Interviewing right
How science can sharpen your interviewing accuracy.

What the research shows
• Typical interviewing practices don’t help to distinguish performers from non-performers and frequently result in costly and ineffective hires.
• A structured, behavior-based approach to interviewing consistently leads to better results in identifying the right talent for the job.
• Structured interviews demonstrate fairness and have an excellent track record of legal defensibility.
• Identifying the right competencies to evaluate is a critical factor in interviewing success.
• What you ask a candidate about and how you phrase the question makes a big difference in the quality of information you receive.

What this book can do for you
• If you are a hiring manager, you will acquire a wealth of practical how-to tips on preparing for, conducting, and evaluating interviews that you can immediately put into practice.
• If you are an HR, recruiting, or training professional, this book is essential for making sure your organization’s current approach to interviewing is consistent with best practices. It also serves as an excellent pre-training tool for working with individuals who have had little exposure to structured interviewing.
• If you are an interviewing enthusiast, Interviewing right will bring you up to speed on state-of-the-art interviewing research and practices. Our distinguished trio of guest contributors from academia (Michael Campion), HR (Marilyn Westmas), and consulting (Linda Hodge) provide their favorite tips and insights from their many years of experience in the interviewing field.

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Interviewing right
How science can sharpen your interviewing accuracy

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Foreword

Organizations cannot afford to make poor personnel selection decisions. Most businesses are in such competitive markets these days that every advantage (or disadvantage) counts. Each new hire or promotion affects productivity, quality, customer service, innovation, and safety, as well as job satisfaction, commitment, turnover, absenteeism, and labor relations. It is no wonder that virtually every list of company values, and most every executive speech, includes a statement about the importance of the employees to the success of the enterprise.

The payoff of a good hiring decision, or the cost of a poor one, is a matter of much debate. At a minimum, most researchers in human resources agree that the financial value of a hiring decision is related to the wages and benefits paid to the employee—on average, employees must be worth at least as much as they are paid, or the enterprise could not make a profit. If you accept that, then one way to get a handle on the financial importance of hiring decisions is to take the expected wages to be paid to the new hire plus benefits (usually another 25% to 40% of wages) and multiply it times the average number of years employees tend to stay in the organization. For example, if you hire administrative personnel who make $40,000 per year (or $50,000 with benefits) and the average employee stays 5 years, then you are making at least a $250,000 hiring decision. If you are hiring a manager who makes $80,000 per year (or $100,000 with benefits) and the average employee stays 10 years, then you are making a $1,000,000 hiring decision. Multiply this out times the number of hiring decisions a company makes in a year, and you can easily see the huge financial consequences.

One problem with making good hiring decisions is the statistical probabilities of it all. Consider the fact that most human attributes, from physical attributes like strength and dexterity, to personal attributes like intelligence and personality, are normally distributed (or nearly so) as demonstrated in the following “Normal Curve” (or “Bell Curve”) that shows the number of people at each level of the attribute.
Job-related knowledge and skills are also distributed roughly as a normal curve. There are three implications of this:

1. There is a small number in the upper tail. There are very few superstars in the candidate pool. You must recruit, interview, and assess a lot of candidates to identify those few. These people can really give you a competitive advantage.

2. Most people are in the middle. With luck, most employees will be about average if you don’t do anything special in hiring. Of course, hiring people in the middle may not give you a competitive advantage.

3. There are some poor performers out there in the lower tail. If hired, they will cause you most of your HR problems (e.g., managing poor performance, absenteeism, morale problems, turnover, etc.). You must have a good hiring process to avoid inadvertently hiring these people. If you do not have a good hiring process, then you are taking your chances.

So, how do you make good hiring decisions? Fortunately, there is a huge science behind personnel selection. It has been a primary topic of research for 100 years. There are tens of thousands of articles and books on the topic. There are so many studies on the topic, that there are now what we call “meta-analyses,” which are statistical summaries of studies. Meta-analyses have shown that well-developed hiring tools can accurately identify the best candidates in nearly all jobs, occupations, and organizations.

