Talent in Innovation.
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Guidelines for Best Practice in Selection Interviewing

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Foreword

The interview has always played a significant part in employee selection. It is used by both human resources specialists and line managers, either as the sole method of selection or in conjunction with other types of assessment.

Despite its universality, some practitioners have concerns or questions about selection interviews. These relate to several aspects of the selection interview. For example, consistency of approach across different interviewers is an issue for some organisations. Others will be interested in the practical processes; how long should we spend on the interview; who should be involved? Yet other considerations are to do with interviewing skills; what sort of questions to ask or avoid, and how to develop rapport with the candidate?

This guide addresses some of the issues to be considered when attempting to maximise the effectiveness of interviews in selecting the best candidate. It cannot, of course, replace adequate training for interviewers.

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The Use of the Interview in Selection

The interview is the most commonly used method of selecting people for jobs. Every year, all over the world, millions of hours are spent conducting selection interviews and hardly any job is filled without some sort of interview taking place. In the 2018 edition of SHL's *Global Assessment Trends Report* – which focuses on organisations' talent management and assessment practices – a key finding was that interviews continue to be a mainstay of the hiring process. Additionally, the use of technology in support of interviewing is becoming more prevalent with over half of the global sample and nearly two-thirds of F500 organisations using real-time video interviews. Table 1 below the usage of types of interviews and technology-enabled interviews by employers (SHL, 2018).

Table 1: Selection methods used by employers (%)

	Currently Use	
Type of Interview	F500	Global Sample
Structured Interviews	78%	76%
Unstructured Interviews	51%	45%
Live / Real Time Video Interviews	65%	54%
Asynchronous Video Interviews	20%	13%
Facial Recognition Software	7%	4%

What is a Selection Interview?

The selection interview takes many forms; it can be one to one or one to several interviewers – the panel interview. Organisations quite commonly hold more than one interview, and interviews at different stages of the selection process, or with different interviewers – who may well have varying objectives. This diversity in format and objectives no doubt contributes to some of the reported inconsistencies across interviews, which also has an impact on the interview's value in predicting future job performance.

The Objectives of the Selection Interview

Much research has focused on the interview as a selection instrument, with the emphasis on the interviewer obtaining information from candidates in order to assess their ability to do the job.

However, in practice, interviewers and candidates place considerable importance on the interview as an exchange of information and less tangible (and more subjective) issues such as the fit of the candidate with the organisation and its culture, or the candidate's personal fit within the team. These variations in the objectives will influence the type of interview carried out and the selection procedure may include several interviews with different objectives, format and content. The most common types of interview used in selection are described in the next section.

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Types of Interviews

Selection interviews can be conducted in many different ways, but perhaps the three models most widely used by personnel professionals are:

- The biographical interview
- The competency-based interview (or the behaviourally-based criterion interview)
- The situational interview

Depending upon the situation, and the information that the interviewer hopes to obtain, a combination of two or even all three may be useful.

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Different Interview Formats: Biographical Interview

Definition

The biographical interview can be defined as a semi-structured chronological exploration of the candidate's past experiences.

It is based on the premise that past behaviour will predict future behaviour. Its aim is to cover, in a comprehensive and probing manner, previous experience both within and outside formal work situations.

Areas of Use

The biographical interview is very widely used at all levels and stages of selection interviewing.

It is probably most appropriate for external candidates, as either the only or the first interview, where technical interviews with line managers are also included.

Example Questions

Questions in a biographical interview can typically be grouped into three broad categories:

- Career: Talk me through the roles you have held in the last 5 years (Probe)
- Skills: What skills most qualify you for this role? (Probe)
- Aspirations: What is your ultimate career goal? Where do you see your career in 5 years? (Probe)

Scoring Methodology

One of the biggest criticisms of the biographical interview is the fact that there is a lack of rigid structure surrounding how to objectively discern how well a candidate has performed. Particularly if it is done without the criteria for the role in mind.

Often a candidate who has undergone a biographical interview will be judged on the general impression he or she leaves; the process is therefore likely to be more subjective.

That being said, there are several suggestions regarding how to score this type of assessment in a fair and objective manner:

- Score applicant responses based on the number of performance indicators each candidate possesses
- Objectively assesses items of biographical information about candidates, scoring them on their answers against previous data to determine an overall risk level

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Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
It is the most common format of interview, seen from the perspective of the candidate, so may be what the candidate expects.	Candidates who are more articulate or have good social skills may do better.
It provides a comprehensive picture of an individual, in terms of both their work and personal life.	It is likely to take both training and time to extract the relevant evidence for specific criteria, e.g. planning and organising skills
	Used without regard to the job criteria, it can lead to questions which are irrelevant to the job.
	The difficulty of relating the interview information to job relevant criteria means that interviewers' personal biases and stereotypes are more likely to affect decisions. This increases the danger of poor decisions and illegal direct and / or indirect discrimination under equal opportunities legislation.
	Its use can be seen as less appropriate for internal interviews where career history is, or should be, known.

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Different Interview Formats: Competency-Based Interview or Behaviourally-Based Criterion Interview

Definition

Competency-based interviewing or criterion interviewing is a structured series of questions aimed at eliciting behavioural information against specific job related competencies or criteria. A competency or criterion in this context is a type of behaviour or skill found to be relevant to the job. Job analysis is usually used to identify relevant behaviour of good job performers.

