

4.6: Behavioral Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Why do good interview questions matter? Cost. It costs the organization a significant amount of money when they make a bad hiring decision. Here are some of the costs to consider:

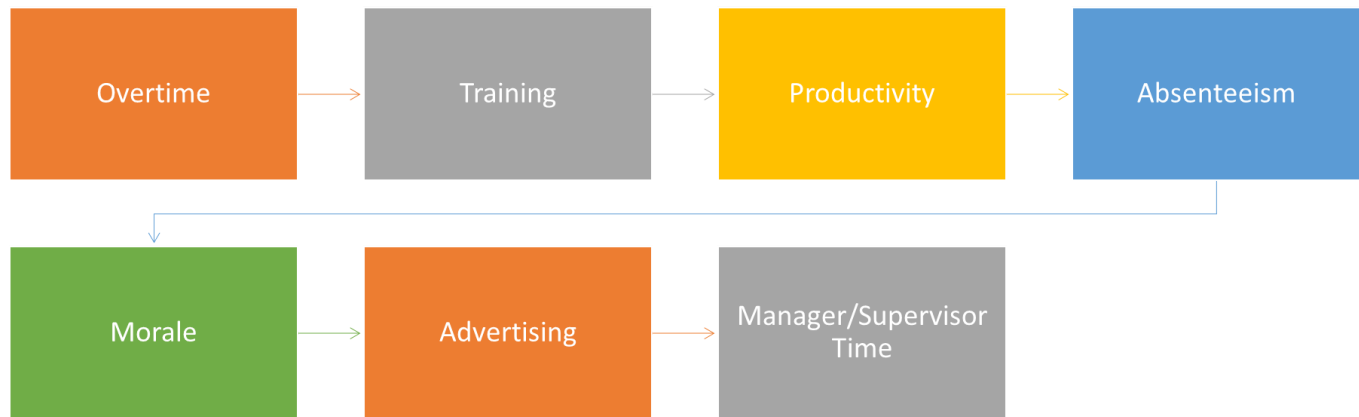


Fig. 1: Overtime, training, productivity, absenteeism, morale, advertising manager/supervisor time.

Some common problems that can lead to a bad hiring selection include:

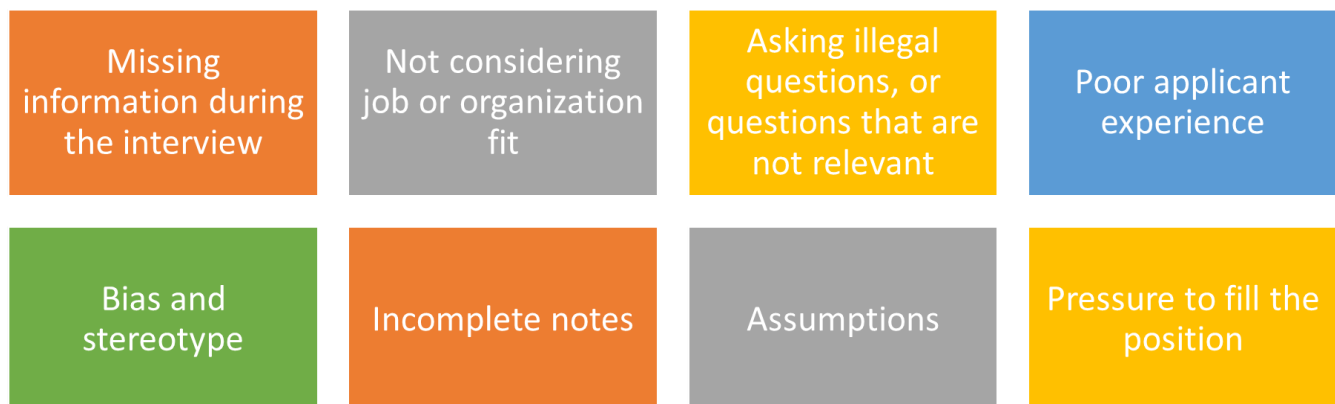


Fig. 1 Missing information during the interview, not considering the the job or organizational fit, asking illegal or irrelevant questions, poor applicant experience, bias and stereotype, incomplete notes, assumptions, pressure to fill the position.