Few research findings in the science of personnel selection are better supported than the finding that structured (planned, science-based) interviews are more valid than unstructured (informal, casual) interviews. There are hundreds of scientific articles and books on the topic. They are summarized in eight narrative reviews and seven meta-analytic reviews. Each one of these reviews has come to the same resounding conclusion—interviews should be planned for and structured.

So why is this finding the case? A fundamental scientific principle is that you cannot have validity (accuracy in picking the best future job performers) if you do not first have reliability. Reliability refers to the consistency, repeatability, and lack of error in measuring something. Traditional (informal, unplanned, casual) interviews are not very reliable. For example, different interviewers ask different questions and they evaluate the same information differently. How can they even begin to compare candidates?
So how do you get reliability or consistency? The answer is “standardization.” There must be consistency, regularity, and equivalence across interviews in order for the interviews to measure anything well enough that they could possibly predict something else. In other words, how can an interview predict future job performance if it cannot measure candidate aptitude in a consistent manner?

The other part of the story is job relatedness. The interview questions must relate to the important skills and competencies required to do the job. The interview must not only measure things well, but it must measure things that matter to the work.

The term “structured interviewing” refers both to the process of enhancing the standardization and job relatedness of the interview.

Extensive research has focused on how to structure the interview, and many helpful approaches and techniques have been identified. These techniques are relatively easy to use for the benefits they deliver. Examples include ways of enhancing the content of the interview, like basing questions on a careful analysis of the job requirements and asking the same or similar questions across candidates, and enhancing the process of evaluating candidate answers, like using rating scales and taking notes.

The goal of this book is to explain some of the most important ways to structure an interview. In my opinion, the book has done an excellent job of this. And it is written in an easily accessible and practical way that makes the material interesting and intuitive, while still being educational and technically sophisticated.

- Michael A. Campion
Chapter 1
The scientific and practical case for preparation, consistency, and rigor

While many interviewers will attest to their strong ability to read others and be a good judge of character in an interview, their intuition in these areas does not necessarily serve them well when it comes to making hiring decisions. In fact, research has shown that the probability of making a successful hiring decision when following a typical set of informal, casual interview practices is roughly equivalent to making the decision by flipping a coin (Hunter & Hunter, 1984). Unfortunately, the gambler’s fallacy can set in, and as successful hires add up, it becomes easier to overlook the losses.

What does it mean to follow a more rigorous and science-based interviewing process? Basically, it involves three things. First, pre-interview planning involves knowing what you are looking for ahead of time. What are the critical skills, competencies, and perspectives needed for successful performance? What elements of background and experience tend to predict those skills? Next, conducting the interview involves asking specific preplanned questions and looking for specific answers or themes. It also involves asking the same questions of multiple candidates for the same job. It means less talking and more listening. It also means taking relevant notes. Finally, post-interview evaluation involves using data-based rigor in comparing candidates. Referencing vague impressions and day-old memories won’t do. So, structured interviewing is a three-stage process: preplanning, conducting the interview properly, and applying rigor in the evaluation that follows.

Returning to the story of Ken and Amy’s interview, you may have thought to yourself that nothing in particular seemed out of place. There appeared to be an even, back-and-forth exchange and an opportunity to share stories and perspectives. Amy had the opportunity to demonstrate her accomplishments as well as get a feel for what Ken might expect from her. While she may have made a misstep here and there, she certainly didn’t do anything to embarrass herself or raise any red flags.

