



## Interviewing Tips for Hiring Executives

From President, Carrie Coward:

“The best interviewing training I have received was from The Adler Group ([www.adlerconcepts.com](http://www.adlerconcepts.com)). I would recommend Adler’s books, courses, and materials to anyone interested in learning to interview simply and naturally, but purposefully.

The Adler Group advocates a method of interviewing that focuses on the candidate’s significant accomplishments. By asking about accomplishments and probing on the details, the hiring executive can learn more about the candidates than dozens of hypothetical questions and answers will ever provide.

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The things I’ve learned over the years boil down to these few keys:

- **The interviewer (you) should listen 75% of the time.** You should be talking about 25% of the interview. This is tough for some executives. However, if you talk more than you listen – you are not learning the details you need to assess the person. Your decision will be much harder if the candidate hasn’t had ample time to tell you their story.
- **Hypothetical questions are not valuable.** Hypothetical questions like, “If “X” then what would you do? Or “How would you handle this situation?” will only get you hypothetical answers. The candidate is pressured to guess what answer you want and give it. The solution is to ask the person what he or she HAS DONE instead of what he or she will do. **This means asking about behaviors.** So, ask:
  - “Tell me about a time when you had to \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “Give me an example of \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “We have a scenario that looks like this...have you experienced this before? If so, tell me about it.”
- **Allow for time before you jump to conclusions based on your first impression.** This doesn’t mean your initial impression is wrong, but it allows for time to elapse where you keep an open mind. Collect information, listen, and then decide.
- **Do not ask personal things about age, religion, race, marital or family status.** Stick to work related topics as much as possible. You can ask about anything job related – including ability to travel and overtime.

## **SAMPLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BASED INTERVIEW**

- 1. Welcome and understanding of the candidate's interest and motivation.**
  - “Please provide a quick overview of your background.”
  - “Initially, what is it that interests you about this position?”
  
- 2. Conduct Brief Work History Review (about 10 minutes)**
  - Review past jobs and get details to orient yourself to the person. For each of the past few jobs: dates, promotions, duties, staff, why left. Explain gaps.
  
- 3. Ask About Significant Accomplishments.**
  - Ask candidate to describe the most significant accomplishments (1-2) from work history. You should ask specifically, “When you worked for Kraft as VP of Product Marketing, tell me about what you see as your one to two main accomplishments.”
  - Spend time fact-finding and probing:
    - Describe the situation/challenges
    - Why were you chosen? What was your role?
    - Describe team; your role with team
    - Skills used/what did you learn
    - What was original plan...how did it change over time?
    - What would you change?
    - Toughest problem faced...how dealt with?
    - What was accomplished – ask for metrics.
    - What skills did you use, learn, apply?
    - How did you grow as a result?
    - If you could do it over again, what might you change?
  
- 4. Allow Time for Candidate to ask Questions**
  
- 5. Recruit and Close**
  - Tell the person how you see him or her at this stage. Ask for his/her thoughts and impressions.
  - Explain next steps and potential time line.
  
- 6. Make notes right away highlighting your overall rating (A, B, C ~ or use a 1-10 scale) as well as key strengths and key concerns.**