How do we avoid these problems?

Use structured and reliable selection processes including:

- Behavioral Based Interviewing
- Situational Questions
- Job and Organization Fit
- Job Simulations
- Realistic Job Previews

Behavioral Based Interviewing

Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior in similar situations. Ex. How someone handled a difficult customer in the past is how they will likely handle a difficult customer in the future. This technique gathers information about what a candidate **HAS DONE**.

This approach focuses on:

- Gathering job-related information
- Learning about past behavior
- Finding a good “fit”
- Legal Considerations

In order to get a candidate to share the most real information, you will need to start by building rapport.

Building Rapport will:

- Set the tone for the interview
- Give you some basic information about the candidate

One common way to build rapport is to ask the candidate **softball questions**. Softball questions are easy to answer questions. They help the candidate feel more comfortable and build their confidence. Examples of softball questions include:

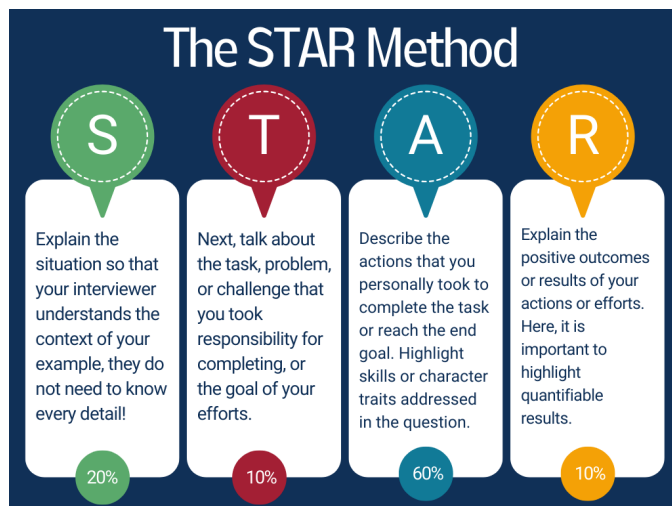
- I see you used to work at ABS Company. Tell me more about your work duties in that job.
- What was your favorite part of working at ABS Company?
- What was your favorite class in college and why?

STAR's

Behavioral questions are looking for answers anchored in STAR's.

S.T.A.R. is a useful acronym and an effective formula for structuring your behavioral interview response. Let's start by breaking down the formula:

- **Situation** (20%), explain the situation so that your interviewer understands the context of your example, they do not need to know every detail!
- **Task** (10%), talk about the task that you took responsibility for completing or the goal of your efforts.
- **Action** (60%), describe the actions that you personally took to complete the task or reach the end goal. Highlight skills or character traits addressed in the question.
- **Result** (10%), explain the positive outcomes or results generated by your actions or efforts. Here, it is important to highlight quantifiable results. You may also want to emphasize what you learned from the experience or your key takeaways.



Here is an example of using the STAR method:



STAR method for the interviewer:

S/T = Situation or Task

- Example of a work-related behavior.
- This is the **WHY**.
- It provides the background or context of the situation.
- Example: A customer asked for the brunch menu and was upset when informed brunch ended 20 minutes ago.

A = Action

- Considered the heart of the STAR.
- Tells you what the candidate **DID** about the situation.
- It is the **HOW** of the STAR.
- It can also tell you what a candidate did **NOT** do.
- Example: I offered suggestions on our lunch menu.

R = Result

- This tells you how things turned out.
- It can also tell you what a candidate would change if this happened again.
- Example: The customer stayed and ordered lunch.

Partial STARS

Candidates don't naturally speak in STARS. Sometimes, you'll need to ask for more information. These questions can help:

- What was the situation?
- What did you do about it?
- How did it turn out?

False STARS

Not all answer will fit into the STAR method. For example:

- Vague answers - they sound good but no specifics were provided.
- Opinions - how the candidate thinks or feels but no real situation is shared.
- Theoretical or future-oriented - these tell us what they *would do*, not what they *have done*.

False STARS can simply be false starts! Ask follow up questions to see if there is a real example they can share.

This information is included in a PowerPoint available as an attachment.

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