As you neared the end of the story, you may also have felt a sense of uncertainty starting to set in. Would Ken recommend Amy for hire? If so, how strong would the recommendation be? Would she be someone who could grow in the role, or would it be another year or so before Ken found himself back in the same place, sitting down with another candidate?
Put yourself in Ken’s shoes for a moment. How easy would it be to provide a solid conclusion as to whether or not Amy would be the right person for the role? He might have a gut feeling pushing him in one direction or the other, but beyond that, what has he really learned from the interview? Does he have the information he needs to predict if Amy can demonstrate the behaviors critical for long-term success at the director level and beyond? She’s had some interesting experiences that could be very valuable in her role at HomeCo, but how much has she really learned from them? Can she apply those lessons to a new and different set of experiences?

The reason Ken might find himself standing at the crossroads of uncertainty has nothing to do with anything “wrong” he did in the interview. If anything, he followed an approach that is typical. The job interview has become an institutionalized practice in selecting new employees and, like most typical practices, very little has changed over the years. As a result, many managers, including experienced interviewers like Ken, are left to trust a few noteworthy observations plus their instincts when it comes to making critical decisions about whom to hire and not hire.

The costs associated with making a poor or even suboptimal hiring decision are many and great. The financial costs are the most obvious. A study found that the costs associated with making a failed hire at the upper-managerial level can be as much as three times that person’s base salary plus benefits (Corporate Leadership Council, 1998). That’s $300,000 for a $100,000 manager.

And that’s just accounting for matters such as salary, benefits, severance pay, headhunting fees, and training costs. It doesn’t begin to factor in the likelihood of lost productivity, slumping revenues, declines in customer satisfaction, and turnover costs. Don’t forget the lurking danger of expensive and drawn-out legal proceedings that can crop up because of things that shouldn’t have been said or done during the interview itself. If that weren’t enough, lost opportunity costs as a result of not hiring the right person also need to be considered. Meanwhile, your competitors may be gaining on you in the war for talent if they are better at interviewing than you are.

In light of the sobering statistics mentioned above, there’s good news to offer about interviewing—very good news. Over the past several decades, a steady mountain of research and real-world results has built up in support of taking a planned and rigorous approach to the interview and focusing attention on specific behaviors critical to performance. It’s generally called the structured interview. Side-by-side comparisons of structured, behavior-based interviewing with an informal, casual, and unstructured interviewing process show that the structured approach is consistently more accurate,
oftentimes by more than a 2 to 1 ratio (Conway, Jako, & Goodman, 1995; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988; Wright, Lichtenfels, & Pursell, 1989).

So, if there is such clear and convincing evidence that planning and rigor—or structured interviewing—is a superior approach, why don’t more organizations and managers engage in the practice? It’s a bit like the old tale with diet and exercise. We’ve all heard since we were children that certain practices will lead to a longer and healthier life, but the vast majority of us tend to do our own thing until we get to a certain stage in life and then decide to try something different. Often we need a compelling reason to make such a change. The call to action can be either positive or negative. The same goes for interviewing. You might be dismayed at the disappointing performance of an employee that everyone thought was a sure thing based on his or her career trajectory and track record of accomplishments. On the flip side, the realization that you spend a significant amount of your waking hours at work or that you want to leave behind a talent legacy you can be proud of may motivate you to learn how to hire more productive and longer-lasting employees. Whatever your reason, find it, and you’ll be on the path to more accurate interviewing and hiring.

Misconceptions and/or fear of the unknown also discourage people from adopting healthier habits. “Exercise is boring. I’m a free spirit—I don’t like being on a regimen. Is it too late to even make a difference?

Why Berbee switched to structured interviewing

Our compelling reason to implement a better interviewing method was cost-driven. As the organization’s pace for growth began to accelerate in 2002, it became increasingly important to make good hiring choices. The more hiring you do, the more mistakes you can make, and thus, the more you increase costs, lose productivity, and even affect morale. In the year prior to implementing our structured, competency-based interviewing and selection process, we calculated that our hiring mistakes amounted to over half a million dollars. Because our ROI calculation was based on conservative data, the actual cost was likely higher. Either way, the financial impact of our hiring decisions led us to realize that we needed to implement a more rigorous and effective approach.