Questions usually focus on eliciting specific examples from candidates, describing situations where they have demonstrated the required behaviours. These are probed in a systematic way by the interviewer to build up a picture of relative strengths and weaknesses of candidates against the criteria. Competency definitions can describe both acceptable / successful and unacceptable / unsuccessful behaviour.

Areas of Use

Competency-based or criterion interviewing can be used for external selection and internal promotion / selection interviewing. It is particularly useful in assessment centres where the interview is usually employed to provide evidence against specific criteria. It is also a useful technique at second interviews, and where selection is shared between different interviewers, individually or in panels, because it allows for a structured and systematic approach with minimal overlap or repetition.

Example Questions

An example of a competency or criterion is:

- Relating and Networking: Establishes good relationships with customers and staff. Builds wide and effective networks of contacts inside and outside the organisation. Relates well to people at all levels
- Example Question: Can you give me an example of a recent occasion when you needed quickly to establish an effective relationship? What did you do? What was the outcome? How would your colleagues approach this?

The STAR Method

The S.T.A.R (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) format of interviewing is a recognised structured interviewing format used by many organisations. It is relatively easy to use and allows for behavioural and competency based questioning.

The interviewer's task is to ask questions that direct the applicant to answer each of the STAR responses in very specific terms.

If an aspect of the STAR is missing or a candidate has failed to address the question fully, an interviewer can ask follow up questions to get a clearer perspective of each aspect of the STAR. For instance, an interviewer may probe further when a candidate focuses on the actions of a collective as opposed to highlighting their specific contribution to a situation or task.

The main disadvantage of this strategy is that it may lend itself to a degree of subjectivity, as the likeability of a candidate may influence whether an interview decides to probe for further information.

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Example Questions

Situation:

- “Tell me about a time when you had to go the extra mile to complete a project? Why were you in that situation?”
- “Tell me about a time when you came across a problem you didn’t immediately know how to solve.”
- “Tell me about a time when you dealt effectively with conflict?”
- “Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation that you have completed?”
- “Describe the last time you did something at work that went well beyond expectations?”

Task:

- “What was your exact part to play in this situation?”
- “What was your assigned role?”
- “How were you able to turn this situation into an opportunity?”

Action:

- "What were the steps you took to solve this challenge?”
- “How did you overcome roadblocks and follow the situation through to get results?”
- “Was there anything unique about your actions or your method worth mentioning?”

Results:

- “How were things better off because of what you did?”
- “What lessons did you learn?“

Scoring Methodology

Because of the inherent structure associated with competency-based assessments, they are easier to score and are therefore considered a more objective measure of a candidate’s ability.

Generally, with competency-based interviews the interviewer will have predetermined which types of answers would score positive points and which types of answers would count against the candidates. In some instances this may be further broken down into negative indicators that are minor – those that are negative but not that important to the role, and those that are decisive – those that are intrinsic to success in the future role.

Marks are then allocated depending on the extent to which the candidates answer matches those negative and positive indicators. As an example, if the question is “Describe a time when you had to deal with pressure”, the positive and negative indicators may be as follows:

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Demonstrates a positive approach towards the problem	Perceives challenges as problems
Considers the wider need of the situation	Attempts unsuccessfully to deal with the situation alone
Recognises his own limitations	Used inappropriate strategies to deal with pressure / stress
Is able to compromise	
Is willing to seek help when necessary	
Use effective strategies to deal with pressure / stress	

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Then the marking schedule would be:

N / E	No Evidence	No Evidence Reported
1	Poor	Little evidence of positive indicators Mostly negative indicators, many decisive
2	Areas for concern	Limited number of positive indicators Many negative indicators, one or more decisive
3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory display of positive indicators Some negative indicators but none decisive
4	Good to excellent	Strong display of positive indicators

Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
Questions are based on an objective analysis of the job and can be seen to be directly relevant to the skills required in the job.	To cover a large number of competencies fully, the interview could be extremely long.
It is easier for information gathered in the interview to be evaluated on a rating scale against that competency or criterion.	Highly articulate candidates or those experienced in this format may be able to make a credible case at interview and be over-rated.
By using the same competencies or criteria, evaluation of the assessment from the interview can be readily integrated with information from other sources such as tests, exercises and questionnaires.	The method assumes that a thorough job analysis has been undertaken. Its effectiveness is markedly reduced if the selection of competencies has not been systematic.
It allows candidates to present relevant evidence of their competence from any sphere, not just work-related. This helps candidates with different backgrounds and experience to be assessed more accurately.	If a chronological / biographical interview has not been carried out there could be significant aspects of a candidate's work history which have not been explored.

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Different Interview Formats: Situational Interview

Definition

The situational interview is a series of predetermined, hypothetical, job-related questions, the responses to which are evaluated against a set of pre-determined example answers – as expressed by subject matter experts.

The interview is therefore highly structured in terms of both the questions and the evaluation of the answers. The situational interview attempts to reduce the potential bias and subjectivity of the interview. It produces an interview that has some of the characteristics of a more formal test.

Typical job situations need to be straightforward, where job behaviour is restricted to one or two dimensions. The situations and example responses should be developed in collaboration with interview and subject matter experts.

Areas of Use

The situational interview was initially developed for use with straightforward manual positions and exclusively for selection. It has been used as a telephone pre-screening interview where there are large numbers of applicants. More recent applications have involved use in selection for clerical and administrative jobs.

