

## The Interview Process

The typical interview follows a defined process:

- Generally there are two or more supervisors, a team leader, a Human Resource representative, and possibly a Department Manager and a Security person who talk with the applicant. The most common approach is when the technical interviewers speak with the applicant separately from HR and security representatives.
- Panel interviews: In some organizations, the interviewers form a panel and speak with the applicant in one session. This method requires less time for the interviewee. It allows the panel to hear the entire interview and ask detailed and pertinent questions; however, it takes more time for the company to organize the panel. Generally one hour is needed.
- Individual interviews: In other organizations, the interviewers each speak with the applicant one on one. The first two technical supervisors / team leaders each speak with the applicant for 45 minutes giving them extra time to explain the overall organization and to ask the applicant questions, the remaining technical interviewers speak with the applicant for 30 minutes since the company structure does not need to be discussed again. This method requires more time for the applicant, but allows each technical interviewer to ask specific questions pertaining to his/her project. Generally two to three hours are needed.
- The Department Manager may speak for about 15 minutes for exceptional candidates.
- The Human Resources representative takes about 15 minutes to explain benefits and the company employment policy.
- The security officer takes about 15 minutes to ensure the applicant has or can obtain appropriate clearances required.
- The interview conversation should give a company overview, convey organizational requirements, and determine if applicant is qualified.
- The interview is usually held at the facility where the work will be performed; however, some organizations have a central meeting location for interviews that is not in the same building where the work will be done.
- The interview should take place at a time that will accommodate the applicant; it is a lovely gesture if it can be scheduled early in the morning to include breakfast or at midday to include lunch.



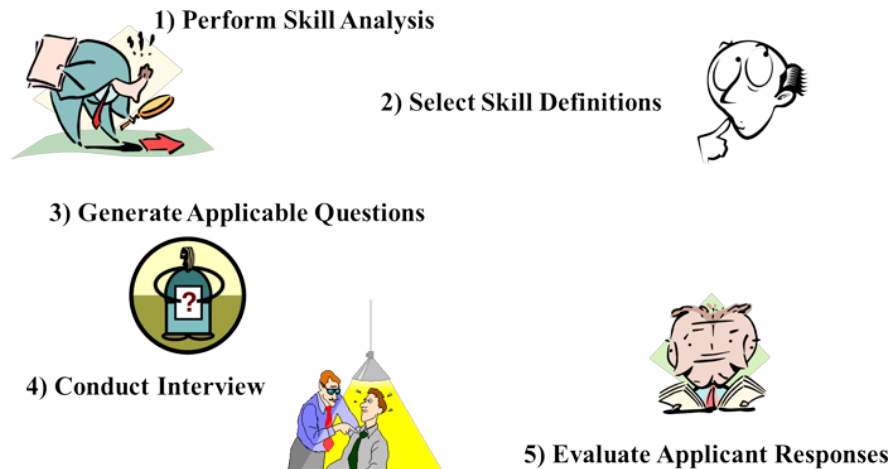
## Skilled Based (or Behavior Based) Interviewing

Effective interviewing starts with preparation! You must:

- Identify the critical requirements of the job
- Review the personnel requisition!
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- "What skills does this person need to have?"
- "What competencies does this person need to possess?"
- "What are the specific tasks and duties associated with the position?"

Skill based interviewing or behavior based interviewing is a commonly used technique that focuses interview questions on past behavior which is used as an indicator of how the applicant would react in the future. There are five parts to skill based interviewing:



In **perform skill analysis**, the hiring team must determine what skills are required for the job and ensure these skills are documented appropriately as required or desired in the Personnel Requisition. This is analogous to a job/task analysis used in the education and training development world; a job can be described in terms of the tasks to be performed and each task requires a specific skill or set of skills. This ensures that the interview will be objective and will be based on the position requirements. For example, if you are hiring a software programmer, the tasks to write code requires the skill of being proficient in the required programming languages, the task to conduct unit testing requires experience in black and white box testing, and the task to produce documentation requires writing skills and proficiency with the required tools.

To **select skill definitions**, the hiring team must make decisions regarding the skills required for this job. A skill is a set of related tasks that you do in a job and a skill definition describes the set of tasks that may be required on the job. Skills can be grouped into two categories:

- Performance Skills such as communicating, problem solving, organizing, planning, leading, problem solving, decision making, team playing, and
- Technical Skills including expertise with specific programming languages, operating systems, computer aided software environment (CASE) tools, methodologies, and software acquisition standards.

Then the hiring team must **generate applicable questions** that will produce responses that can be used to evaluate the defined skills. Ideally, the questions should require the candidate to cite specific examples demonstrating application of the skill. Example skill based questions begin with:

- "Tell me about a time when..."
- "Give me an example of..."
- "How would you...."

For example, we have probably all been asked: "What are your leadership strengths?" and you may have responded with "I am able to motivate teams."

## Interview Do's and Don'ts

Be aware of and be prepared to address issues critical to most applicants including job security, training, technology opportunities, level of responsibilities, benefits, salary, and job variety, that is, are employees allowed and encouraged to move between projects?