– Marilyn Westmas

I know someone who ate fast food every day and lived to be 90.” The list goes on and on. With more structured interviewing, some managers may feel like they are being taken out of their preferred style or method of
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Interviewing. “My interviewing track record has always been fine. Why can’t I do it my way anymore?” they might say. Others might feel confined by the structured approach. “I enjoy the back-and-forth of a good conversation. Plus, I’m more of a talker, not a listener.” Still others might be concerned about the impression left on the candidate. “Won’t they get bored? Will their impressions of the organization be negative?” The research done to date hasn’t provided any substantive evidence for these claims, nor do the feedback comments from interviewers and candidates, when the structured interview process follows best practices (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997).

Once you’ve invested some time in learning and practicing the more structured approach, the benefits will start to emerge, and you will also find that it can be a very engaging and even fun activity. Just like those individuals who get hooked on a healthier lifestyle, you may find yourself wondering at some point why you didn’t do it this way all along.

Before we start taking you through all the benefits and how-to’s associated with using a structured behavioral approach to interviewing, a few more words are in order about how interviews are typically conducted in organizations and some of the subtle and not-so-subtle shortcomings that can emerge.

Typical interview practices. Most common mistakes.

There is no record of the first-ever job interview, but our guess is that it took place a long, long time ago. Perhaps Ogg was looking for an additional hunter for his woolly mammoth team. Except for the fact that the conversation wasn’t interrupted by beeping pagers and cell phones, it was probably much like one you would experience today. So what are some of the more common elements of the job interview?

• **It doesn’t last very long.** A study reported that the average interview lasts just under 40 minutes. Even more interesting, the standard deviation (plus or minus variation) was 25 minutes. This means that only a small percentage of interviews are longer than an hour, and it would not necessarily be out of the ordinary for an interview to last only about 15 minutes (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997).

• **Roughly equal attention is given to delivering and gathering information.** In most organizations, interviews have a dual function: part opportunity to size up potential employees and part opportunity to sell the candidate on the organization.
• **The tone is often informal and unstructured.** A good part of the interview is often focused on building rapport and developing a good “feel” for the candidate. In the course of doing so, the conversation can often flow from topic to topic, depending on the interests of either party.

• **The content from interview to interview is inconsistent.** Interviewers often resort to a small subset of standard questions that they may use with any candidate. Other than that, the content is more likely to vary, depending on the candidate’s background and what topics come up during the conversation. Even interviews with candidates for the same position often do not overlap very much in terms of content. This makes comparing candidates difficult.

• **Note taking is limited.** Some interviewers are copious note takers by nature, but the majority like to record a few particular observations or underline noteworthy information here and there on the resume. Long stretches can go by during the interview where no note taking occurs at all.

• **The primary focus is on technical abilities and individual achievements.** Once they have an intuitive sense of whether or not they can work with a person, interviewers often shift their attention to determining if the individual has the requisite skills and abilities to perform the job on a day-to-day basis. Thus, more attention is focused on aspects of the candidate’s knowledge base and track record of accomplishments than on factors such as strategic thinking skills, getting work done through others, or handling difficult situations with courage and composure.

• **The resume often dictates the content of the interview.** A well-written resume is a great marketing tool. It not only gets a candidate noticed, but it can also influence what others choose to ask questions about. Consequently, if it’s a question that pertains to something on the candidate’s resume, he or she will likely have prepared a quick response that portrays the achievement in the most positive light (Andler, 1998).

• **Traditional questions are frequently met with canned and rehearsed responses.** Beyond the resume-specific questions that candidates can often easily respond to, there are also the time-honored favorites of the corporate interview, the most infamous being “Tell me your greatest strengths and weaknesses.” These questions and the responses that follow often provoke an “I’ve heard that before” reaction from both the candidate and the interviewer.
• **Criteria for evaluating a candidate are often narrow or unclear.** Sometimes interviewers sit down with a candidate in an effort to gauge the individual’s “fit,” but have difficulty defining what does or does not represent that fit. In other instances, a specific set of criteria is laid out, but why those particular factors have been chosen or if they capture a complete set of behaviors critical for performance is unclear.