Example Questions

The company you work for has implemented a new customer management system and is moving information across from the old system to the new system. The data has to be transferred across manually and you have been asked to get involved in this. Your task is to copy information from customer printouts onto the new customer management system. The task involves inputting thousands of customer details, is quite repetitive and requires a great deal of concentration. You are working in an open plan office with other data inputters who are working on the same project. The area you are working in is opposite the Customer Services Department, which receives incoming calls and deals with customer queries. As a result, it can, at times, get quite noisy. How would you approach the task? (Listen and evaluate response against benchmark answers.)

Scoring Methodology

As mentioned above, the responses to a situational interview are compared against a set of pre-determined example answers – as expressed by subject matter experts.

In this way, one can develop a rating scale not dissimilar to a scale that would be used in a behavioural interview. Using key indicators of the technical experience required for the role, and a rating scale linked to the degree a candidates answer matches the listed response.

Score			
1	2	3	4
No answer	(include minimum criteria)	(include minimum criteria)	(include minimum criteria)

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Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
All candidates receive standard identical questions and the information gathered is evaluated objectively.	The underlying assumption of the situational interview is that people's intentions (as expressed in response to hypothetical questions) are related to actual behaviour, however, some researchers suggest that it may measure cognitive problem solving skills rather than typical patterns of behaviour.
The questions are based exclusively on job situations. Therefore, the content is viewed as being highly relevant to the job.	The interview is open to social desirability responding. In some cases, the interviewee may try to second guess the required answers or discern clues from the wording of the questions.
A good level of predictive validity* has been found for situational interviews.	The time and expense of devising, running and scoring the interviews can be very resource intensive.
In the eyes of the candidate, the questions have high face validity, i.e. they appear relevant, which increases their motivation in the interview.	Articulate candidates may do better.
	Where a number of equally viable or acceptable responses could be given, it becomes difficult to rate them objectively in terms of their effectiveness.
	Candidates may find the formality and structure of the interview unfriendly and intimidating.
	Gaps in work history are not fully explored.

* Predictive validity - the ability of a measure to predict future performance levels

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Different Interview Formats: The Panel Interview

Definition

The panel interview refers to the number of interviewers rather than any particular style of interviewing. The panel interview has at least two interviewers up to a maximum of around 20. The panel interview may be biographical, situational or competency-based, or a combination of different interviewing styles.

Areas of Use

Overall, the panel strives to achieve greater accuracy and objectivity by combining the skills and viewpoints from a range of specialists and pooling their judgements to evaluate the candidate against a shared understanding of the assessment criteria.

Panels often combine a line management interviewer with a representative from the HR function. Panel interviews are used at all levels, but particularly with more senior levels, and at a later stage in the selection process.

Panel interviews are a popular method of assessment in Public Sector and other large organisations, e.g. banks.

Guidelines, Strengths and Limitations

To get the most out of panel interviews, general interview guidelines should be followed, as well as the following guidelines.

Before the Interview:

- It is particularly important that you meet up with other panel members before the interview to discuss your overall approach
- A chairperson should be appointed at this meeting
- Any relevant documentation, e.g. person specification, CV, competency interview guide, should be reviewed by the panel before the interview
- The panel should also discuss the strategy to be followed: what to look for, who explores what areas and for how long
- Prior to the interview, the chairperson should ensure that the panel has agreed on how the interview is to be conducted
- Agree who is responsible for taking notes at different points of the interview

During the Interview:

- The chairperson has responsibility for introducing panel members, making the candidate feel at ease, and maintaining control of the interview, e.g. by picking up on any points which need further exploration and summarising where appropriate
- As a panel member, you should be aware of your own behaviour during the interview. In particular, it is important to note:
    - When not asking questions, you should avoid distractions such as shuffling papers and talking to each other
    - Staring fixedly at the candidate can be just as unsettling as appearing to take no interest at all
    - When not actively involved in questioning, you should be listening intently for cues to follow-up, and making brief notes of any evidence that seems to be emerging

After the Interview:

The chairperson should lead the discussion of the candidate, recording the panel's assessment, differences of opinion within the panel, and ensuring that members' judgements are based on evidence rather than guesswork.

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Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
The panel interview reduces the risk that the bias of any one individual will prevail.	The presence of several interviewers at the same time can be stressful to some candidates.
The panel interview enables those not actually asking questions to make more effective observations of the candidate, and to pick up cues, which the questioner misses.	It is generally harder for a panel to establish rapport with a candidate than is the case with one-to-one interviews.
The evaluations of the panel can be made from a common base, which is shared between members.	There may be differences of view within the panel between HR specialists who are trained interviewers and line managers who may not be trained; one side may want to have the last word.
The panel enables different functional interests to be represented, e.g. different departments, and helps to build consensus.	Panel interviews make heavy demands on the time of senior managers.
The panel can combine the different skills and viewpoints of HR specialists and those of line managers or technical specialists.	Research into Group Psychology does not support the assumption that groups necessarily make better decisions.

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Different Interview Formats: The Telephone Interview

Definition

The telephone interview refers to the medium in which the interview is conducted, rather than any particular style of interviewing.

The telephone interview may be biographical, situational or competency based or indeed a combination of interview models.

Areas of Use

Whatever the type, the telephone interview is most frequently used as an initial screening interview, either following short listing from CV's / application forms, or subsequent to initial web-based screening through bio data, tests and questionnaires.