Be sure to avoid typical interviewing problems including:

- Missing important information
- Overlapping coverage in interviews
- Misinterpreting applicant data
- Permitting biases or stereotypes to affect judgment
- Allowing one dimension to overly influence judgment
- Arriving at decisions too quickly or too slowly
- Allowing the interview process to turn off applicant

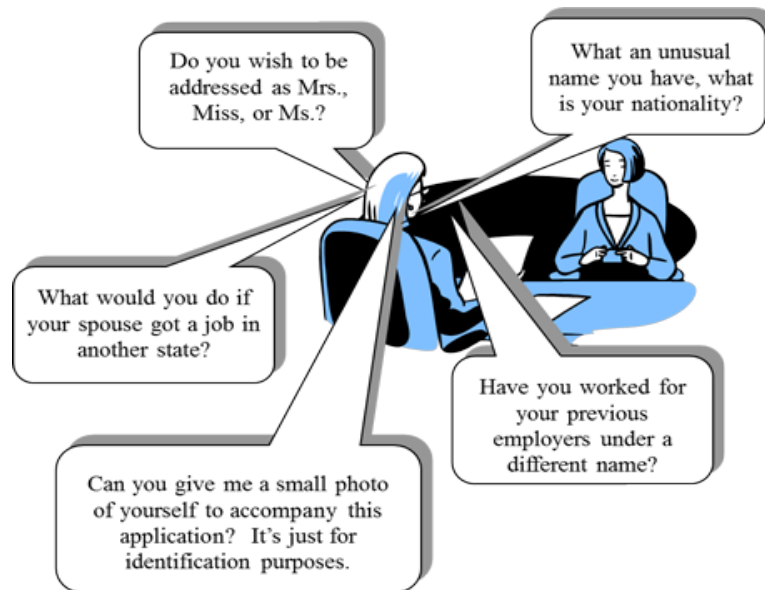
Generate open ended skill based interview questions that:

- Obtain the behavior you are requiring for the job
- Are job related and legal
- Are straightforward
- Emphasize recent activities rather than distant past
- Concentrate on the relevant background required for the job

Do not ask:

- Leading questions
- Multiple choice questions
- Illegal questions including marital status, age, military record, race, national origin, religion, transportation or commuting issues, gender, personal needs, childcare arrangements, harassment, and arrest record, unless the job requires it.

For example, if the job requires that every employee in that position be a U.S. citizen, you may ask if they are a U.S. citizen. If the person lives 50 miles away, you may not ask if they can handle the commute; however you may state that the job's core hours are 8:00–5:00, and can you meet this requirement?



Just prior to the interview, the hiring team ensures they are prepared. They must review the resume and agree on the primary questions.

When **conducting the interview**, be sure to:

- Note if the applicant arrived on time for the interview or if not, did he/she call you or HR in advance
- Put the candidate at ease by asking rapport-building questions such as introducing the interview team or commenting on the weather
- Ask the same questions to all interview applicants for this job
- Ask the skill based questions
- Take notes to document your decision and compare them with other applicants
- Tolerate periods of silence when asking questions that require specific examples because the applicant needs time to recall examples from the past and use this time to add to your notes
- Allow the applicant to talk 80% of the time
- Seek contrary information to gain a balance of applicant's strengths and development needs
- Probe to get answers and specific examples to the skill questions
- Ask follow-up questions and understand the "why" behind the behavior
- Be aware of the word "we" which attempts to gloss over negative experiences, the word "manage" which is often too general, and body language that is inconsistent with comments
- Listen actively
- Be enthusiastic and sincere
- Control the interview and regulate the flow of the interview, that is, cue the candidate as to when to keep talking, when to stop, and when to change topics
- Complete the evaluation immediately following the interview

## Evaluate Applicant Responses

Finally the hiring team gets to **evaluate applicant responses**. Each interviewer should base his/her assessment on the demonstrated skills that align to the personnel requisition, not intuition. Skill based

interviewing, not personality factors, provide an objective assessment and will provide the best match for the job. The hiring manager gathers and tallies the easy to collect objective data using an interview rating form.

#### Interview Rating Form

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Skills Evaluated	Very strong evidence skill not present	Strong evidence skill not present	Some evidence skill not present	Strong evidence skill is present	Very strong evidence skill is present
Job Knowledge					
Experience					
Attitude					
Team Player					

## The Hiring Process

Once the hiring manager has evaluated the applicants and the selected candidate, he/she must sell the position by:

- Following up with phone calls to answer any questions
- Encouraging the candidate to talk to someone in the organization who is performing at the same level
- Possibly recommending a second interview if the candidate has more questions

Then the hiring manager works closely with HR to put together an offer package.

Offer Request	
Candidate Information: date of interview, years of experience, education, current salary	
Recommendation: percent increase, sign on bonus, other compensation	
Relocation if required: house purchase, cost of living adjustment	
Signatures: first line manager, second line manager, HR	

It is important that the salary offered be consistent with the employee population. If the offered salary is too low, you will soon have an unhappy new employee. If the salary offered is too high, you will soon have a dissatisfied organization. Most organizations have statistics with a salary range driven by job code, education, and years of experience.

#### Statistics for Current Organization

Job Code	BS and Yrs Exp	Lowest	Mid	Highest
Level 1 SW Eng	0–2	\$51K	\$58K	\$61K
Level 2 SW Eng	2–5	\$59K	\$63K	\$69K
Level 3 SW Eng	5–9	\$66K	\$71K	\$76K
Level 4 SW Eng	9–14	\$75K	\$83K	\$89K
Level 5 SW Eng	14–20	\$88K	\$95K	\$104K

For example, a new software engineer with Bachelors of Science degree plus 5 years' experience could be offered a Level 2 or Level 3 Software Engineering position. Generally hiring managers recommend offering the Level 2 position so you have the option to promote sooner. The salary should be high end of Level 2 around \$66,000.