



Seeing tomorrow's ideas...Today

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Focus on Innovation

Focus on Innovation is a monthly electronic newsletter designed to provoke thoughts and ideas on how to bring innovation to life within the organizations in which we work.

Identifying Creative Talent

Companies are being forced to shift to a "creativity orientation" in an effort to endure the dynamic, ever-changing global marketplace. A challenge for many leaders is how to identify creative talent when interviewing for a position that requires a creativity orientation. Although interviewers will agree that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, most interviewers spend too much time gathering low yield information. It is only through behavioral-based interviewing (BBI) that we have a better chance of drawing high yield information from candidates. BBI accuracy exceeds traditional interviewing accuracy by between three to seven times, making the behavior-based interview far more cost effective.

BBI focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. It is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. BBI involves using questions that seek demonstrated examples of behavior from a person's past experience and that concentrate on job-related functions. These require more than a yes or no response. They often begin with "Tell me..." "Describe..." "When..." A candidate can use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school projects, and family life - anything really - as examples of past behavior.

The key to BBI is obtaining behavioral examples. Using the **ECHO** approach will ensure that you get complete answers from interviewees:

- **Example** - A specific incident from the applicant's past
- **Circumstances** - Background information highlighting severity, difficulty, urgency, others involved, etc.
- **How handled** - The candidate's specific actions and thoughts while dealing with the situation.
- **Outcome** - Tangible reactions from others, results/feedback

Once you have asked your question (i.e. "Tell me..." "Describe...") it is important to probe for "code able" data. The goal is to probe enough so that you know the specific situation (Example); you get a clear understanding of the circumstances surrounding the example so that you can better evaluate the way he or she handled the situation (Circumstance); the candidate describes what exactly did he or she do or say (How Handled); and that you see a tangible result from someone or something other than what the individual did himself (Outcome).

Here are some examples of behavior-based interview questions that you can use to identify creative talent:

Describe a time when you were creative in solving a problem?

- What was the problem?
- What specifically did you do that was creative to solve it?
- What was the outcome?

Tell me a time when you created or introduced, or helped to create new ways of doing things to the organization?

- In what sense was the idea (method) new to the organization?
- What did you do to create the new idea or method?
- How did the idea or method contribute to the organization or team?
- What was the outcome?

Can you describe a project where you applied creativity?

- What was the project?
- What prompted you to begin this project?
- What specific steps did you take that were creative?
- How did you know that they were creative?
- How did it end up?

What's the Bottom line

Whether you are trying to identify skills, attributes or knowledge about a candidate's creativity orientation, behavior-based interviewing will allow you to get a complete picture of the candidate's capabilities and attitudes in this area.



Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.
If you would like more information about the ideas and topics listed in this issue, contact Judy Laws, Ph.D. at jlaws@foursightconsulting.com.

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