The telephone interview is particularly valuable when it precedes a more sophisticated selection process, perhaps involving significant time and money in travel. It is also beneficial when the telephone is a medium used a great deal in the job itself, i.e. it can act as a simulation in order to evaluate telephone communication skills. Initial interviews for call centre staff can be conducted by phone.

The telephone interview can also be of particular benefit in terms of convenience for potential employees who are going to be home based, and may find travel to an initial interview inconvenient, preferring an exploratory discussion on the phone.

Guidelines, Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of the telephone interview are dependent on it being conducted well. In addition to the considerations outlined for other types of interview, e.g. competency, the following guidelines should be borne in mind:

- Help candidates prepare for the interview and acknowledge this format may be new to them. In particular you may wish to:
- Make it clear in the advertisement or agency brief that you will be conducting initial telephone interviews
- Arrange a convenient day and time with each candidate just as you would when preparing a face-to-face interview schedule
- When you make arrangements, indicate how long you expect the interview to last and ask the candidate to try and be alone with no distractions or interruptions
- You will not have the normal visual clues, so expect to feel different from face-to-face interviews. It is also harder for candidates to absorb questions if they cannot see you
- Early rapport building is important to enable candidates to present themselves well. Do set out the parameters for the interview in the normal way
- Most interviewers will need to consciously slow down when interviewing candidates over the telephone
- Silence and hesitance may feel more uncomfortable in the absence of eye contact, so do tell the candidate that it is quite alright for them to pause while they think or to go back to add pertinent information. There may be a more frequent need to reframe questions if the candidate is hesitant
- Accents are often more pronounced over the telephone, so it is important to guard against stereotyping

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Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
The strengths of the telephone interview are mostly connected with efficiency and practicality.	Most of the potential limitations have to do with the lack of visual clues in communication.
Candidates are more likely to be available early by telephone than for a visit.	The interviewer needs enhanced skills of clarity and empathy, and a willingness to use increased verbal affirmations to encourage communication.
Actual time spent setting up interviews is minimised. The overall time frame may be reduced.	On the telephone, it is more difficult to discern whether hesitancy is giving you valuable data on the candidate's knowledge and experience, their communication style or simply lack of understanding of the question.
A telephone interview can often be accommodated into both parties' working days (or evenings) without disrupting other commitments.	Candidates will not always have positioned themselves to participate in the interview without distraction.
Meeting rooms will not necessarily be required.	If the job does not require telephone communication, individuals who are not comfortable with this medium of communication will be disadvantaged.
Potentially more candidates can be screened – a bonus when the response has been high and it is only convenient to interview a short list, or indeed when the market is not on your side and it is tempting to interview marginal candidates.	Disabilities affecting speech or hearing may be further exaggerated if the face-to-face phenomenon is removed.
It can save time and money to conduct initial structured telephone interviews.	Interviewers find it difficult to perform large numbers of these while maintaining motivation and standards.
Where good telephone skills are essential for the job, e.g. customer support staff, sales, helpline operators, telesales people, reception staff, research assistants – the telephone is a perfect simulation medium to assess relevant skills.	
It is easier for candidates with mobility problems.	

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Different Interview Formats: The Videoconference or Skype Interview

Definition

The video interview is a newer medium by which interviews are conducted, and it has gained increasing popularity in recent years. Instead of a face-to-face interview, managers can conduct the interview over video cameras, webcams, or other related video technology. Videoconferencing is the most common use of video in the interview process. Because Skype first popularised the medium of video communication often individuals will refer to all video interviews as skype interviews.

Videoconferencing is streamed in real time so it is a “live” interview. It occurs between two locations that simultaneously connect as well as interact in a two-way video and audio transmission. Similar to a face-to-face interview, interviewers have the ability to tailor questions to the interviewee. It also allows the interviewer and the interviewee to meet in a mock face-to-face setting where both parties exchange information. However, some information (e.g., eye contact, the handshake, and other body cues) may be restricted or missing due to technological barriers.

As with the telephone interview it can be biographical, situational or competency based or indeed a combination of interview types.

Areas of Use

As businesses become more global and far reaching there are often instances where recruitment needs to take place remotely. An increase in globalisation of organisations and tighter labour markets require organisations to evaluate an increasing number of applicants in diverse geographical regions. Videoconference technology has provided a means to reduce the costs associated with interviewing distance applicants dramatically, while simultaneously expanding applicant pools

Additionally, through videoconferencing, the internet provided the possibility of a halfway house between the telephone interview and the ‘live’ face-to face interview. Videoconferencing provided the opportunity to conduct single, pair or panel interviews, fulfilling the employer’s desire to see the candidates that they are interviewing.

Videoconferencing interviews are generally used either as an initial interview, following a telephone interview or subsequent to initial web-based screening through psychometric assessments.

In some instances, a videoconference interview will be followed by a face-to-face interview; however, in a number of instances the video interview has replaced the face-to-face interview entirely.

