



INTERVIEWING TIPS FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES

The best interviewing training I have received was from The Adler Group (www.louadlergroup.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 is called Performance Based Interviewing which focuses on the candidate's significant accomplishments. By asking about accomplishments and probing on the details, the hiring team can learn more about the candidate than dozens of hypothetical questions and answers will ever provide.

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

- **The interviewer (or interview committee) should listen 75% of the time.** The interviewer should be talking about 25% of the interview. This is tough for some executives and search committees. 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 his/her 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 us about it."
 - Have you been in a situation that involved ABC? If so, please tell us about it and share any key lessons learned."
- **Allow for some time to pass 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. It is far too easy to "pitchfork" a person too quickly. Commit to an open mind during the interview and look for confirming and disconfirming evidence to back up your initial impressions.

- **Stick to job-related questions and skills.** 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 the 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. Allow the candidate to explain gaps.
3. **Ask about significant accomplishments.**
 - Ask the candidate to describe the most significant accomplishments (1-2) from work history. You should ask specifically, "When you worked for the Bloomberg Foundation as Vice President of Technology, tell us 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 the team; your role within the team.
 - Skills used/what did you learn?
 - What was the 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 questions from the candidate**
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 timeline.
6. **Make notes right away highlighting your overall rating (choose a scale) as well as key strengths and key concerns.**