Again, these practices are not necessarily always bad. Many managers simply find them the easiest and most acceptable things to do, given the perceived constraints of the interview format as well as the confines of their busy schedules. However, these typical practices often pave the way for some common interviewing mistakes. While not every problem listed below finds its way into each and every interview situation, at least a couple of them tend to appear in any interview.

• **Lack of preparation.** Sometimes the opportunity to conduct a successful interview is in jeopardy before the conversation even begins. Without a clear understanding of the role and the competencies needed to tackle it successfully, and how key behaviors can be spotted in the interview, the rest of the effort will lack focus and effectiveness. Nevertheless, whether because of limited time or a belief in their ability to read others, many interviewers wind up “winging it” when it comes time to conduct the interview.

• **Overweighing first impressions.** One of the most cited interview studies came to the conclusion that most interviewers reach a near-firm decision on hiring within the first three minutes of meeting a candidate (Springbett, 1958). In these cases, the remainder of the interview exists to either search for more information that confirms initial positive impressions or go through the motions until the session can be called to an end. As a result, important information is often overlooked or doesn’t have the opportunity to surface in the discussion.

• **Insufficient data gathering.** As we mentioned earlier, note taking is often limited and sporadic. Consequently, the interviewer misses the opportunity to record impressions in real time. This limits the amount of clear information to draw from when discussing the candidate with others and trying to reach final conclusions later.

• **Making too much of a negative.** At least three to four pieces of positive information are needed to balance out a negative impression recorded during the interview (Miller & Rowe, 1967). Some interviewers’ tendencies to want to “screen out” candidates by looking for a so-called red flag or knock-out punch make it difficult to make objective evaluations.
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• **Fix-it-later assumptions.** Individuals who adhere to fix-it-later assumptions are often so taken with a candidate’s numerous positive qualities that they are willing to overlook issues that could potentially result in serious problems down the road. A frequent example is when a candidate with superior technical skills is extended an offer despite clear evidence of low interpersonal skills. The interviewer assumes that the candidate’s interpersonal shortcomings can be addressed over time while he or she continues to make a positive impact in the technical arena. Sometimes this story has a happy ending, but the more frequent result is a call to HR or an expensive executive coach.

• **Overemphasizing fit.** Research suggests that person-organization or person-culture fit is an important element in retention and long-term success on the job (Schneider, 1987). However, it is not the only factor of relevance and should be appropriately balanced with other considerations in making the hiring decision.

• **Focusing on irrelevant behaviors.** Sometimes the interviewer’s attention is drawn to a behavior that is intriguing yet has little relevance to performance on the job. A candidate might make an impression with her interpersonal savvy and poise in dealing with others. However, if the role she is a candidate for is mostly behind the scenes and offers little opportunity to entertain or influence others, how valuable are those skills?

• **Biased/leading questions.** Even the most experienced interviewers will occasionally provide too much information to lead the candidate. Asking closed-ended questions that result in the candidate giving factual or yes/no answers is also an easy trap to fall into. The candidate might appreciate the ease of responding to these types of questions, but they provide little in the way of valuable information for the interviewer.

• **Hasty evaluation and decision making.** Thorough preparation and an expertly conducted interview can be quickly undone by poor handling of the decision-making process. Hiring panels can begin to let personal biases and agendas influence the final outcome when faced with limited information and time pressure.

Following a structured, behavior-based approach to interviewing minimizes or eliminates many of these mistakes. The remaining chapters explain why and how this happens.
Does person-organization fit really matter?

Both experienced and inexperienced interviewers often believe that the fit between the person and the organization is a critical factor in determining the outcome of a hiring decision. It turns out that the amount of statistical variability in hiring decisions that is accounted for by actual measured similarity between the values of the candidate and the values of the organization is quite small.