Guidelines, Strengths and Limitations

As with the telephone interview, the strengths of the videoconference interview are dependent on it being conducted well. Videoconference interviews are also highly dependent on how effective the technology being used is. In addition to the considerations outlined for other types of interview, e.g. competency, the following guidelines should be borne in mind:

- Help candidates prepare for the interview and acknowledge this format may be new to them. In particular you may wish to:
    - Make it clear in the advertisement or agency brief that you have multiple rounds of interviewing and one of these may be a videoconference.
    - Arrange a convenient day and time with each candidate just as you would when preparing a face-to-face interview schedule.
    - When you make arrangements, indicate how long you expect the interview to last and ask the candidate to try and be alone with no distractions or interruptions.
- Choose a professional location free of distraction, especially if you are conducting the interview from a home office. Videoconferencing and telephone interviews indiscriminately pick up sights and sounds. A messy office or room in a private home can be needlessly distracting. Choose a quiet, neutral, and professional location from which to conduct the interview and instruct the applicant to do the same.

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- Confirm and test the candidates' connection. Some candidates may not have affordable access to high-quality technology – specifically those that reside in developing countries. Others may be unfamiliar with videoconferencing or conference calls. Make sure they know whom to contact in the event that they require assistance.
- Additionally, it important that candidates are not disadvantaged if they do not have access to videoconference technology, and that provision are made for these candidates.
- Be mindful of how technology shapes impressions. In video and telephone connections, delays and distortion can make candidates appear awkward or less articulate. If there is any doubt as to what has been said or understood, take the time to double-check the meaning and invite the candidate to do so as well. Behave professionally at all times, even in the event of a technological glitch; a break in the video signal does not necessarily mean the audio is not working.
- Early rapport building is important to enable candidates to present themselves well. Do set out the parameters for the interview in the normal way.
- While you will have some non-verbal ques, these may be limited
- Make a backup plan in the event of a technology failure. With your tech support person, establish a backup plan in the event of technology failure, such as resorting to a conference call if a connection fails. Clarify who is going to do what in the event of problems and who will be responsible for re-establishing connections.

Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations
As with the telephone interview, the advantages of conducting a videoconference interview are tied in to the cost and efficiency of the medium: • **You have access to a broader spectrum of candidates from multiple locations.** • **Candidates are more likely to be available early if they do not have to come to a specific location; it creates flexibility and ease of access.** • **Actual time spent setting up interviews is minimised. The overall timeframe may be reduced.** • **A videoconference interview can often be accommodated into both parties' working days (or evenings) without disrupting other commitments.** • **Potentially more candidates can be screened – a bonus when the response has been high and it is only convenient to interview a short list, or indeed when the market is not on your side and it is tempting to interview marginal candidates.** • **It can save time and money to conduct initial structured videoconference interviews.** • **It is easier for candidates with mobility problems.**	The limitations of videoconference interviews are predominantly associated with the limitations of technology: • The effectiveness of a video interview hangs on the quality of the internet connection. Even a short delay in the feed can render a conversation too awkward to be of value. Poor audio quality has much the same effect. Poor video quality will also hinder an interviewer's ability to interpret visual cues such as facial expressions and body language. • Candidates may not always have positioned themselves to participate in the interview without distraction. • It limits your ability to promote your organisation and as such makes it more difficult to ascertain whether there is a mutual fit. Your facility, equipment, environment, and culture are not showcased to the candidate. • If you are mixing videoconferencing interviews with in-person interviews, it can diminish the objectivity of the recruitment process, as a fair and objective process is one in which all candidates are interviewed in a similar way. • Lack of personal interaction. • International time zones sometimes make it difficult to coordinate intercontinental videoconference interviews

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Different Interview Formats: The One-way / Non-live Video Interview

Definition

In a one-way video interview, the applicant does not interact with a live interviewer. Interview questions are presented virtually on a computer, tablet, or smartphone with webcam and audio capabilities. The applicant goes through a series of questions, presented one by one, to which they must immediately respond verbally, in some instances within a given time limit.

Applicants' answers are recorded with a web cam and hiring managers or recruiters are able to review the video at a later stage. The candidate is only able to give information to the employer because video interviewing is asynchronous.

Although video interviewing is mainly for giving information, applicants may also receive information from the employer if they have a video introduction or closing video for the applicants to watch.

Area of Use

The purpose of one-way video interviewing is to narrow the applicant pool down even further by screening out applicants who are a mismatch or unqualified for the position so it usually replaces one of the first steps of the selection process.

This technique is increasingly popular with organizations because it is extremely time and, in the long term, cost effective for the employer. Applicants can choose when and where they do the online interview at their own convenience, as long as they complete the interview within a given deadline.

One-way video interviews are highly structured, which increases standardisation between applicants, resulting in less error. Highly structured interviews have been shown to demonstrate interrater reliability and predictive validity, as well as fairness for minorities and females.

Guidelines, Strengths and Limitations

Due to the fact that one-way video interviews are relatively new in use, it is critical that employers forewarn candidates and set them at ease with the new medium.

As with the video conference interview, it is important that candidates have resources they can access if they have any technological difficulties or questions around how to complete the interview.

