

# How behavioral interviewing can increase by nearly 50% your chances of hiring the right employee?

## And Evidence of the Effectiveness of Behavior-Based Interviews



*If you're married, your mother-in-law is probably an expert in **behavioral interviewing**.*

**Remember her advice:**

*"When you choose your husband/wife...you better love him/her as s/he is now. Because he or she isn't going to change, and neither are you."*

**And it's true.**

For the most part, people don't change their **behavior** from year to year.

For example, if a person is meticulous about keeping their desk tidy, it's almost **certain** that person will display that very same trait this time next year.

And if a person is notorious for always showing up late.....no-one is shocked if the same person is always late in his new job also.

And that's the key behind **behavioral interviewing**

Behavior-based interviewing is an approach that looks at **PAST behavior** as the best predictor of **FUTURE performance**.

A MORE accurate Guide to help you **predict** how people will behave in the future if you hire them for your company.

And it makes simple **common sense!**

## "Tell me a time when....."

For example, rather than asking, "What would you do if ..." one should ask,

**'Tell me about a time when you.....'**

You want to find out how people ACTUALLY behave rather than their PROMISE of how they will behave.

### **Remember:**

Just because people can give good answers and sound impressive -- it doesn't mean they can DO what they SAY.

The underlying premise is always the same: **people will handle future job-related situations the same way they have before in the past.**

So, to find out how they will handle critical job-related situations, you always ask them how they handled those same situations in the past.

Let's take a very simple example.



## Hiring a company Receptionist

You're interviewing Mary for the position of company receptionist. The interview starts as normal ...and you are using the same old, traditional questions.

- What is your experience, Mary?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about our company?
- Mary, what do you like to do in your spare time?

## Good Questions....and Bad Questions

These questions aren't bad in themselves.

They will definitely help you to find out more about Mary.

But they are severely limited, as they can lead to very standard and well-rehearsed responses from your interviewee.

Look, at this stage even the dogs in the street would have a good idea what questions you are going to ask - and with practice, could give you great answers!

**So even if Mary answers well - what does it really mean? Is she really good?**

Or:

Is she just good at answering the same old questions that EVERY interviewer asks?

You see, at the end of all these questions, you still have very little **REAL information about how Mary would behave in real-life situations in your company.**

But there is another approach....

## Behavioral interviewing

Behavioral-based interviewing is now used by over 70% of Fortune 500 companies.

Instead of the same old **traditional** questions, well-crafted behavioral-based questions can give you a much more accurate 'printout' or 'portrait' of a candidate's **true** character and ability.

Remember again, behavioral-based interviewing is highly effective because it examines the **past behavior of a job candidate, which is considered the most accurate indicator of future behavior.**

## Here's how it works:

Let's say that you want to find out more about, say Mary's **skills of diplomacy.** How she might deal with people?

In the past, you might have asked:

"Would you say you are very diplomatic with people?"

'Yes, I am'. Full stop.

Look, you have asked her a **close-ended question** leading to a similar response.

However, a behavioral-based question might be:

'Mary, have you ever felt irritated or frustrated while dealing with a customer? How did you respond when customers became demanding beyond an acceptable level?'

The 'Behavior-based question' questions how she behaved in the past in very **specific situations** relating to diplomacy.

It allows the candidate to give you a fuller answer - and it gives you a more accurate and truer picture of the candidate.

You **see** how the candidate reacted in the past and that is always the best predictor of future performance.

But that is not enough.

**As an interviewer, you need to obtain repeated examples of behavior to confirm they really exist.**

So you need to ask a number of related behavior-based questions all designed to reveal how proficient the candidate really is in this competency.



## How to use this approach in your interviewing?

Let's continue with the same simple example

The first step is to define the essential **competencies** you want in a good receptionist:

Don't rush this.

To help you, **Interview Creator** will create a list of over 50 **core** competencies. Go through each one and pick out the ones that you would like in a good receptionist: or whatever position you are selecting for

Also, make this a team effort.

Get essential **feedback** and **opinions** from at least several people who know the job well, covering a variety of perspectives (manager, supervisor, incumbents etc.)

As you're compiling this list of **essential** competencies, make sure you consider not only the obvious competencies (such as, Attention to detail, Customer Focus) but also the more subtle competencies, such as Integrity and teamwork

For example, **Interview Creator** would select some of the following.

- *Interpersonal skills*
- *Communication skills*
- *Conflict Resolution skills*
- *Cooperation skills*
- *Resourcefulness*
- *Diplomacy Skills*
- *Adaptability*
- *Awareness to Detail*
- *Customer service*

Now discuss these with your team.

The more thorough and systematic your approach to identifying job competency requirements, the better.

### 2. Ask Questions That Closely Match Real Job competency Requirements:

If you've identified exactly what you want someone to be able to do well on the job, ask questions about **exactly** that.

The more vague the question, the greater the chances that the answer will be about something irrelevant.

Be very clear and specific

You want to find out how **customer-focused** she will be?

Don't just ask:

'Describe something you've done that illustrates high customer focus'.

**Be MORE specific.**

**MORE definite:**

Ask:

*'Describe a time when you went out of your way to do whatever was reasonably possible to ensure that a customer was satisfied with your service.'*

For example, if you choose customer focus, Interview Creator would have created these Questions for you.

**3. Obtain In-Depth Answers:** This is a very important part of the process. You want answers from your candidate that describe real experiences. Real situations that reveal his behaviour in the heat of the moment.

