

BUILDING YOUR HIRING MUSCLE: THE INTERVIEW PHASE

A WORKOUT IN 10 QUESTIONS

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BUILDING YOUR (INTERVIEWING) MUSCLE

A WORKOUT IN 10 QUESTIONS

GREAT HIRING TAKES *EXERCISE*

I've said it before: hiring skills are like a set of muscles. If you don't choose to use them when you make a new hire (the "I'm too busy, how about this guy" method), then those muscles never really develop, and you pay the price by hiring a string of warm bodies who last just long enough to cost you a fortune to replace. On the other hand, if you do use your hiring muscles, then you can strengthen, tone, and fine-tune them by doing certain "exercises" each and every time you hire.

One of the best exercises I've found for strengthening and developing your hiring process – not to mention improving the likelihood of bringing a really strong hire on board – is learning to use and fully incorporate the "behavioral interview" technique. This is now the core of every interview I conduct when adding a new employee to my team.

WHAT IS THE "BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW" CONCEPT?

It's all about asking *open-ended, situation-based questions that get candidates talking about their prior, most relevant work and life experiences*. And I'm going to give you my 10 favorite behavioral interview questions to adapt, fine-tune, and use as you will. Once you've filtered through your candidates' resumes and done a few initial phone interviews, these ten questions will result in helping you identify and hire great employees.

Furthermore, here's a trick to increase your interviewer savvy tenfold: You'll get far better results if you don't use these questions verbatim. For each position, **fine-tune each question so it is based on the exact job duties and what you hope to accomplish with the new hire**. By doing this, you should be able to create a powerful set of interview questions that are specific to the position you are hiring for.

HERE'S THE WORKOUT PLAN I RECOMMEND.

Along with 10 of my favorite behavioral interview questions, I've also included a few reasons why I've found each question to be useful and versatile.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS: MAKE THEM YOUR OWN

The behavioral interview technique is all about asking open-ended, situation-based questions that get candidates talking about their prior, most relevant work and life experiences.

Take these, mold them as you will, bench-press them in your own brain, and use them for your own devices!

1. Tell me about a time when you had to use patience to calm down a patient, and how you turned the situation into a positive experience for the patient.

- This question reveals the candidate's ability to clearly articulate past experiences (they pay attention, they're patient-focused).
- It gives details about their past roles and responsibilities.
- It provides insight into how they deal with a problem common to all practices, and if and how they are able to think on their feet.

2. Have you ever been at odds with a coworker? How did you resolve the conflict?

- A "no" answer is an opportunity to press, and shows up as a red flag for me. "You mean to say you get along with *everyone*, all the time, no matter what?"
- If the candidate has an example, their story about the issue, whose fault it was, and how it was resolved will be enlightening.
- Look for whether or not they need to make others wrong so that they can see themselves as always being in the right.

3. Describe a goal you set for yourself and how you met it.

- This does not have to be about work.
- It will show if a candidate is an independent thinker and is able to work on a project to completion.
- This question may reveal attributes you find desirable: for instance, the ability to identify an issue and bring a solution to the table; or, likewise, reveal undesirable attributes.

4. What do you consider your greatest work achievement?

- This is your candidate's opportunity to shine a spotlight and advocate for themselves.
- Candidates who excel at answering this question will likely also be great at promoting your practice and making patients comfortable with treatment plans.

5. What do you need to be paid per hour to start, and where do you see yourself in two years, with regards to income and on a professional level?

- This is especially important to ask if you feel the candidate is showing promise during the interview process.

- Their expectations for pay should not be off the charts, since you should have established and posted the pay range in your job ads.
- This is an opportunity for them to describe a work life that includes opportunities for advancement, challenges, and a desire to evolve with your business.

6. Have you ever disagreed with your doctor or boss about something? How did you handle the situation?

- Clinical staff may reveal that they are always second-guessing doctors and care providers around them.
- "How they handled it" should be a clear and concise answer that makes you comfortable.

7. Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure to meet a deadline, or to correct an error you created yourself.

- You're looking for specific examples in which the candidate shows that they can work well either as an individual or within a team.
- Their answer could show whether they have the ability to identify errors as opportunities for correcting mistakes, as opposed to covering up errors or shortcomings, hiding problems, or blaming others.

8. How do you handle interruptions at work? Give examples.

- If this candidate is interviewing to work at any position where they are going to be constantly interrupted by patients, other team members, and/or the telephone, then they need to be tested for their ability to work in a busy environment without becoming frustrated.

9. "In our practice the entire team, from front to back, follows specific systems designed to help us provide a treatment plan with a very high level of acceptance. Make no mistake that treatment and the patients are our number one concern. We've found that associates integrate much quicker if they are willing to follow our treatment criteria. That said, do you foresee any problem in integrating with ours?"

Describe a situation in which you've followed systems or protocol specific to the place you worked. Did you find that these systems were useful and helpful?"

- OK, I admit it, this is several linked questions. This is an especially good set of questions to ask associate doctors and clinical staff candidates.

10. Do you have any questions for us about the position or the practice?

- If they answer no, this a candidate-killer for me.
- This is also an indication if they researched your practice beforehand
- This will also show how if they were listening during the interview and how they are processing the information that you revealed.

Many of these questions are from our CEDR HR Solutions two minute trainer, "Behavioral Job Interviews." I highly recommend it, and [you can access it here.](#)

HIRING BETTER EACH TIME – FINAL THOUGHTS

The behavioral interview process, when given your undivided attention, can lead you and your candidates down all sorts of paths. Ideally, those paths should help them put their best foot forward, without leading *you* astray. While some revelations may occur, this is not an "aha/gotcha" process. It's about asking better questions, getting them talking, and listening with focus and purpose.

As you listen, keep in mind that you are looking for people, whether office or clinical team members, to raise your game. You are seeking people who excel in areas where your practice needs improvement, and who like what they do and are excited to do it for you.

And by the way, I do go back to my "gut feeling" at the very **end** of the hiring process – and only at the very end, when the last two candidates are fantastic and running neck and neck toward the final verdict. The result? My interview and hiring process now gets me an 80% success rate... and you can get there too.

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