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Strengths and Limitations

Potential Strengths	Potential Limitations

The primary advantage of the one-way video call lies in the efficiency of the medium:
• **You have access to a broader spectrum of candidates from multiple locations.**
• **Candidates are more likely to be available to complete the interview if it is available 24 hours a day for the duration of a period. Candidates are able to schedule the interview in their time without impacting on the interviewee.**
• **Actual time spent setting up interviews is minimised. The overall time frame may be reduced.**
• **Potentially more candidates can be screened – a bonus when the response has been high and it is only convenient to interview a short list, or indeed when the market is not on your side and it is tempting to interview marginal candidates.**
• **It can save time and money to conduct initial structured videoconference interviews.**
• **It is easier for candidates with mobility problems.**
• **Multiple managers can view the recorded interviews as many times as necessary and rate them to make informed decisions about which applicants to advance to the next stage of the selection procedure.**
• **The absence of interviewers means that interviewer characteristics will not affect applicants' verbal and nonverbal behaviour during the interview.**
• **High degree of standardisation between candidates.**
	The limitations of a one-way video interview are predominantly associated with the lack of interpersonal communication:
	• Candidates are not able to ask questions or clarify the meaning of a question during the interview process.
	• No personal interaction can have several unintended consequences:
	  ○ No rapport is developed so some candidates may feel ill at ease
	  ○ It is easier to fake responses as it lacks the interrogative quality of most other interview types
	• As with a videoconference, the one-way video interview is also highly dependent on having the requisite technology and the effectiveness of that technology.
	• Candidates will not always have positioned themselves to participate in the interview without distraction.
	• The initial outlay cost is expensive.
	• Limit research into their reliability and validity as it is a relatively new method of interviewing candidates.

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General Guidelines for Interviews

Before the Interview

Make sure you are familiar with any relevant documentation, such as person and job specification and CV.

If you are carrying out a competency-based interview, ensure you are familiar with the competencies so that you can select the appropriate questions to use.

If you are carrying out a biographical interview, prepare questions in advance of the interview.

Ensure that you can justify the relevance of any questions you intend to ask.

If you are carrying out a situational interview, ensure you are familiar with all the situations and response options.

During the Interview

Welcome the candidate — try to put them at ease.

Introduce yourself and mention your role.

Explain the format of the interview, i.e. Biographical, Competency-based or Situational or a combination of these, and mention the length of the interview.

Outline the role.

Explain that you will be taking notes giving reasons.

Keep questions open, e.g. what, where, why, how questions — ones that cannot be answered with a yes or no, as well as short and specific.

Listen and look attentive, allowing the candidate time to think and speak.

Consider your body language, e.g. show interest through leaning slightly forward, nodding and maintaining good eye contact but do not intimidate the candidate!

Maintain control of the interview. Redirect the candidate if you feel they are going off-track.

Make detailed notes throughout, which are accurate, factual and job-related. Only record what has been said in the interview, not your beliefs or thoughts about the candidate.

Allow the candidate time to ask questions at the end of the interview.

Let the candidate know what will happen next, e.g. second interview, tests, assessment centre, as well as when this is likely to happen.

Thank the candidate for their time.

Afterwards

Read your notes immediately after the interview to fill in any gaps.

Classify and evaluate the behaviour of the participant in terms of the criteria being assessed.

Be aware that candidates may have the right to ask for copies of any notes made during the interview, and that you may need justify any decisions made on the basis of the interview.

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Does the Interview Work?

There has been a considerable amount of research undertaken into the selection interview. Much of the early research was concerned with the overall outcome of the interview in terms of its reliability and validity. More recent research has focused on specific aspects of selection interviews such as non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer and interviewee, and the influence of personal perception on decision making in the interview.

The following sections in this guide explore the reliability and validity of selection interviews and outline factors that influence decision-making before, during and after the interview.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of judgements made by an interviewer if she / he were to interview the candidate afresh on a second occasion or if someone else were to interview the same candidate. In practice, greater emphasis is placed on inter-rater reliability; that is, the extent to which different interviewers make the same assessment of the candidate they have seen, either separately or together at a panel interview. Studies usually show quite low levels of consistency between raters. Reasons for low inter-interviewer reliability could be that interviewers are not in fact basing their judgements on the same information, or that they hold different perceptions of the candidate requirements. Good job analysis, providing selection criteria and interviewer training tend to increase reliability.

Validity

Although it is essential to achieve a reasonable level of reliability for the interview before it can be used as an assessment technique with any confidence, it is also necessary to show that it is valid, i.e. that it can predict training and / or job success.

Over the years, many studies have investigated the ability of the interview to predict job success. Statistical techniques (meta-analysis) have allowed the summarisation of many different studies to produce general conclusions about the validity of interviews. Interviews appear to offer low but positive validity in relation to work success. Early studies showed low but positive validity for the interview in general. More recent studies suggest that different types of interview may have different validities. Structured interviews, with job relevant criteria derived from detailed job analysis carried out by trained experienced interviewers, are better at predicting future job performance.

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What Challenges Influence the Effectiveness of the Selection Interview?

Many factors have been found to influence the decisions made by interviewers. The basis for many decisions, however, stems from factors outside the interview as well as those during it. The following sections examine factors before, during and after the interview, which influence the resulting decision.

Before the Interview

Before the interview takes place, there are several factors that may affect the way it will proceed.

Lack of Clear Job Information – Research suggests that the more information interviewers have about the job, the more consistency there is between interviewers.

Inappropriate Person Specification Stereotypes – Interviewers selecting for the same post tend to share part of their stereotype of a "good candidate" with their colleagues, but also tend to hold additional personal views.

Insufficient Preparation – Interviews which are not well planned and structured tend to have poorer results.

Limited Interview Skills Training – The absence of some form of interviewer training, before the interview takes place, is likely to increase any effect the above factors may have.

Ignorance of the Law – Most countries have specific legislation that needs to be considered when conducting section interviewing. More often than not, this legislation is related to fairness and equal treatment of candidates. It is important to be familiar with the legislation in your country and act in accordance with this legislation.

