

# Predictive Interviewing

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# Employment Interviews

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- **The importance of interviews**
- **Benefits of interviews**
- **Problems with interviews**
- **Why interviews are poor predictors**
- **How to make interviews better**
- **Selection and training of interviewers**
- **Conclusion**

# The importance of interviews

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  - Benefits of interviews
  - Problems with interviews
  - Why interviews are poor predictors
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  - Conclusion

- Interviews are the most common personnel selection tool
- Interviews are the single biggest determinant of personnel selection decisions

# Benefits of interviews

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- Create an interactive forum for the assessment of interpersonal skills, job-relevant knowledge, motivation and potential fit
- Allow the interviewer to:
  - Sell the organization to qualified candidates
  - Give a realistic and detailed description of the position to candidates
- Provide the organization with a chance to make a favorable impression even on applicants who are not given offers or who do not join the organization

# Problems with interviews

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- **Poor reliability/consensus between different interviewers**
- **Poor validity/prediction of job performance**

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## Poor reliability/consensus between interviewers:

Different interviewers:

- Have their own styles and approaches
- Treat candidates differently and inconsistently
- Vary in how many criteria they assess
- Vary in which criteria they assess
- Vary in the standards they use to assess and weight criteria

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## Poor validity/prediction of job performance:

- Interviews are not very good predictors of job performance

Average validity:

20% for unstructured interviews

50% for structured interviews

# Why interviews are poor predictors

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- **Intrinsic limitations of the interview**
- **Interviewer biases**
- **Interviewer errors**

# Why interviews are poor predictors

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## Intrinsic limitations of the interview:

- Interviews are situation-specific samples that often do not generalize to job performance
- There is a higher degree of subjectivity in interviews than in other selection tools
- The two main purposes of the interview- assessment and recruitment- often interfere with one another

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## Interviewer biases:

- *Leniency* - rating all candidates favorably
- *Stringency* - rating all candidates unfavorably
- *Central tendency* - not differentiating between candidates
- *Contrast effect* - evaluating candidates in comparison to others
- *Halo effect* - one good or bad attribute determines the entire evaluation

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## Interviewer biases (continued):

- Physical attractiveness of candidate
- Perceived similarity with candidate
- Stereotypes on the basis of gender, age, national origin, ethnicity, education, work experience, etc.
- Incorrect assumptions about non-verbal behavior

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## Interviewer errors:

- Making judgments too quickly
- Gathering insufficient information by not asking tough or probing questions when necessary
- Over-weighting negative information
- Spending interviews confirming first impressions

# How to make interviews better

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**Preparation**

**Structure**

**Timing and logistics**

**Conduct of the interview**

**Questions**

**Ratings and rating scales**

**Additional considerations**

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## Preparation

- Clearly define the role that the candidate is being interviewed for
- Specify the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, attributes
- Review the candidate's file and select interviewers in advance
- Assign different interviewers different roles in advance
- Consider both assessment and recruiting when choosing interviewers

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## Structure

- Ensure that the experience of all candidates is as similar as possible
- Use the same criteria and rating scale for all candidates
- Ask only job-relevant behavioral or situational questions
- Ask more than one question to assess each criterion

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## Timing and logistics

- Do not make the interview too long or too short
- Divide the interview into discrete stages
- Interview in a quiet location free from distraction and interruptions
- Use more than one interviewer to enhance objectivity
- Discourage interviewers from discussing the candidate with one another before they have all met with the candidate

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## Conduct of the interview

- Set the candidate at ease and establish rapport
- Make a statement at the beginning of the interview to set expectations
- Listen carefully and actively - use the 80/20 rule – do not interrupt
- Take notes throughout the interview or not at all
- End with a clear statement about next steps

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## Conduct of the interview (continued):

### Try to balance:

- Sticking to the protocol versus adapting for the individual candidate
- Letting the candidate speak freely without letting the conversation drift
- Being friendly versus probing insufficiently
- Comprehensiveness versus redundancy
- Being encouraging but not "shaping" responses

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## Questions

- Ask the same questions of all candidates to ensure standardization
- Follow-up and probing questions can vary when appropriate
- Ask one question at a time
- Use open-ended rather than closed ended or leading questions
- Don't ask questions which encourage candidates to present strengths as weaknesses

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## Ratings and rating scales

- Rate all candidates on the same criteria using the same scale
- Use separate rating scales for each criterion
- Be mindful of biases in making ratings
- Make ratings as soon as possible after the interview
- Discuss ratings of candidates with other interviewers as soon as possible after interviews

# Selection and training of interviewers

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## Choose interviewers who are and/or train interviewers to be:

- Knowledgeable about the role, the team, and the organization
- Representative of diverse groups in the organization
- Good at eliciting and evaluating information
- Reluctant to jump to conclusions
- Open-minded and able to revise opinions
- Self-aware and able to account for their own biases
- Accurate in their predictions of candidate success over time

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Employment interviews should be part of an evolving, integrated personnel selection system embedded in an evolving, integrated Human Resource system

# Legal issues

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It is illegal to treat candidates differently on the basis of, to ask questions about, or to make employment decisions based on:

Age

Gender

Race

Religion

Marital, family or residential status

Place of birth, country of origin or citizenship

Arrest record

Disabilities

Health