



Interviewing Effectively - How to Select the People You Really Need

An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

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Interviewing Effectively - How to Select the People You Really Need

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COURSE OVERVIEW

For many people, making a successful hiring selection is a lot like describing their taste in art: *“I’m not sure how to describe it but I’ll know it when I see it!”*

Think back to the last time you interviewed an applicant. You had the best of intentions and wanted to ask the right questions to discover information about their background, experience, skills, and abilities.



But, if you are like many others without interview training, you may have found yourself doing more talking than listening rather than learning about his or her strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps the interview got off track and you found it difficult to get back into focus. And, if someone would have asked for your opinion of the applicant at the end of it, would you have been able to refer to specific skills or just your overall impression?

And, as for the person you finally selected, you probably based your decision more on instinct than specific information. Also, if you were asked why you **didn't select** someone else, would you have been able to defend your choice objectively so as not to show discrimination?

If you're disappointed with the results of this kind of hit-or-miss approach to interviewing applicants, then it is time to approach it with a more systematic and objective method. This course will help you develop:

- ✓ A process of analyzing the open position that will allow you to determine what types of skills and qualities you require in an applicant to ensure later success on the job.
- ✓ An effective plan for the interview that allows you to engage in friendly (and informative) chatting without losing the thread of your questions or letting the session slip out of your control.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course teaches the following specific knowledge and skills:

1. A process of analyzing the open position that will allow you to determine what types of skills and qualities you require in an applicant to ensure later success on the job
2. An effective plan for the interview that allows you to engage in friendly (and informative) chatting without losing the thread of your questions or letting the session slip out of your control
3. How to calculate the cost of turnover which results from a bad selection
4. How to distinguish between the skills and behaviors required for success in the open position
5. How to create "tie breaker" criteria to select the best candidate
6. A technique to help define the desired behaviors for a position
7. How to identify warning clues in a resume that should require follow-up in an interview
8. How to establish rapport with the applicant to help you have a more effective interview; and
9. How to avoid asking questions that could lead to trouble later on.

POOR CHOICES AND THE COST OF TURNOVER

Finding new or replacing lost employees is very expensive for any organization. This course teaches skills that can reduce this cost by helping you improve your interviewing results through more consistency and relevance to your interview questions. *A more standardized approach to questions means the answers you get will help you distinguish between applicants more easily and be more confident about your final selection.*



The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) estimates that the cost of turnover is typically 30% of an employee's **total** annual salary expense when you factor in the cost of recruitment, lost productivity, possible overtime for others in making up that person's work, possible impact on customers, morale of fellow employees, etc.

Here is how to figure the cost of turnover in your organization.

1. Take the annual salary for the position you are trying to fill \$ _____
2. Add the wage cost of benefits, taxes, and anything else the employer provides such as uniforms, parking fees, etc. as a percentage of salary. Usually from 28% - 35% depending on the organization \$ _____
3. Take 30% of that amount as the cost of turnover.

For example, let's use a position that pays \$80,000 a year and the company's added wage costs are 35%.

1. Take the annual salary for the position you are trying to fill. = **\$80,000**
2. Add the cost of benefits, taxes, and anything else the employer provides such as uniforms, parking fees, etc. as a percentage of salary. (We will use 35% here.) $\$80,000 \times 35\% = \$28,000$
 $\$80,000 + \$28,000 = \$108,000$

3. Take 30% of that amount as the cost of turnover. $\$108,000 \times 30\% = \$32,400$. The cost of losing that $\$80,000$ employee is estimated to be **\$32,400**.

Additional costs include fees for outside recruiters (if you use them) and possible overtime for employees having to cover for this open position.

Obviously, we must improve our interviewing skills to get better ‘fits’ for open positions so we can reduce our costs of turnover.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Many times, interviewers make the mistake of focusing on the technical skills relevant to the position *instead of the behavioral skills necessary for the successful application of the technical skills.*

For example, if an IT manager were asked, *“What skills and abilities are you looking for in the person who fills this programmer’s position?”* they may look at you as if you had lost your mind and reply, *“The ability to write code, of course!”* Their interview questions would probably deal primarily with the technical skills of writing code.



TECHNICAL SKILLS OR BEHAVIORAL SKILLS?

However, the position of a programmer *within the organizational network* probably involves many critical **behaviors and abilities** that are not just about the technical skills of writing code such as:

- The ability to multi-task (it is rare that someone with technical skills will only work on a single project to completion without interruption by unexpected ‘fires to put out’ or changing priorities from management)

- The ability to ask questions and listen effectively (Are the desired outcomes the client is expecting actually what they will get given the existing resources and environment?)
- The ability to meet milestones and deadlines
- The ability to work within a team effectively (Programming is rarely a project for one person. Typically, several programmers work together on segments of a project, and they must be able to get along with each other.)

- The ability to manage issues (Issues will frequently arise, and they must be managed effectively or escalate into a crisis.)
- The ability to manage technical debt (Technical debt is a result of shortcuts taken during development. The skilled programmer will find a way to manage it, but it is a choice.)
- The ability to manage risk (Risk is a result of uncertainty. The skilled programmer will find a way to manage it, but it is a choice.)
- The ability to manage business users (Business users are the people who use the software. We are dependent on them for which business users we can deliver value to.)

To view the remainder of the course material and to take the quiz for PDH credit, you must purchase the course.

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