

Dattner Consulting, LLC

Predictive Interviewing

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Employment Interviews

- **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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- 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**

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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

Legal considerations

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

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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

Sample Interview Rating Form

Name of candidate: _____

Position applying for: _____

Date of interview: _____

| Criterion | Rating (1 - 5) | Comments |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| 1. Technical ability | | |
| 2. Leadership skills | | |
| 3. Interpersonal skills | | |
| 4. Presentation skills | | |
| 5. Teamwork | | |
| 6. Conflict management | | |
| 7. Motivation | | |
| 8. Catalyzing change | | |
| 9. Cultural fit | | |
| 10. Organizational citizenship | | |

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