

## MAKING A GOOD HIRE

### Overview

Three elements are required to ensure a good hire, or at least minimize the risk of a bad hire:

1. A detailed position description that provides measurable criteria against which to assess the candidate's competence. Without measurable criteria, judgments are based on opinion and intuition versus data.
  - a. Measurable criteria include role, competency (knowledge, skills, & talents), and leadership style definitions and indicators. It also includes failure factors/derailers known to lead to poor performance.
  - b. Position context information, e.g., the position purpose, success measures, critical contacts, critical processes/tasks, issues, and district values/vision/mission/goals, is essential in determining what roles, competencies, and leadership styles are required and what derailers to avoid.
2. A pool of qualified candidates.
  - a. It is helpful to have a pool of well-screened candidates who have the core capabilities required.
  - b. If a pool does not exist, then typical sourcing strategies are employed to include networking and advertisements in the media, on web job sites, and in key association newsletters. If the position qualifications are unique, a more proactive candidate search is required, to include sourcing potential candidates who may not be actively seeking a new position.
3. Effective candidate assessment methodologies applied to different sources of candidate performance data. (Note; panel interviews are often used in the education hiring process. **They are definitely not recommended** as they have little predictive validity and often set up false expectations unless very well structured.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application review</li><li>• Telephone screening interviews</li><li>• In-depth individual interviews - Guided Storytelling Interview (GSI)</li><li>• One-on-one Chemistry interviews</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key stakeholder group meet and greets</li><li>• Work samples</li><li>• Simulations</li><li>• Background checks</li><li>• Reference checks - internal and external</li></ul>
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***When done well, #1 and #3 above ensure that your hiring decision will be data versus opinion-based!***

## Utilizing Interviews to Assess Competence

Several of the candidate assessment methodologies noted above use interviews to surface scorable information, i.e., telephone screening, videos, panel evaluations, in-depth one-on-one interviews, and reference checks. There are three levels of interview that can be applied to those screening methods, with Level-I being the least effective, and Level-III the most effective. A general description of each type of interview is provided on the chart on the following page.

<b>LEVEL I: TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW (set question based – worst – no predictive validity)</b>	<b>LEVEL II: BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW (example based - better)</b>	<b>LEVEL III: GUIDED STORYTELLING INTERVIEW™ (GSI) (critical incident based – best!)</b>
<p><u>Based on a set of pre-determined questions/probes such as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about yourself.</li> <li>• What are your strengths?</li> <li>• What are your limitations?</li> <li>• How would others describe you?</li> <li>• Why does this job interest you?</li> <li>• Why are you here?</li> <li>• What would you do if you were faced with ...?</li> <li>• Why this job?</li> <li>• What is your ideal job?</li> <li>• What do you think you can do to contribute to this organization?</li> <li>• What are the biggest challenges you've faced?</li> <li>• Where's your passion?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Based on work examples with probes such as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give me an example of a time when you had to do xyz.</li> <li>• Give me an example of your xyz skills.</li> <li>• Describe an accomplishment and then specifically what you did to obtain that result.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Based on emotion bound key events/stories (4-6) with questions/probes such as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about a time on the job when you were particularly satisfied (or dissatisfied)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide me with a one-minute snapshot of that situation/story.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When a story (+ or -) has been identified, the following probes are used to walk through the story, which may take 10-40 minutes.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take me back to the beginning and describe:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you did</li> <li>• What you saw</li> <li>• What you felt</li> <li>• What you said</li> <li>• What you heard</li> <li>• What you thought</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Tell me more</li> <li>- Recreate the conversation in detail</li> <li>- Jump to the next most relevant thing that happened, and so on ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\* Training for the GSI usually takes two days in a workshop setting followed by a day to a day-and-a-half+ of critique and coaching around practice interviews.

The goal of any interview is to surface valid information that can be measured against the criteria in the position description. The strengths and limitations of each of the three levels of interview are presented in the context of a number of dimensions in the chart below:

<b>DIMENSIONS \ LEVEL</b>	<b>LEVEL-1: TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>LEVEL-II BEHAVIORAL</b>	<b>LEVEL-III GSI</b>
• <b>Typical Time to Administer</b>	• 30-60 minutes	• 45 – 60 minutes	• 1.5 – 3.0 hours (depends on application)
• <b>Talk Time Percent (less interviewer best)</b>	• 50% Interviewer - 50% interviewee	• 30% Interviewer - 70% interviewee	• 5% Interviewer - 95% interviewee
• <b>Predictive Validity</b>	• Low – little evidence of responses being related to actual job skills	• Moderate if examples are probed deeply	• High – what is surfaced in interview is indicative of actual skills practiced
• <b>Vulnerabilities</b>	• Favors those who interview well and prep for the interview v. having the skills to do the job	• Mixed – again, favors those who interview well, but better than Level 1 interview.	• Favors those who have skills to do the job v. those who interview well
• <b>Ease of Being Faked</b>	• Very easy to fake/lie	• Moderately easy to fake/lie	• Very hard to fake/lie
• <b>Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</b>	• Low – waste of time	• Low to Moderate	• High
• <b>Interviewer Bias</b>	• High – opinion predominates over data – often unfair (pick like self) – get both false positives & negatives	• Moderate – opinion versus data – moderately fair	• Low – Data predominates over opinion – most fair – false positives and false negatives minimized
• <b>EEOC Compliance</b>	• Rigid – must ask same questions of each candidate	• Rigid – must ask same questions/ examples of each candidate	• Flexible – interviewee selects stories-content specific questions not needed
• <b>Impact on Interviewee</b>	• Little – business as usual	• Mixed – can be positive if done well	• Very positive – typical response is that the interviewee feels well understood – sells the district/org.
• <b>Professional Development Support/ Goals/Targets</b>	• Low	• Low as typically administered	• High – interview is recorded and scored – PD goals and team fit are obvious
• <b>Typical Confidence in Hiring Decision</b>	• 50-50	• 60-40	• 80-20

It is no surprise that the GSI is by far the interview technique of choice. The recommended major elements of the hiring process for senior school and district leaders are as follows:

1. Position description creation that captures performance requirements in measurable detail – to include roles, competencies, leadership styles, and derailers (failure factors). 2. Application screening (cut number down to 6-8 candidates/quarter finalists)	3. Telephone screening (60-75 minutes) using an abbreviated GSI (cut number down to 2-4 candidates/semi-finalists) 4. In-depth GSI interview (2.5-3.5 hours) that is video recorded so others/search committee can listen and score (cut down to 1-3 finalists)	5. Work samples for teachers, and a leadership simulation involving final candidates for leadership positions 6. Stakeholder meet and greets 7. Candidate home district site visit 8. Reference checks – employing an abbreviated GSI; and background checks
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Note that videos, e.g., sometimes search firms provide candidate videos, are not recommended unless conducted with a GSI. Also note that panels are not recommended, as they create a stress dynamic with candidates that blocks access to important performance information/stories. They also can result in poor judgments and expectations if panel members are not sophisticated interviewers. Having said that, it may be politically required to have formal panels.

**Analyzing and Scoring Other Sources of Candidate Data**

When reviewing applications and videos, observing work samples or simulations, and doing reference checks, the position description criteria can provide a mechanism for making reliable estimations of what knowledge, skills, and talents the candidate possesses, although there are limits as to what you can hang your hat on based on the particular source of data. For example, applications provide less data and are less reliable than simulations.

**Interview Analysis/Scoring Example**

On the following page is a single page of a transcript from a 50+ page GSI. The sentences/phrases highlighted in yellow are those that reflect a thought, feeling, or behavior that can be related to the demonstration of a particular role, competency, or leadership style. If you had measures common to those associated with the role and leadership style of “Politician” and “Political Savvy” competency, you could easily make a case that the interviewee was demonstrating evidence/indicators for those position description criteria. There are also indicators supporting the demonstration of other competencies on this one page, e.g., Results Driven.

**SAMPLE OF ONE PAGE OF THE STORYTELLING ANALYSIS OF ONE INTERVIEWEE**

<p>kids with emotional problems who had been at the high school, but who would be sent out by the previous director or may be the year before by me, and I thought to myself if we were paying 40,000 50,000 per kid, we can take that 250,000, 300,000, and we can create a heckuva program here for that kind of money. If I get the support from the superintendent and the principal and his assistants, because some of these were high profile kids, and I thought and we need to get the parents on board because the parents have to agree to this. So my wheels began to turn thinking we can do this differently, if we can do this better, and by the way save the district some money, and when I went to school board to present this...</p> <p>I: Before you went to the board, anything else that you were a part of that sticks out in your mind?</p> <p>R: I probably talked to other directors or looked at other programs that they had done in their district. Portsmouth always had programs so I know I must've talked to the Portsmouth person, in fact I had her come in at one point to help me sell the idea, so yeah...</p> <p>I: Tell me a bit more about that if you can remember it...</p> <p>R: What I remember is, I did not want to pass myself off as the only expert or an expert on emotional disabilities, so I thought one way to sell this idea is to have someone with that experience come in and talk about</p>	<p>1 – identifies ways of using resources better and perhaps improving performance  2 - looks to improve performance of program; high standards  3 – is able to foresee results and potential gains  4 – recognizes need to gain support from key stakeholders – influence – political awareness  5 - studies situation to understand key variables as a way of getting better results for kids</p> <p>6 - demonstrates financial awareness of actions; concern for saving the district money</p> <p>7 - does homework to gain facts and build case – for persuasion  8 - influence skills – uses others to sell idea</p> <p>9 - recognizes own limitations; recognizes the value of the credibility of using additional experts  10 - understands how to employ someone else to sell an idea to enhance own credibility  <b>page theme</b> - concern for the bottom line  <b>page theme</b> - effective use of influence; political savvy</p>
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