Generally, legislation indicates that you cannot ask questions of a candidate unless they are linked to an inherent requirement of a role. With the view that the legislation aims to limit discrimination in organisations there are often questions that you are prohibited from asking (For instance you cannot ask if a candidate is married, whether they have kids, or if they are pregnant) as these may undulling influence your hiring decision.

Lack of Diversity Awareness – Training in diversity awareness will help interviewers avoid being biased by stereotypical views of members of different groups and to interpret interview information in the relevant context.

During the Interview

The factors highlighted as potential problems before the interview serve also as problems during the interview itself. For example:

First Impressions – These are usually lasting impressions. Decisions tend to be made early on in the interview. Barrick, Swider, & Stewart (2010) found that initial impressions and, what they deemed, 'fast and frugal' judgements had a significant impact on whether a candidate was offered a position with the organisation. After the first impression is made, the decision predisposed the interviewer to perceive and accept information that supported their "decision".

Visual Cues – Several researchers suggest that non-verbal sources of information are more important than verbal ones. For example, it has been shown that successful candidates look the interviewer in the eye more, smile more, gesture more, and generally appear more enthusiastic. With reference to candidates, it was also found that interviewees who 'liked' their interviewer, were more likely to accept offers. Visual cues are therefore important to both parties.

Leniency / Strictness Bias - Given people differ in how they evaluate people; some interviews are very liberal and lenient, while others are critical and demanding. This bias tends to raise or lower the scores of people who are interviewed.

Hearing what they want to Hear – Seeking information which supports initial impressions suggests that interviewers are selectively listening. The outcome could lead to information being weighted differently by different interviewers.

Halo Effect – When the interviewer lets one favoured qualification, trait, or experience influence all other factors, resulting in an unduly high overall performance rating.

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Overweighting Negative Information or the Horns Effect – A number of studies suggest that interviewers give more weight to unfavourable information than to positive. This suggests that negative information presented early in the interview will be of considerable importance to the final decision.

Overweighting Academic Qualifications – Interviewers generally seem to give most weight to academic achievement, even in jobs where it is not as relevant as other factors, for example, manual skill, flexibility, motivation etc.

Attitudinal, Gender and Racial Similarity or Appraiser Bias – A number of studies suggest interviewers give higher ratings on some traits to candidates who are like themselves. For example, a study demonstrated that females were given lower evaluations than males by male interviewers. Also, both male and female candidates were more likely to be recommended for traditional role stereotyped jobs.

Similarity Effect – When an evaluator rates a candidate based on characteristics the appraiser sees in themselves. Interviewers have an unconscious tendency to favour people who are physically and professionally similar to them.

Cross Cultural Issues – Where interviewer and interviewee approach the interview with different cultural assumptions, there is a risk of poor assessment of skills, unless the interviewer is aware of the potential dangers and how to deal with them.

Questioning Style – Asking open questions and sensitively probing responses will enhance the amount and quality of information obtained from the interviewee.

After the Interview

Following the interview, additional factors can affect how the information gathered is evaluated and selection decisions made.

Primacy Effect – There is a tendency for that you interviewed first to stand out more, as they are more easily recallable. If you had a handful of candidates to work through in a day, the first one or two might stick out in your mind more clearly because of the primacy effect. It is important to not mistake the fact that you can more easily recall these individuals as them being more qualified or a better choice. Just because they had the luck of the draw of going first in no way impacts how they would perform on the job.

Recency Effect – The opposite of the primacy effect; it refers to the tendency of the brain to be able to recall individuals at the end of a group more easily, just as it does with those at the beginning. The strategy to avoid this error is the same as avoiding the primacy effect, making sure to not assign more value or credibility to these individuals just because they may be easier to remember.

Contrast Effects – Studies suggest that assessment of a candidate partially depends upon the other individuals being rated at the same time, i.e. assessments seem to come from person-to-person comparisons, rather than from comparing each applicant thoroughly with the person specification for the job. Although this may mean that the “best” candidate is selected, in essence the decision has been made between the available candidates. The “best” candidate from a poor bunch may not be good enough!

Pressure to Select – In studies where interviewers are required to rate candidates on a range of different criteria, it has been found that the average level of ratings increases when there is a strong pressure to fill a post urgently (regardless of the quality of the candidates).

Intuitive Decision Making – Interviewers are human. Despite repeated calls for interviewers to base their decisions on the objective evidence they have collected, there remains a constant temptation to make overall judgements based on intuition. The “gut-feel” school of interviewing still has a few ardent supporters, as does the “I can spot them when they walk through the door” school!

Structured Interview Guides and Note Taking – There is some evidence to suggest that interviewers who work to a structure and who takes notes during the interview have more accurate recall of applicants after the interview.

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Overcoming the Challenges

Considering all the potential problems associated with selection interviews, it may seem rather surprising that the procedure remains the most popular method for assessing candidates for jobs. If it were to be abolished there would be an uproar: employers want the opportunity to meet potential recruits prior to making selection decisions and candidates expect to be interviewed, feeling cheated if they are not.

Hence it looks like the interview is here to stay, so how can it be improved?

Before the Interview

Analysing the Job - In order to conduct an interview effectively it is imperative to establish what the job involves and the specific skills and attributes needed to perform successfully in the role. (Interviewers working from a good job description are more likely to focus on key areas and pay less attention to irrelevant information.)