But sometimes it can be hard to quantify exactly how much information is enough. To help you, ask yourself these questions:

- a. Do you know the full circumstance the candidate was in, what key actions he or she took, and the results?
- b. Did you obtain at least several specifics, such as approximate dates, relevant quantities, people involved, etc.?
- c. Can you step back in time and visualize what the candidate did? Now can you project into the future and get a 'feel' – a strong 'sense' of how he might perform in the future for you?
- d. Can you visualize what the candidate did well enough to know whether and how well he/she took the actions your hiring criteria call for?
- e. Can you listen not only to his verbal description of how he behaved in the past – but also to his body language? His body language is **'talking'** to you too. In some cases, it can be 'louder' than his verbal language. Watch how he moves? Note the tone of his voice, The movement of his eyes. Does he hold your eye gaze as he explains how he handled a difficult situation?

The key is **specifics**. Detailed descriptions.

The candidate can go on for hours, and claim to be a smart, hard working, persistent, motivated, innovative, great leader especially under pressure, etc., but if she hasn't provided a convincing detailed example of having ACTUALLY demonstrated that skill in the past, she hasn't provided anything useful at all.

Empty words. Lead to empty promises.

**4. Ask the Same Questions of Every Candidate for a Position:** If you've identified job requirements and you've identified questions most likely to obtain the information you need, ask them of all candidates for a position. These are the things you want to know about a candidate for that job.

**5. Look for congruent, CONSISTENT examples**

As an interviewer, you need to obtain repeated examples of behavior to confirm they really exist.

For example, you might ask for an example of leadership in their last job. And then, ask them to describe that experience with as many specifics as possible.

Then, a little later in the interview – you might ask them a question about their skills of organization. To tell you about a very specific time they had to take charge and organize a big event, say when they were in college?

Now, the candidate will be concentrating on showing you how well he organized this event.

This is important.

However, as the interviewer, you are also looking for more subtle clues. In this event that he is describing, is the candidate also in the main leadership role here – or is someone else leading – and he is simply excelling at organizing?

Does this show an in congruency in his earlier claims that he always steps up to take responsibility and leadership? You need to investigate.

The key is to ask a number of related behavior-based questions all designed to reveal how proficient the candidate really is in this competency.

Interview Creator Online allows you to ask any number of different and related questions to test exactly for each vital competency.

## Proof of the Effectiveness of Behavior-Based Interviews



Today, there is general acceptance of the effectiveness of behavioral interviewing.

And in the most comprehensive research carried out in 1997 by Salgado, J. F. (1997) in **'Personnel Selection Methods'** in C. L. Cooper and I. T. Robinson, *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. New York: Wiley – it was shown that. **behavioral interviewing** can increase by nearly **50%** your chances of hiring the **right** employee\*.

### **Real Evidence For Behavioral Interviewing**

Other international research has also demonstrated the excellent effectiveness of this type of interviewing.

The following provides a sampling of such evidence, and represents research and implementations from multiple researchers and service providers.

#### **• Orpen, 1985**

This study analyzed the validity of a behavior-based interviewing process and a traditional interview process.

Results showed the behavior-based interview ratings to correlate more highly with performance measures than the traditional process did. This suggests that behavior-based interviews successfully predict performance better than a traditional process.

#### **• Green, Alter, & Carr, 1993**

This study examined the validity of a behavior-based interview process. Results showed that interviewers' ratings positively correlated with job performance. This shows that behavior-based interviews help predict" who will be high performers based on the interview ratings.

#### **• Pulakos & Schmitt, 1995**

This study compared the validity of past-experience interviews and situational interviews. The past-experience interview ratings correlated more highly with performance ratings than the situational interview ratings did.

This suggests that behavior-based interviews predict a candidate's future performance better than situational interviews do.

### **Evidence Of Applying Behavioral Interviews To Real Organizations.**

Following implementation of a behavior-based selection process at a "Big 4" accounting firm

- First year turnover for campus hires dropped from 24% to 17%.
- Fewer second-round interviews resulted in time/cost savings.
- Estimated savings of over \$2 million per year.

#### **Following implementation of a behavior-based selection system at a call center:**

- Staff turnover was reduced by a third, from 45% to 30%, over a twelve-month period.
- Recruitment costs were cut by more than \$430,000.
- The number of employees who had been with the organization for over a year increased by 12%.

#### **Following implementation of behavior-based selection at a medical facility:**

- Patient satisfaction scores went from the 80th percentiles to the 99th percentile.
- Avoidable turnover declined by five percent.
- One of three health care organizations named to Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For."

### **In a nutshell:**



**The goal of any selection interview is to learn enough about a candidate to be able to predict future-on-the-job performance and behavior.**

That information can then be used to make an informed hiring decision or recommendation.

Behavioral interviewing is a technique based on the idea that candidates' past and present behavior is the best predictor of how they will behave in the future.

But behavioral traits don't appear on a resume — ***they can only come from an interview.***

Furthermore, interviewers need to obtain **repeated examples of behavior to confirm they really exist.**

Interviews not based on behavioral interviewing techniques inevitably focus exclusively on education, experience, and knowledge — exactly the information that's already on the resume.

While these are clearly important, they only reveal what a candidate actually did. Behavioral interviewing helps get at the "how" and "why" behind a candidate's performance.

Competency-based behavioral interviewing uses "competencies" to describe behavioral qualities.

Examples include analytical, problem solver, team player and customer-oriented. Behavioral competencies should be used to describe job requirements ("must be articulate, adaptable, committed," and so on) before the interview as well as to evaluate candidates after an interview.

When behavioral-based interviewing forms the framework for the entire hiring system, interviewers are able to make much more effective hiring decisions.

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