



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Performance-Based Interviews

Structured behavioral and competency interviews merely prove that an applicant can talk the talk. The person hired may not be a top performer but a prepared "impression manager."

Performance-based interviews ensure that HR can identify top performers who meet or exceed expectations. Further, they are a seamless addition to the process if HR has been using some type of structured interview.

Performance-based interview questions are specific to the job, company problems and culture. This specificity is critical, as it enables HR to identify potential top performers from the applicant pool. It also exposes the strengths, weaknesses, and personal and cultural fit of the applicants. It takes only minimal effort to evolve from a structured behavioral or competency interview to a performance-based interview. Hence, HR professionals, who have long been comfortable with competency models and/or have invested thousands in such hiring models, must incorporate performance-based techniques into their current selection practices. Organizations that do so have found the change to be painless and the results dramatic (significant time and cost savings and improved hiring decisions that identify a top performer every time).

Performance-based interviews are similar to structured interviews. In performance-based interviews, each interviewee receives the same set of questions and the score corresponds to his or her responses. A five-point performance-based rating scale is also used for evaluation, but the scale begins at zero. Furthermore, with the performance-based rating scale, the correctness and completeness of applicant responses is evaluated.

Potential top performers are easy to identify because they always give answers that are both fully complete and correct and that exceed expectations.

Performance-based interviews are superior to structured interviews because instead of evaluating applicants on work done earlier, they are asked to do work and/or verbally resolve problems that would be typical of the new job. In other words, applicants actually perform critical components of the job. This enables HR to identify people who can do the work and solve problems instead of identifying those who only tell what they did elsewhere. A comparison of the applicants' responses reveals the top performers (i.e., those applicants that exceeded expectations). Moreover, performance-based interview questions can be developed more quickly because they emerge directly from the job.

Performance-based interviews also enjoy a long shelf life because they can be modified easily without reducing their effectiveness. By changing one or more of the critical dimensions of the questions asked, an entirely different response is acquired. This prevents applicants from memorizing suggested responses (a major problem with behavioral and competency interviews) and allows the questions to keep pace with positions as they evolve. This means the only way applicants can successfully answer all of the questions is if they can truly perform all aspects of the job. If they are well-



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qualified, they can breeze through the interview. Otherwise, no amount of preparation or practice will get them in.

These interviews have consistently identified top performing applicants for a wide variety of jobs including entry level, clerical, service, technical, medical, and professional, as well as senior and executive management. The use of performance-based interviews also speeds up the selection process, especially when used in conjunction with Micro Assessments, which are essentially written performance-based pre-interviews that can be emailed to applicants anywhere in the world. This dramatically improves the quality of applicants and reduces the number of applicants to be interviewed (and the resulting cost).