

## Interviewing and a Process For Having Fun Doing It.

There are two sides to interviewing: The candidate being interviewed, and the hiring manager conducting the interview.

The key words “the art of interviewing” have produced the highest hit rate my website has ever had, and the number of “hits” continues to be very strong for over six weeks. I have always thought of interviewing as a problem area, somewhat similar to the problem some salespeople have closing sales.

My experience is that salespeople achieve the highest closing rates by obtaining the best information about the customer’s needs. I believe there is a parallel between interviewing candidates or candidates doing the interviewing, on one hand, and salespeople meeting customer needs on the other. The key in both cases is to put the other person first.

I am sure you have heard this before. It is at the heart of marriage relationships, it is one of the key results for any of the twelve-step recovery programs, and in general, this priority leads to a more peaceful life.

So why do many hiring managers dread the thought of interviewing candidates? It’s simple! It is very difficult work, and the end results are not known for a long time because hiring managers do not know if they have received correct information.

One solution is for candidates and hiring managers to become professional dummies. Professional dummies are sure they have the answer to a question but they want nevertheless to give the other person the opportunity to answer it. The person’s response reveals not only the expected answer but more importantly, the passion the person has for the response. Once the passion is revealed it presents the opportunity to ask deeper questions that will provide *intrinsic* information about the person, which will define what he or she will do.

Professional dummies transfer personal stress to the other person by asking open-ended questions. This kind of question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. For example: “Why do you believe this position is a good fit for you?” There are only two types of answers – aggressive or cautious. The aggressive response may be short on details but with lots of emotion. The cautious response will take time to develop, but could have more details that are necessary for knowing more about the candidate.

Another parallel between salespeople and hiring managers is that both tend to want to be in control of the interaction. The best way to be in control of any interview is to give up the control. Allow the aggressive response to be so you carefully listen to the message. Listen for emotions and facts, for different levels of emotion all the while taking notes. When the person stops talking refer to your notes to ask more probing questions to have more clarification and enhance the message the candidate delivered.

To be truly in control of any interaction with someone, ask the other person a question and **wait** for the response. No matter what question you ask you **cannot know** what their answer will be. So wait for it and be in control of the conversation. Interviewing process

The interviewing process can be very daunting for anyone who needs to hire a new employee. Consider the dynamics of needing to change focus from daily tasks of, for instance, developing new business strategies, or attending to the urgent needs of a customer, and switch over to the entirely different focus required for interviewing candidates. This redirection of your attention can be a real challenge to the human spirit.

Many companies harvest candidates from print media, job boards, and social media outlets. The Human Resource department usually selects candidates whose resumes contain the technical skills required by the job description. H R does the fact-finding phone interview, and has each candidate complete applications and other tests or assessments. The point of all this effort by HR is to offer the most qualified candidates to the hiring managers.

When all the candidates have been selected, it is time to conduct the dreaded interviews. Depending on the position, many companies have the candidate individually interview with a number of people so they can all come to a consensus about which candidate would be the best for the position.

The next step is to inform the Interviewers about the objectives of the interview i.e. the position and its expectations, the environment the candidate will work in, and other issues specific to the company and position. Interviewers need to plan for the time to conduct the interviews, which as the day progresses is going to change, keeping them from being as focused, as he or she needs to be. These and other aspects of interviewing are very costly to any organization.

## **One remedy is to conduct group interviews**

Group interviewing requires three interviewers: one whom the candidate will report to if hired, and the other two people are those who will be affected by performance of the position's duties.

The interviewers need three tools for a highly effective group interviews. They will need: a current job description, a set of key accountabilities for the position, and a set of job related interview questions that focus on the personal talents that candidates will need to do the job.

The hiring manager and others determine the date for the interviews, and the amount of interviewing time, will be determined by the number of candidates and the type of position. All the candidates are to be interviewed individually on the pre-determined date and the time slot assigned to them. The advantages to this process are the interviewers have the opportunity to plan for this activity, and are able to focus on the task for that day and the allotted time slots. It is a cost effective use of the interviewer's time.

Each of the three interviewers has one or two questions to ask the candidates. The three interviewers side by side on one side of the table, and the candidate is across from them. Each interviewer is provided with all the information HR has gathered about the candidates, which they need to have thoroughly reviewed it beforehand.

The first interviewer begins asking questions. The other two interviewers listen to and observe the candidates as they respond to these questions. Then the process is repeated with each of the other two interviewers. This process puts candidates under pressure, pressure they will also experience from time to time on the job.

At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewers ask candidate to step out so that they can compare their notes and make a consensus decision about the candidate's appropriateness for the position.

Group interviews yield great benefits. Interviewing candidates **is always a team** effort, and sharing the task makes a difficult human activity easier. Moreover, managers focus on the task of interviewing for a specific, allotted time period, not one interview today and another tomorrow. Candidates need to go through the interview process only once. Finally, the company completes a difficult task in a efficient cost saving manner that achieves good results.

Ask us for help in bringing this efficient, rewarding group interview process in to your company.

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