

BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING

One tool you can use to find the right people is “behavior-based interviewing.” It starts with writing down the *behaviors* that are most important for success in a particular job – not the tasks. Managing a team, motivating people, developing under-performers, starting a line of business, engaging people in change – these all might be behaviors you’re looking for. This list becomes your litmus test for selecting the right people.

Here is an example of a typical interview vs. behavior based interview:

Typical Interview:

- Describe your experience in sales.
- Have you ever had to manage large accounts?
- Describe your greatest success.
- What motivates you?
- How do you handle conflicts?

Behavior Based Interview:

- This position requires a person to make five sales calls a day while traveling in a territory from Minneapolis to Atlanta. Tell me about your experience managing those kinds of sales logistics.
- This position requires people to manage large accounts with three or four contacts inside the organization, all of whom need to say “yes” to consummate a sale. Tell me about your experience making such a sale. How did you get them all to say “yes”?
- We expect people to be self-motivated. Describe your own motivations for success. Describe examples where you went an extra mile for a client – and for your company?
- Tell us how you handled a situation that made you look bad. What did you do? What did you say? What was the result?
- This position requires working with an internal R&D team to help them modify our product for a new launch every twelve months. Describe how you’ve successfully managed internal relationships with R&D teams to maximize the success of upgraded products?

The corollary of behavior-based interviewing is open-ended recruiting: when a position comes open, you should keep searching until you find the right person, even if it means temporarily not filling the slot. Finding the right person is simply too important to warrant settling for less.