In a typical study on this topic, the cultural values of the organization and the individual candidates are measured using independent surveys. The cultural values include such things as the importance of autonomy on the job, being team oriented, employment security, risk taking, rule oriented, results oriented, emphasis on quality, and many others. The actual similarity is calculated by computer and not known to the interviewer. Later this measure of similarity is correlated with the interviewer’s hiring decisions. The results show that only about 1% or 2% of the variation in hiring decisions is explained by actual similarity in cultural values.

There are many possible reasons for this outcome. Possibly the candidates’ credentials are more important than cultural values. Or possibly candidates that appear to “fit” one organization, fit many organizations. In other words, good candidates fit lots of organizations. Whatever the explanation, the suggestion from this research is not to make too much out of presumed culture fit in your hiring decisions.

– Michael A. Campion


Nobody said it was easy

Interviewing and making accurate decisions is not an inherently simple or easy process. A variety of challenges facing the interviewer makes it easier for mistakes to occur. Some are obvious; others tend to lurk in the background. Here are five critical challenges interviewers face:

(1) **Time pressure:** Time pressure exists on two levels: micro and macro. On the smaller scale, a limited amount of time often exists to gather meaningful information from a candidate—interview sessions are seldom scheduled for more than an hour. On the larger scale, recruiters and managers experience pressure to fill open positions in a timely manner. Having a position stay open longer than expected only raises the pressure.

(2) **Decision pressure:** Making a hiring decision is never a trivial task, but the pressure on making a good call tends to increase with the level and salary of the position.
(3) **Ambiguity:** This challenge is a given. No matter what your experience as an interviewer or the amount of time taken, you will never learn everything you need or want to know about a candidate. Interviewers need to be able to deal comfortably and effectively with loose ends. Unfortunately, many individuals find doing so very difficult.

(4) **Social expectations:** Both candidates and interviewers tend to be on their best behavior. Neither party wants to look bad to the other. While commendable, this mind-set can also lead to acting out of character and telling the other party what we think they want to hear. As a result, a positively distorted image can form on both sides and both parties will ultimately pay the price.

(5) **Process and logistics:** Sometimes the coordination, complexity, and level of secrecy that accompany scheduling an interview for an executive-level candidate can rival that of a major military campaign. Oftentimes these steps are necessary, but they also sap time, energy, and focus away from the real task—determining if the person is right for the role. Similar challenges can occur in assigning responsibilities to an interview panel and then getting panel members to share their observations and make a decision. As a result, standardization of interview practices is often an afterthought.

Some of these challenges, such as ambiguity, will never be completely eliminated, but a best practices approach to interviewing makes many of them more manageable.

**The advantages of structured interviewing**

Following the interviewing approach we describe in this book is not just about eliminating mistakes or making the process more manageable; substantial benefits can also be gained. Here are just a few:

- **Improved hiring:** Structured, behavior-based interviewing is one of the most valid forms of selection. Structured interviews also demonstrate lower levels of adverse impact (see box below) than cognitive abilities tests, another popular selection tool (Huffcutt & Roth, 1998). Furthermore, applicant reactions to interviews are more favorable when compared to other selection methods such as personality tests, biodata inventories, integrity tests, and some forms of cognitive abilities tests (Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993).
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• **Clarity and comfort:** When you conduct a structured interview that focuses on abilities mission critical to job performance, you know what you are looking for and how to determine if a candidate possesses those abilities. The ambiguity and uncertainty experienced by the interviewer decreases and confidence increases. Consequently, there is less likelihood of “missing something” in the interview.

• **Standardization:** A structured, consistent interview process creates an even playing field for evaluating candidates for a position. Interviewers share a common language and a common yardstick for comparing candidates’ strengths and weaknesses.

