



Interviewing Skills

©2002 Next Step Learning, Inc.

Acknowledgments

Director of Development

Susan L. Wimberly

Course Editor

Audrey Skinner

Course Developer

Joseph S. Bocchi

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this manual may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without the written permission of Next Step Learning, Inc., except where permitted by law.

Trademarks, service marks, products or services referred to in this manual are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

Next Step Learning, Inc., does not express or imply warranties for these materials or any other information provided to the student.

About This Class

This class covers basic interviewing skills.

About This Manual

This manual provides conceptual information. Topics are arranged in modular units. This allows you to refer to this manual for self-study or reference, and you can select a unit and start reading at any point.

Units and lessons are arranged in a logical order according to adult learning principles. Each unit ends with a summary of main ideas for your review.

Some units conclude with a section of unit activities. These activities provide you an opportunity to apply the knowledge you learned in the unit.

About the Icons

The manual provides the following icons for special information:

❖ This icon indicates a note of special interest.

💡 This icon indicates a caution or warning.

📌 This icon indicates a tip or shortcut.

😊 This icon indicates information that may not be essential but could be handy to know.

❓ This icon indicates a point of discussion.

✂ This icon indicates a brief activity.

Notes

Table of Contents

Class Organization	5
---------------------------------	----------

Unit: Planning and Recruiting	6
--	----------

Lesson: Consequences of Interviewing and Hiring Practices	7
Visible and Invisible Costs.....	7
Long-term Consequences	11
Calculating Replacement Costs.....	11
Lesson: Finding the Right Fit.....	13
Case Study	13
Lesson: Why New Hires Leave.....	14
Lesson: Planning Hiring Strategies.....	18
The Role of the Human Resources or Hiring Manager: Advance Organizational Goals	18
Linking Human Resource Planning to Strategic Planning	19
Defining Position Needs: Analyzing Internal and External Factors	20
Developing Structuring Statements.....	27
Lesson: Defining Position Descriptions and Specifications	31
Job Analysis	31
Writing Job Descriptions and Specifications	35
Adjusting Job Descriptions and Specifications to Changing Strategic Needs	38
Common Resources for Identifying Job Descriptions and Specifications	39
For Your Review	39
Unit Activities	41
Assessing the Cost of a Poor Hiring Decision.....	41
Hiring and Retaining.....	43

Unit: Recruiting Applicants	48
Lesson: Starting Your Search	49
Identifying Internal Sources and External Sources	49
Lesson: Using an Advertising Strategy	54
...But First, A Word From Our Sponsors	54
Lesson: Writing Effective Job Placement Ads	56
Target the Ad	56
Compose Your Ad or Listing.....	56
Lesson: Using Electronic Advertising	60
Lesson: Exploring Other Resources for Recruiting	61
Visiting Campuses	61
Internship Programs	62
Job Fairs.....	62
Employment or Recruiting Agencies	62
Competitors.....	63
For Your Review	63
Unit Activities	65
Key Questions for Developing Your Advertising Strategy	65
Unit: Screening Applicants.....	68
Lesson: The Importance of Screening Applicants	69
Lesson: Evaluating Resumes	70
Evaluating the Resume.....	71
Reference Checks	73
Selecting Candidates to Interview.....	75
Avoiding Discrimination in Selecting Applicants for Screening and Interviewing	75
Lesson: Conducting Phone or Initial Screening Interviews	76
Structuring Statement	76
Some Common Screening and Interview Questions	78
Traditional Tracking/Interview/Screening Areas.....	79

For Your Review	81
------------------------------	-----------

Unit: Preparing for Interviews	82
---	-----------

Lesson: Setting Up Interviews	83
Lesson: Types of Interviews.....	85
Determining the Best Methods for Your Company and the Specific Position	85
Lesson: Structured Interviews and Performance-based Interviews.....	87
Benefits of Structured Interviews	87
Potential Shortcomings of Structured Interviews.....	88
Benefits of Performance-based Interviews	89
Potential Shortcomings of Performance-based Interviews.....	90
Lesson: Developing Questions.....	91
Using Open-ended and Closed-ended questions	91
Deriving Structured Questions from Job-related Behaviors and Situations	94
Avoiding Illegal Questions.....	98
For Your Review	102

Unit: Conducting and Controlling Interviews .	104
--	------------

Lesson: General Approaches to Interviewing	105
Lesson: Planning an Introduction.....	107
Revising Your Structuring Statement	108
Lesson: Conducting the Interview.....	110
Greeting the Applicant.....	110
Conducting Interviews	114
Creating Performance-Based Interviews.....	121
Lesson: Taking Notes During Interviews.....	122
Lesson: Rating Responses	123
Lesson: Managing and Recognizing Nonverbal Communication	125

Table of Contents

Reading Nonverbal Messages	125
Other Nonverbal Cues.....	126
Verbal Cues	129
Lesson: Closing the Interview	130
Lesson: Conducting Group Interviews	131
Lesson: Selecting the Best Applicant	132
Lesson: Extending Job Offers	133
Guidelines for Extending an Offer.....	133
Terms of Employment Offers	134
Lesson: Notifying Other Applicants	136
For Your Review	141
Index	143

Class Organization

This class covers the following units:

- ☐ Planning and Recruiting
- ☐ Recruiting Applicants
- ☐ Screening Applicants
- ☐ Preparing for Interviews
- ☐ Conducting and Controlling Interviews

Unit:

Planning and Recruiting

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- evaluate the consequences of interviewing and hiring practices.
- find the right fit.
- understand why new hires leave.
- plan hiring strategies.
- define position descriptions and specifications.

