



SORDILL CONSULTING
Organizational Training & Development
www.sordill.com

Behavioral Interviewing Techniques

WHAT IS BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING?

Behavioral Interviewing is a model which uses open ended questions that are based on past job related experience to provide the best predictor of future performance.

It's ethical, legal and consistent; provides the applicant an opportunity to tell you his or her "story" in their own words; stays focused on bonafide job related experiences; and gives you tools for matching organizational needs to applicant background and potential.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

- ✓ **Profiling the Job Based on Organizational Needs** – Review the current job description and assess current and future needs for the organization. Revise the job description to meet real organizational needs going forward.
- ✓ **Identifying Performance and Technical Skills Required** – Read the job description and list Performance Skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, coping with stress, organization and time management, ability to work independently, etc. Create a second list for Technical Skills such as specific computer applications or skills, specialized knowledge or experience, educational requirements, math skills, scientific skills, research skills, etc.
- ✓ **Developing Open Ended Behavioral Questions** – Use the lists of Performance and Technical Skills to develop open ended questions based on past experience. Some examples include:
 1. Describe a time in any job in which you were faced with problems or stresses which tested your coping skills. What did you do?
 2. Give me a specific example of a time when you did not finish a task because you did not have enough information to come to a good decision.
 3. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a quick decision. What did you do and what were the results?

4. Tell me about a time when you had to use your oral communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you.
 5. Give me an example of a time when you feel you were able to create a motivational environment for your co-workers or employees at work.
 6. Give me an example of a time in which you had to use your fact-finding skills to gain information for solving a problem - then tell me how you analyzed the information to come to a decision.
- ✓ **Outlining the Interview Format** – Plan your format. It might be something like:
- *Introduce yourself*, including name, title, and your role in the interview process
 - *Set the agenda* and decide how you will allocate the time you have available. Plan to spend about 3 to 5 minutes on the Welcome and Introductions, a minimum of 20 minutes on the Interview itself (40 to 60 minutes is preferable), and leave another 10 to 15 minutes for them to ask questions and close the interview.
- ✓ **Conduct the Interview**
- *Welcome and Introductions*
 - Confirm the position being interviewed for. Only provide high level information about the job at this point. They have probably learned quite a bit about the position through the internet, advertisements or recruiters and to spend much of your valuable interviewing time on this at this point in the process is counter productive. Providing additional information gives savvy interviewers the opportunity to tell you what they think you want to hear. This takes time away from your objective which is to gather information about the applicant so you can decide if they are a good match to your needs.
 - Tell them you will ask your questions first
 - They can ask their questions at the end of the interview. Some of their questions may be deferred to others who will be interviewing the candidate later
 - Outline what's next on the agenda after your interview is over. Tell them who else they will be meeting or when they can expect to hear from you again, etc.
 - *Asking Questions*
 - Use the questions you've prepared
 - Use add on questions as appropriate or needed
 - Remember the STAR – Specific situation, Tasks, Actions, Results
 - Allow silence for them to think about their answers without interrupting or asking the next question to “let them off the hook”
 - Ask for contrary evidence to get both sides of the picture and a balanced view of their abilities. Examples of contrary evidence are:
 - à Question: Tell me about an important goal you achieved. What was the goal? What did you do to achieve the goal? What obstacles did you encounter and how did you overcome them? What were the results?
 - à Contrary Evidence: Tell me about an important goal which you were unable to complete. What was the situation? What did you learn? How have you applied what you learned from that experience?

- *Listening and Interpreting Answers*
 - Always listen to understand their perspective
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Paraphrase to verify your understanding
 - Look for potential as well as existing skills
- *Matching Information Gathered to Organizational Requirements*
 - Take notes during the interview so you can refer back to the skills and requirements you identified as you were preparing for the interview
- *Clarifying and Addressing Concerns* – Be sure to ask additional questions to clarify and better understand the data you are gathering. If there are inconsistencies or other causes for concern, ask the candidate to clarify them for you. Pay attention to your intuition as a cue to ask more questions or clarify what you are hearing.
- *Answering Questions from the Applicant* – When applicants ask questions about negative aspects of the organization, neutralize your comments. Try to focus on your own experiences, what you like about the organization or your job. Be honest without being judgmental or negative. Allow applicants to draw their own conclusions about whether a job requirement is one they would like or not. Just because you or others might not like that aspect of the job doesn't mean this applicant would feel the same way. Show genuine enthusiasm and speak from personal experience. Nothing sells a company more than authentic, honest, positive responses.
- *Next Steps in the Process* – Give the applicant your card or contact information if you'd like them to follow up with you or tell them when you'll be back to them. Provide them with an idea of what will happen next in the process. Be sure to keep any commitments you make to follow up.
- *Closing the Interview* – Thank the applicant for spending the time with

you. Even if you are not interested in them as a potential employee, treat them with respect and dignity.

Wish them well. You might ask them a couple of questions about where else they are interviewing, how you stack up against the competition, what their timetable is, etc. Reiterate when they can expect a decision or next step in the process.

- ✓ **Decision Making and Recommendations** – Following the interview, you should decide whether this person matches your needs and whether you want to either see them again or make a recommendation to hire. Make a note to yourself as a reminder of specifically why you would or why you would not offer them a position. Be sure your notes only reflect bonafide job requirements.
- ✓ **Follow Company Policies and Procedures** – Always follow organizational guidelines, policies and procedures.
- ✓ **Conduct Interviews which are Legal, Ethical and Consistent** – Using behavioral interviewing helps maintain legal, ethical and consistent interviewing practices. Be sure to only ask questions that are relevant to bonafide job requirements and utilize your Human Resources Department or other professionals as resources to ensure your interviews are legal, ethical and consistent..

Programs and Services Offered by SORDILL CONSULTING include:

- Ø Assertive Communication Skills
- Ø Change Management
- Ø Coaching, Feedback, and Managerial Communication
- Ø Communication Strategies
- Ø Conflict Management
- Ø Customer Service & Telephone Skills
- Ø Executive Coaching
- Ø Facilitation
- Ø Getting Organized
- Ø Goal Setting and Achievement
- Ø Handling Problem Employees and Terminations
- Ø Individual Professional Development
- Ø Interviewing Techniques
- Ø Leadership Skills
- Ø Listening Skills
- Ø Managerial and Supervisory Skills
- Ø Managing Up
- Ø Managing Interpersonal Relations
- Ø Meeting Management
- Ø Mentoring
- Ø Myers Briggs Type Indicator
- Ø Motivation
- Ø Negotiating for Success
- Ø One on One Coaching
- Ø Organizational Skills
- Ø Outdoor & Executive Challenge
- Ø Performance Management
- Ø Performance Reviews
- Ø Presentation Skills
- Ø Problem Solving Techniques
- Ø Project Management
- Ø Sales and Sales Management
- Ø Sexual Harassment Awareness
- Ø Strategic Planning
- Ø Stress Management
- Ø Team Development
- Ø Time Management
- Ø Train the Trainer

For more information about programs and services, or to request future newsletters via email, please call Pat Sordill at 978-266-9524 or send an email to: pat@sordill.com. Visit our web site at: www.sordill.com