Behavior Based Interviewing Quick Guide

The purpose of an interview is to gather additional information which will help you identify and select the most qualified, best-fit candidate for your position. Behavior based interviews can increase your chances of hiring the right candidate the first time by providing a systematic method for gathering information to effectively evaluate each candidate. Below is an overview of how to successfully conduct a behavior based interview.

What are we trying to learn from the behavior based interview?
- The candidate's past behaviors and experiences relative to the major job responsibilities/competencies of the position.
- Complete information about the candidate's knowledge and abilities.
- An understanding of what aspects of a job motivates (satisfies/dissatisfies) the candidate.

How do we get the information we need during the interview?
- By asking open-ended questions that focus on the major job responsibilities of the position.
- By gathering specific examples from the candidate's past experiences that demonstrates his/her skills, knowledge and abilities.
    - Examples should be collected in a STAR format to ensure you have a complete understanding of the information provided by the candidate. To be a complete STAR, a response should contain the following:

STAR Components		
S/T	**S**ituation/**T**ask	The background or context in which the candidate took action
A	**A**ction	What the candidate said or did
R	**R**esult	The effects of the candidate's actions

- By asking follow-up questions to obtain any missing details from the candidate's response based on the STAR format.
    - Follow-up questions should be asked throughout the interview. On average, 2-3 follow-up questions may be necessary to obtain a complete STAR.
- By gaining an understanding of the candidate's likes and dislikes as it relates to the essential functions of the position.

What are some recommended interviewing techniques?
- During the opening of the interview, set the candidate up for success by explaining the behavior based interviewing format and what you're looking for in the candidate's responses.
    - Example: *"Throughout the interview I will be asking you behavior based questions. I am looking for specific situations or tasks from your past experiences, what you did and the results of the situations."*
- Build rapport with the candidate in the interview to encourage a comfortable atmosphere.
    - During the opening: thank the candidate for his/her time and introduce all interviewers.
    - Throughout the interview: maintain eye contact, listen and respond with empathy, as well as reacting sensitively to negative information.

- o During the closing: give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions, provide additional information on the position, and set an expectation of when he/she will hear from you regarding the next steps.
- Give the candidate several moments to think about his/her answer before offering to rephrase or restate the question.

What do we need to watch out for during the interview?
- You may not always receive responses in the STAR format. It is common to get answers that are missing one or more of the STAR components or a specific example.
  - o Ask follow up questions to get a complete STAR including a specific example about the candidate's past.
- You may not always receive candidate's responses that follow the STAR format in the ideal order (Situation/Task, Action, Result), but the answer can still provide a complete STAR and the information you need.
  - o Example: You can receive ARTS (Action, Result, Task/Situation) or RATS (Result, Action, Task/Situation).
- You may receive a response that sounds good, but lacks substance. Answers that are vague, opinions, or future oriented don't tell you what the candidate has actually done and therefore need follow up to obtain a specific example.
  - o Examples:
    - Vague answers can contain phrases such as "I always…"; "We…"; "My team…".
    - Opinions can be identified through phrases such as "I think…"; "I feel…"; "I believe…".
    - Future oriented responses may include phrases such as "I plan to…"; "The next time I will…"; "I would like to…".
- Your follow up questions should be open-ended questions about the past. Avoid theoretical and leading questions that may persuade a candidate to respond without providing a real-life, specific example.
  - o Examples:
    - A theoretical question could be "What would you do?".
    - A leading question could be "Did you do the 'right thing'?"

How do we evaluate the information we receive?
- After each interview, take time to review the candidate based on the major job responsibilities of the position and the information obtained during the interview regarding the candidate's skills, knowledge, abilities, and motivations.
- Identify complete STARs and categorize them into the appropriate major job responsibilities/competencies.
- Determine if the STAR response is an effective (+) or ineffective (-) behavior based on the job functions.
- Weigh the significance of each STAR response considering: how similar it is to the position, how impactful the action was, and how recently the behavior was exhibited.
- Rate each competency, considering the most significant STARs using the following scale:

Rating Scale	
1	Much less than acceptable
2	Less than acceptable
3	Acceptable
4	More than acceptable
5	Much more than acceptable

Reminder: It is a HR best practice to take notes during the interview to recall details regarding the candidate's experiences and examples in order to effectively evaluate all information after the interview. All interview documentation must be maintained in the department for 3 years for all candidates interviewed.