person should fill out a “score sheet.”

The example provided on this page lists common competencies. Each participant will want to create their own customized version based on the competencies identified for the position being filled.

The simplest way to evaluate candidates is to see which person has the highest score.

Assessing responses

- Complete assessment within 20-30 minutes
- Evaluate one competency at a time
- Assign an appropriate rating
- List examples and stories the candidate provided as a reminder



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After the interview: Assess responses

- ◇ Complete assessment within 20–30 minutes
- ◇ Evaluate one competency at a time
- ◇ Assign an appropriate rating
- ◇ List examples and stories the candidate provided as a reminder

Candidate name:		
Position:		
Competency	Rating	Comments
Adaptability	1 2 3 4 5	
Experience	1 2 3 4 5	
Interpersonal skills	1 2 3 4 5	
Attitude	1 2 3 4 5	
Initiative	1 2 3 4 5	
Maturity	1 2 3 4 5	
Stability	1 2 3 4 5	
Emotional control	1 2 3 4 5	
Integrity	1 2 3 4 5	
Values	1 2 3 4 5	
Other:	1 2 3 4 5	
Other:	1 2 3 4 5	
Interviewed by:		Date: