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THE RIGHT

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HIRE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **27**

Chapter 7 | More Tips for Successful
Behavioral-Based Interviewing

More Tips for Successful Behavioral-Based Interviewing

Behavioral-based interviewing can be a very effective tool to use for gathering performance information from a candidate. Here is a very practical model that will help you to more easily use it in your next interview.

Using the EAR Model When Interviewing

In a behavioral interview, the types of questions you ask the candidate are different. These are geared toward getting answers that include measurable results which will enable you to compare the performance of two or more people with each other. The interviewer must pay particular attention to the answers – which are also different. One model that has been proven to help you measure the results of your questions is called the EAR model – which stands for Event, Action, and Result.

E: Event, example, or problem the candidate experienced

A: Action the candidate took in response to the event or situation

R: Result (outcome or effect) of the actions the candidate took.

Here's an example of an interview discussion and question:

At Prestige Medical Center, our patients are our top priority. Many patients find themselves in the hospital unexpectedly and their stress level is very high. If they become upset with something that has happened or something that didn't happen that they felt should have, we need to continue to be responsive. Can you tell me about a time when you had an upset patient, how you dealt with it, and what the outcome was?

Candidate's response to the question:

(E) Last week we had a lady taking her dad to the day surgery center for a procedure. They were running late and had gone to the wrong building. I was on my way to the resource center when



Finding Quality Staff Is Made Easier with Behavioral-Based Interviews

I met them out front. She was upset, saying how no one would help her, and why didn't we have a sign?

(A) So, I said to her, "How can I help?" I asked her which area she was looking for and then I walked her over to the surgery center. She was still flustered, so I waited with her dad while she got him registered.

(R) When she finished, she put her hand on my arm and said, "I'm sorry I was so upset. It's been a crazy morning. Thanks so much for your help and patience." All of this only took about 10 minutes of my time and the patient was very happy.



Satisfied Patients Indicate Good Patient Relations

The above example includes all of the EAR elements. The Event was finding a patient who needed help. Taking the patient to the Surgery Center was the Action taken, which brought about the Result of a satisfied patient.

Behavioral-based questions are great tools to use to get started in your search for EAR's. Candidate's answers often will not contain all of the elements of an EAR (an incomplete EAR), so it will be necessary to ask more questions. This can lead to even more good information.

Let's do a quick review of the previous exercise:

Question: Can you give me an example of a time when you went beyond your regular job duties to solve a problem?

Response: After joining the department, I quickly discovered they had no system of recording patient's complaints. They were clueless as to how many, or the types of issues, that they had received. I made a simple computer form for it, and taught them how to use it.

Can you see which part of EAR is absent? The Result is not there.

Clarifying Issues with More Questions

Here are some sample questions you can ask when a part of the EAR model is missing.

If you need further information about the Event, use questions such as these in your follow up:

- Could you give me a specific time when you used that approach?
- Can you give a specific example of when this happened?
- What were the circumstances surrounding. . . ?
- What was the most memorable time when that happened?

If you need further information about the Action, use questions such as these in your follow up:

- Tell me, specifically, how you. . .
- Exactly what did you do?
- Walk me through the steps you took.

- What did you do first, second, etc.?
- What was your role on the team?
- Exactly what role did you play?

If you need further information about the Result, use questions such as these in your follow up:

- What was the result?
- How did it work out?
- What feedback have you gotten?
- How did you know that what you did was effective?
- What happened?

When you receive an answer that contains a missing part of the EAR, or none of them, this is called an incomplete EAR. Answers that frequently fall into that category often contain words like "would," "should," "usually," "always," and "generally." This type of answer will also often lack specific examples and anecdotes. Good interviewers will recognize this absence and know to ask follow-up questions.

Here is a chart that will help interviewers to probe for more information. The left side has various responses from the candidate, and the right side has questions you should ask to clarify the issue.

CANDIDATE RESPONSE	PROBING QUESTION
Most of the time, I am able to stay ahead of the workload and get all my tasks done.	Can you tell me about a specific time when you were able to do that?
If I had been the manager, I would have made the changes much more quickly.	Have you been in a situation in which you had to deal with working through change or making changes quickly? Tell me about it.
Things went fine.	What happened to let you know everything was fine?
The group was much tougher to convince than I had expected. I knew I needed to take a different approach in those meetings in the future.	Tell me about the approach you used. What steps did you take?
I did more than my share of the work on that project. That's for sure.	I would like to hear about your specific responsibilities and duties on the project. Tell me what you did on that particular project.
I believe in going the extra mile for the patient.	Can you tell me about a time when you did that?
Usually I help my teammates with their work even when I am busy.	Give me an example of a time when you were very busy but still helped a teammate out of a tough spot.
I had the highest productivity and best patient service scores for two years in a row.	Give me a specific example of the kind of patient service behaviors that led to your high scores.

Preparing for Your Behavioral Interview

Here are a few things you can do in order to prepare for a successful behavioral interview:

- Review the job description.
- Identify and prioritize the key job skill and work environment competencies that will be important.
- Complete your interview prep. Questions guide.
- Reserve a private and quiet location for the interview.
- Review your questions right before the interview.
- Turn off your cell phone, pager, and other electronic devices.



Successful Interviews Need Quality Preparation

Here are a few tips that will help you conduct a behavioral interview successfully:

- 1. Establish rapport with the candidate.** When candidates are comfortable, their answers are more genuine. Keep your body language open. Smile and make eye contact with the candidate. Do not frown, cross your arms, or turn away from the candidate. Remember, good interviews are all about developing RELATIONSHIPS.
- 2. Using the resources available to you,** select your questions prior to the interview. Include a few back-up questions on your list just in case the interview takes a different direction than you are expecting. Check out www.ropella.com/therighthire for a list of sample interview questions.
- 3. Take notes during the interview.** Your interview notes will help you remember information and summarize important points made by the candidate. The notes also provide a great way for you to organize the information that you want to fact check and confirm. Notes should contain only information about the specific response given and candidate key words, not personal impressions. Keep in mind that your note taking could make the candidate uncomfortable. So carefully explain why you are taking notes in order to relieve any discomfort.
- 4. Explain that you will be asking for specifics.** Make sure the candidate knows from the get go that you will be asking for very specific examples of how the candidate handled situations in the past. Tell the candidate you will be seeking information on actions taken and results achieved.
- 5. Listen for the EAR** (Event, Action, Result).
- 6. Probe for the EAR.** If a candidate's answer is missing an element of the EAR or doesn't hit on any of the EAR elements, then ask follow up questions until each element has been covered. See the previous pages for sample follow up questions.
- 7. Allow time for the candidate to think.** Silence during an interview is okay, especially when it results from a candidate carefully thinking out a response. You don't both need to be talking non-stop. In fact, a good rule of thumb for interviewers is that they should be listening 80 percent of the time and speaking 20 percent of the time or less.
- 8. Seek contrary evidence.** If the candidate only gives one-sided answers, in other words, answers that make them look infallible; you may have to actively seek out a balanced perspective. No candidate will ever be perfect. If the applicant provides "textbook," perfect responses to every question you raise, consider asking, "Tell me about a time when you did not achieve a desired outcome?" Doing so will help you get a better evaluation of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and will help you get an idea of how the candidate deals with adversity.
- 9. Keep an eye on the clock.** Track your time so you can ask all of your questions. Behavioral questions and responses take more time than questions with "yes" or "no" answers, so plan ahead and prioritize your questions so you cover the most important questions first.

- 10. Allow the candidate to ask questions.** The objective of an interview is for you to discover the right person for the job and for the candidate to discover the right job and organization for them. In order for the candidate to do that, he will need to ask his own set of interview questions. So be open and responsive to these questions and always take the time to give satisfactory answers. If necessary, ask the candidate if your answer to their question was satisfactory. This eliminates assumptions and surprises later.
- 11. Close the interview professionally.** Make a good impression by thanking the candidate, providing your business card, and giving specific follow-up steps and timelines.
- 12. Have each interview participant (member of the Selection Team) complete their interview feedback matrix immediately following the interview.** The matrix is displayed and explained in chapter 8 of The Right Hire.

Planning a One-Hour Interview Format

You can minimize your time and still get the best results in a one-hour interview if you plan it in advance. Here is a four-step process you can use to as a guideline.

Conducting the Interview (1 Hour Format) - Approximate Time to Allow



*Planning Gives You the Best Results in A
One-Hour Interview*

- 1. Establish rapport and review background information.** (5-7 minutes)
- Allows candidate opportunity to relax.
 - Fosters openness from the candidate.
 - Promotes clarification and expansion of information provided.
- 2. Ask behavioral questions and collect examples of EARs.** (30-40 minutes)
- Plan questions to correspond to the specific competencies that are necessary for the job.
 - Take notes.
 - Clarify and rephrase as needed, but be careful not to tip your hand, so ideally do not offer an example of what you are looking for.
 - Be patient. Silence is okay.
 - Ask follow-up questions and probe further as needed.
- 3. Communicate additional information regarding the position & always answer all the candidate's questions completely.**(5-10 minutes)
- Offer job specific information (e.g., job duties, schedule requirements, location, etc.)
 - Ask the candidate, "What questions do you have for me?" and "Did I answer your questions satisfactorily?"
- 4. Close the interview.** (5-10 minutes)
- Ask the candidate, "Is there anything else you would like to tell me about you or your experience?" or "Any additional information of value that you think you could you bring to our organization?"
 - Review what will happen next in the selection process. Provide the candidate with specific details and a timeline for follow up.
 - Thank the candidate for the interview.

Now that you have completed the interview, organize all your notes, documents, and information you have collected into a file folder. Double check to make sure that all red flags have been addressed and remaining questions are followed up on.

THE RIGHT HIRE

“The most important decisions that business people make are not *what* decisions, but *who* decisions.”

- Jim Collins, Author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't*



In most organizations, making the right hire means the difference between success and failure. This book helps you recruit great people and keep them loyal to the organization by helping you understand, assimilate and execute today's best processes, programs and practices for Sourcing and Marketing to potential candidates, Assessing and Recruiting top talent, Retaining & Training employees and Transforming your organization for the better.

What you will learn from this book

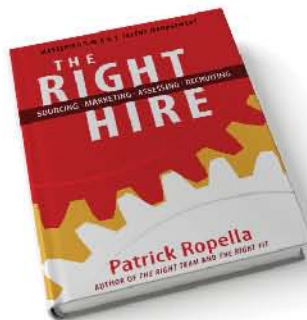
- How to successfully execute the all-important preparation stage of talent sourcing
- What to do to bring into alignment the whole interview-selection team
- Where to scout, network, and narrowcast in order to recruit the best candidates
- What techniques to use to screen and assess talent using proven tools
- How to use behavioral-based questions and interviewing techniques to uncover quality information that leads to great hiring decisions
- What can be done to dramatically improve the negotiations, offer, acceptance, start date and on-boarding processes
- And much, much more...

“People interviewing have choices, and *The Right Hire* presents the right things to do not only attract the top talent, but also to assess for culture fit, personal characteristics, experiences and credentials that will fit with your opportunity. With the growing need for companies to hire the very best talent available, *The Right Hire* is a must read.”

- Steve Watson,
International Chairman, Stanton Chase

“Too often making the right hire is seen as a matter of luck. It should not be. Follow the steps in this book and it will improve your success rate dramatically.”

- Yves Lermusi, CEO, Checkster



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Patrick B. Ropella is Chairman & CEO of the Ropella Group, a 25-year-old international Executive Search, Leadership Transformation, and Corporate Consulting firm in Florida with clients among the world's most prestigious corporations. The Ropella Group focuses on working with mid-level management and executive-level leaders regarding their search, leadership, and/or consulting needs across most roles and functions. Patrick authored the book and web based training program, *The Right Hire – Mastering the Art of SMART Talent Management*. The SMART Talent Management System covers Sourcing, Marketing, Assessing, Recruiting, Retention, Training and Transforming top talent. Patrick's status as a thought expert, and writer on talent management & leadership has been promoted, featured and published in a wide variety of trade magazines and business publications, and leadership and executive search industry blogs and journals. Patrick regularly speaks at webinars, career fairs, conferences, trades shows and more. For more information about Growing Your Great Company through Ropella services, visit www.ropella.com, or call Patrick Ropella at (850) 983 - 4777.