Structuring the Interview – The ore structured the interview the better. Following a structure is probably the single technique which is most likely to help in improving the reliability of a selection exercise. Adherence to a structure helps to ensure that for each candidate broadly the same areas are covered. With a structure, the interviewer can more easily monitor the progress of the interview, ensuring that the discussion remains job-related. Moreover, adherence to a structure exposes gaps in the evidence collected, which might otherwise be overlooked.

Planning the Interview – Careful consideration of pre-interview information, application forms or CV's is critical in identifying relevant areas to explore further. Some standard questions for all candidates can be prepared in advance where this is appropriate.

Training the Interviewer – Trained interviewers will not only be more likely to demonstrate the appropriate skills of effective interviewing, but they will also be more aware of the potential pitfalls of interviewing as a selection technique. Maintaining a healthy scepticism and an alertness to the possibility of bias and stereotyping serves as an excellent defence against the subjectivity and personal preferences, which can so easily undermine the quality of evidence collected.

During the Interview

Obtaining Evidence – The interview should be planned and conducted to collect relevant information about the candidates, in order to make an assessment against the selection criteria.

Effective interviewing skills such as questioning techniques, developing rapport, controlling and summarising also contribute to ensuring that sufficient and appropriate information is collected.

Taking Notes – It is difficult for an interviewer to remember accurately everything that an interviewee has said during the course of an interview. If the interviewer relies solely on his or her memory, points will almost certainly be forgotten or distorted. In order to limit this risk, note-taking during the interview is strongly recommended. This will enable interviewers to check that they have elicited all the information they require against their predetermined interview plan, and to check their understanding with the interviewee. In addition, gaps in written information are much more visible (and therefore difficult to ignore), than gaps in information which is stored solely in the memory of the interviewer.

An accurate record of the interview is useful evidence (of the objectiveness of decisions) should a candidate challenge the selection process under Equal Opportunities Legislation at an industrial tribunal.

More than One Interviewer? – In terms of perceived fairness, involving more than one interviewer, such as in a panel interview may, particularly in the eyes of the candidates, increase their confidence that the selection decision is not based on one face-to-face encounter, which may be subject to interview bias. Where no other selection techniques are involved this may be particularly important. However, facing more than one interviewer can be a rather intimidating experience for some candidates.

More than One Interview? – An alternative to panel interviews is to conduct further interviews with different interviewers, who may see the candidates in a different light. In discussion after the interview, the interviewers should be able to compare evaluations and challenge each other's biases.

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After the Interview

Recording the Evidence – Note-taking during the interview should be supplemented by note-taking after the interview. During the interview, it is of course not possible to fully cover all that is discussed, and therefore interviewers should add to their notes immediately after the interview has finished. Once this process has been completed, the interviewer is then in a position to undertake their final write-up of the interview. This should be structured against the pre-determined selection criteria.

Evaluating the Findings Effectively – Clear descriptions of the selection criteria, with benchmarks of either detailed behavioural description and / or numerical ratings, encourage interviewers to evaluate specific aspects of required performance, rather than make a generalised judgement of "I liked that person". Ratings should be completed after the interview on each candidate, together with written evidence to support the rating.

Using Other Assessment Techniques – Interviews can be an efficient and cost-effective means of collecting certain types of information (for example, about past work experience or personal presentation). However, they are a less reliable technique for gathering information about other potentially important characteristics, such as aptitude.

It is recommended that information collected from interviews should be supplemented by the use of other assessment techniques such as ability tests or personality questionnaires, which can provide objective and reliable evidence about the suitability of the candidate. The use of multiple assessment techniques in assessment centres has been repeatedly demonstrated to improve the validity of a selection procedure.

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Making the Best Use of Your Interviews

There is no evidence to suggest that organisations will reduce their use of the interview, although there are indications that additional selection techniques are being used alongside interviews.

Therefore, organisations need to direct their attention more closely to what they expect the interview to achieve for them in the selection process. Other selection techniques may focus on assessing the candidate's match with the skills and abilities required to do the job, but the interview can explore wider issues such as why the candidate wants this job in your organisation. It also provides an opportunity for the candidate to meet people in the organisation and seek information from them to help in his / her decision making.

A professional, well conducted selection interview can have a significant impact on the candidates' perception of your organisation and whether they wish to work for you or even, in some circumstances, do business with you in the future.

Reviewing Selection Interviewing

Consideration of the following will help to ensure that your interviews are conducted effectively and that interviewers and candidates have confidence in them.

Do interviewers have:

- Up-to-date job descriptions, selection criteria or competency frameworks available?
- A clear objective for their interview?
- Training in interviewing skills?
- Awareness of equal opportunities legislation?
- Adequate time to prepare: alone or with others?
- An interview schedule that allows time to explore information thoroughly?
- Knowledge of other selection methods being used?
- Interview record forms for interview notes and final decisions?
- Feedback on the outcome of their decisions?

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Useful Publications

Barclay, J. R., (2001). Improving Selection Interviews with Structure: Organisations' Use of "Behavioural Interviews". *Personnel Review, 30*(1-2), 81-101.

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This best practice guide tries to answer some common questions about the topic, but while we have made every effort to ensure our guidelines reflect best practice, we do not accept liability for any loss whatsoever nature suffered by any party as a result of relying on these guidelines.

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