• **Easier maintenance:** Clearly defined roles for interviewers. Established criteria for evaluating candidates. Specified links between job requirements and interview content. All of these elements make it easier to train individuals how to interview and evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of the organization’s interviewing practices.

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**What Is adverse impact?**

“Adverse impact” is a technical term with important legal implications. Adverse impact is determined by comparing the hiring rates of minority group candidates to non-minority group candidates, or women candidates to men candidates. For example, if you hired 45% of women candidates and 50% of men candidates, then the impact on women would be 45% divided by 50%, or .90. If the impact is below .80, then adverse impact is said to occur. If it is above .80, then adverse impact has not occurred. In other words, adverse impact is when the hiring rate of one group is less than 80% or 4/5ths the hiring rate of the other group.

Adverse impact is important because federal hiring regulations stipulate that when adverse impact occurs, the organization is required to prove that its hiring procedure is job related; otherwise, it is illegal. Many companies have been sued for adverse impact and lost millions of dollars in damages and attorneys’ fees.

Structured interviews tend to show less adverse impact compared with other good hiring procedures such as employment aptitude tests. Tests can sometimes show adverse impact against some minority groups, although not usually against women.

– Michael A. Campion

The value of a repeatable process

In the high-tech industry, we’ve learned that we can reduce time, eliminate errors, and increase the quality of the result if we operate in a repeatable process framework. With a repeatable process, there is a planned route and specific, proven tools to use. For us at Berbee, the Lominger model is our repeatable interview process. Each interview set is customized for the position requirements, but the routine and methods are always the same. The interview team and the hiring manager know what to expect and get very good at their part. We have quickly become more efficient and more skilled in our questioning and evaluation techniques.

– Marilyn Westmas

• **Strengthened defensibility:** The prospect of litigation always hovers over selection decisions. Legal research shows that structured interviews stand up very well in court (Williamson, Campion, Malos, Roehling, & Campion, 1997).

• **Selection-development alignment:** Think of the observations gathered from the interview as a first snapshot of a new employee entering the organization. Evaluating behaviors critical to job performance gives you an immediate assessment of where an employee stands. Developmental needs identified during the interview can be addressed immediately via specially designed job assignments.

The key to achieving these advantages lies in mastering three critical steps in the interview process.

**Just three steps? Tell me more.**

Stage is a more appropriate term than step. A lot of attention tends to get focused on the interview itself. The pre- and post-interview stages do not always get the same scrutiny. However, critical mistakes can happen at any stage and each is essential to a successful interview. Preparing for, conducting, and evaluating the interview make up the proverbial three-legged stool of interviewing practices. Chapters 2 through 4 focus on each individual stage and provide a variety of how-to steps and practical tips.
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Following the essentials, the final three chapters help you take interviewing to the next level. Chapter 5 outlines some skills for more advanced interviewers to master. Chapter 6 tackles emerging trends and unanswered questions related to interviewing. Chapter 7 identifies the critical skills an interviewer needs to be effective and offers tips for development.

Interviewing is always full of surprises and insights. It’s something you can become very good at, but no matter how many interviews you’ve conducted, there is always something new to learn. This book will provide you with lessons to build a good foundation. Embrace your experiences as an interviewer, and they will be a source of continued growth and enrichment as well as a competitive advantage.

Court cases on employment interviews

Structured interviews have been shown to be more legally defensible in court than traditional interviews. A study of 99 federal court cases on employment interviews identified the characteristics of interviews statistically associated with judgments in favor of the organization (defendant). These characteristics are the unmistakable features of structured interviews. They were:

- Objective/job-related criteria
- Behavior (versus trait) based criteria
- Specific (versus general) criteria
- Trained interviewer
- Interviewer familiar with job requirements
- Validation (job relatedness) evidence
- Guidelines for conducting interview
- Minimal interviewer discretion
- Standardized questions
- Consistent administration
- Interviewer’s decision reviewed

– Michael A. Campion

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