

## Interviewing

The #1 problem we find when connecting with organizations looking to [retain our services](#) is that they often work back assward.

Companies spend a great deal of time and money training their employees on everything from SOX to the proper way to complete a timecard. They provide continuing education to ensure ongoing compliance with the laws governing their industry. The more progressive organizations even cross-train their team in order to provide them with a wider range of skills, increasing their chance of [mobility within the company](#).

Unfortunately, most invest zero time in training their hiring managers on the most important step in hiring talent: [Effective methods of interviewing!](#)

After almost 20 years of recruiting and 25 years hiring and managing staff, I have come to the conclusion that effective interviewing ultimately hinges on 6 key components.

### The 6 “BE’s” of Effective Interviewing

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. BE Prepared        | 4. BE Specific & Cite Real Examples |
| 2. BE A Good Listener | 5. BE Energetic & Enthusiastic      |
| 3. BE Inquisitive     | 6. BE Yourself                      |

### BE Prepared

No matter which side of the interview table you’re sitting on, [preparing for an interview](#) is of the utmost importance. With the amount of information available on the internet, candidates can uncover a variety of intelligence regarding a company’s business strategy, their latest press releases, and in some cases, details about their management team.

[As a hiring manager](#), it is important to spend time reviewing the position, the skills you are seeking, the long-term opportunities, and the current culture of your department. Perhaps there are some technical gaps in the group or the team needs a high energy professional to provide balance to the other personalities. It is also your duty to review the candidate’s resume prior to the interview – and 10 minutes before they walk through your door will not suffice! I have experienced many failed interviews resulting from a simple lack of preparation. The biggest surprise for any candidate is an interviewer that has obviously failed to review the candidate’s credentials. In some cases, the interviewer is completely unaware of the position for which the candidate is interviewing!

Likewise, there is nothing more unimpressive to a hiring manager than a [job seeker](#) who has failed to read the job description or who lacks an understanding of the company's core business

### **BE a Good Listener**

While it is important for both the candidate and hiring manager to listen carefully – especially during the first round of interviews – it is imperative that the hiring manager spend 75%-80% of his time listening. I am amazed when candidates tell me they are unsure whether they are a good fit because they spent the entire interview listening to the interviewer talk about himself.

As a candidate, [one of the worst offenses you can commit](#) is constantly interrupting the interviewer. Not only does this demonstrate your lack of listening skills, but it also puts into question your ability to manage a team and communicate others in the company. Bring a notepad with you in order to take notes and write down your questions as they arise. Before asking a question, determine whether this is the most appropriate time. With some patience, perhaps the interviewer will answer the question on his own.

### **BE Inquisitive**

This is one of the most obvious components of an effective interview, yet it is often underutilized. Having read the [job description](#) (candidate) and [the resume](#) (hiring manager), both individuals arrive at the interview with a very basic and purely academic understanding of the other – nothing more.

In-person interviews provide both parties with an opportunity to discuss the true substance of the position. [The candidate is able to discover](#) the company's culture, the long-term prospects for growth, the day to day activities, the hiring manager's expectations, the manager's work ethic and work style, and the makeup and tenure of the department. Likewise, the hiring manager is able to delve into nearly every aspect of the candidate's skills and talents including: her decision-making skills, specific accomplishments and direct contributions to the company, ability to multi-task and work in a team culture, motivation, ideal work environment, technical capabilities, communication skills, ability to think on her feet and much more.

Without the proper questions, much of this substance remains a mystery – and the worst time to solve this mystery is after she starts working for your company!

### **BE Specific & Cite Real Examples**

Hopefully, we have all heard about the current trend in screening talent: behavioral interviewing. This is a style of interviewing based on asking situational questions such as "Tell me about a time when...." or "Give me an example of a situation in which you..."

But how many of us really know how to translate the necessary skills and personality traits into questions that will ultimately reveal whether the person is a good fit? The best way to create these questions is to work backwards. If you are tasked with replacing a great candidate who

just left your team after several years of positive contributions, think about what made her successful.

- What issues did she face during the past year and how did she respond?
- What is the pace of the department?
- Do they work long hours on a regular basis or just at month end?
- How did she handle multiple tasks being thrown at her?
- When she did not respond well to difficult situations, what type of response would have been ideal?
- How did the expectations change when you made an acquisition and how was this position affected?

These represent just a few examples of the scenarios your new hire will encounter. Use them to your advantage by translating them into behavioral interviewing questions.

As a candidate, the most effective way to [demonstrate your experience and showcase your talents is to provide specific examples of your accomplishments](#). Once again, this cannot be accomplished without properly preparing for the interview. Ideally, the examples you cited on your resume are the same examples you will use during the interview process. Be sure to outline your role in each accomplishment, the reason for your involvement, the challenges you faced and how you overcame them. Most importantly, describe the outcome and how it benefited the team, department and company. A word of caution: do not take credit for successes that resulted from the contributions of others! At some point during the process, your exaggerations will be discovered!

### **BE Energetic & Enthusiastic**

Every candidate wants to [stand out in an interview](#). A positive attitude and an enthusiastic demeanor cannot guarantee you a job for which you are under qualified. However, you will almost certainly lose a job that you are qualified for if you fail to demonstrate your interest and excitement during the interview. Throughout the screening process, the hiring manager will spend a great deal of time evaluating your culture fit in addition to your technical fit. Whether the department is high energy or low key, the hiring manager wants to hire someone that is passionate about the work he will be doing.

As a hiring manager attempting to attract the right professional, it is critical that you express enthusiasm for your company and your role. There have been countless situations where a candidate has decided not to pursue an opportunity because it was painfully obvious that the hiring manager was unhappy in her role. Who wants to work for someone who doesn't like what they are doing? Moreover, the hiring manager is going to have a very [hard time developing and promoting her people](#) if she constantly displays the hardships of her position and omits the positive attributes.

### **BE Yourself!**

Last, but most important of all, Be Yourself! The only way to avoid a mismatched placement is to provide your audience with a true picture of who you are. Both employers and candidates must depict themselves in an honest fashion. ([\\*Note: Candidates, this includes the presentation of a truthful resume](#)). While there is always some degree of “selling” during the interview process, you will avoid surprises and misaligned expectations if and only if you discuss your work style and work ethic from the very beginning.

A recent survey conducted by Leadership IQ indicated that 46% of new hires fail within 18 months. Nearly 89% of these [new hires left their position due to a lack of culture fit](#). One of the best ways in which to gauge whether there is a fit is to conduct several rounds of interviews, ideally involving 3-6 employees in the process (the hiring manager, peers, subordinates, other departmental leaders, and the hiring manager’s boss). Leveraging the perspective of several employees will help you avoid making an emotional hire or worse yet, turning someone down for irrelevant reasons. Ideally, the final interview should be an informal lunch, allowing the hiring manager to observe the candidate’s conduct in a more casual setting. This additional meeting will provide a more realistic picture of both the candidate and the hiring manager.

The process of Interviewing and hiring new staff is not simple. Selecting the right candidate requires the consideration of many factors. In today’s labor market, the cost of making a mistake is higher than ever before – the average cost of replacing an employee is now estimated at 1.75x – 2.75x base salary. However, by adhering to these 6 guidelines, you will eliminate much of the guess work and greatly increase your chances of making a successful hire.