Lesson:

Consequences of Interviewing and Hiring Practices

The consequences of ineffective hiring practices are evident in the following statistics:

- Harvard research indicates that 80% of turnover is due to hiring mistakes.
- A Michigan State University study shows that interviewing is only 14% accurate in predicting performance.
- Over 90% of all hiring decisions are made by a single interview.
- It will cost at least 150% of a person's base salary to replace him or her. The higher the initial salary and the better the performance, the more you will pay for a replacement.
- The US Department of Labor reports that poor hiring will cost a company double the salary.

Visible and Invisible Costs

Certain immediate costs include:

- Recruiting
- Advertising
- Special recruiting programs, such as employee referral awards
- Application processing
- Reference, educational, employment, or criminal background checks
- Skill, personality, or aptitude testing and drug screening
- Applicant travel expenses
- Logistics planning for interviews

Planning and Recruiting

- On-boarding (for example, benefits start-up processing)
- Actual job offer costs (salary, relocation expenses, bonuses, assistance with home sale, etc.)
- ❖ Note that the consequences of poor interviewing and hiring processes are often invisible, however.
- ✂ After your instructor divides the class into groups, read the following list of invisible costs. With your group, discuss the other costs you can add to the following “invisible costs” list below:
 - Lost Productivity: In the time it takes to advertise, screen, interview, and negotiate, how much time elapses during which the job’s duties are left undone? ...Or picked up by other unit members? What is the cost of this lost productivity? What is the cost of your own redirected time on an inefficient hiring process and on offsetting lost productivity of your unit? Is there cost involved in training and supervising others to do the job?
 - Poor Morale: In the period just before an employee leaves, what is the impact on morale and productivity of that employee and others around him or her? After the employee leaves, what does it cost to manage low morale and to maintain adequate levels of productivity?
 - Adverse Customer Impact: What is the impact to your customer or client relations as you try to fill the position? ...Or lose someone who clients considered to be top notch? What happens to continuity of service? What are your risks in losing customers or clients? What are the costs of spreading limiting existing resources to cover the same scope of service? How much time and money will you and others invest to prevent the client or customer from leaving your company with the exiting employee?
 - Vacancy Costs: What will be the costs of project delays, overtime, customer backorders, and downtime on salaries, systems, and support? How will erosion of customer satisfaction and employee moral affect your company’s overall performance?

- ❖ When adding visible hiring costs to invisible hiring costs, common cost categories of hiring, the cost may range from 15% of the position's base salary to 38%, if an employment agency is used.

- Low Productivity Costs for New Hires: Even if hired from within the company, the new hire needs time to become productive. This chart shows typical new-hire productivity levels by week:

Weeks on the Job	Productivity Level
First Four Weeks	25%
Weeks 5 through 8	50%
Weeks 9 through 12	75%
After Week 12	Full productivity

- ❖ Mistakes also will be made during this 12-week period; some mistakes may not be caught right away and will cost more to correct down the line.

- Low productivity — and associated costs for errors, inconsistent customer service, and other transitional risks — could amount to 32% of the position base salary.

- ❖ For more senior-level positions, or for those requiring longer periods of time to develop full productivity, the costs will be higher.

- Training Costs: New employee orientation and job-specific training may cost as much as 13% of base salary.

Planning and Recruiting

Use the space below for notes:

[illegible]

Long-term Consequences

What happens if you make the wrong hiring decision? Without an effective hiring process, you may be faced with the following scenarios as well as being faced with even higher long-term hiring costs:

If the employee stays:	If the employee leaves:
An unproductive employee, perhaps for years.	Replacement hiring costs escalate.
A disruptive employee who "poisons" morale and the productivity of others.	Productivity is lost for the position and the morale of overworked colleagues plummet.
Management gets burdened with extra documentation and corrective actions.	Additional out-processing paperwork becomes necessary, as does advertising, etc.
Frequent absenteeism/tardiness raises overtime costs and reduces productivity, service, etc.	Continuity, the team atmosphere, and customer or client relations are disrupted.

Calculating Replacement Costs

There are number of ways that you can calculate the costs of replacing an employee. You can calculate general replacement costs or common costs.

Calculating General Replacement Costs

For example, the general replacement cost of a technical writer with a base salary of \$45,000 is 150% of \$45,000 = \$67,500.

Calculating Common Costs

To calculate the common costs for replacing a technical writer with a base salary of \$45,000:

1. Calculate the visible and invisible costs by taking 15% to 38% of \$45,000 Base = \$6,750 to \$17,100
 2. Low Productivity and Errors: 32% of \$45,000 = \$14,400
 3. Training: 13% of \$45,000 = \$5,850
 4. Add all of the above costs to the base salary to calculate the total replacement cost. Salary (\$45,000) + Visible and Invisible Costs (\$6,750 to \$17,100) + Low Productivity and Errors Costs (\$14,400) + Training Costs (\$5,850) = \$72,000 to \$82,350.
- ☺ The US Department of Labor calculates the cost of replacing an employee as 200% of base salary. Using the technical writer example, the replacement costs according to the US Department of Labor is 200% of \$45,000, which equals \$90,000.
- ❖ Whether you use the general replacement cost or assess total common costs, replacing an employee costs your company between 150% and 200% of the position's base salary.

Lesson:

Finding the Right Fit

Because hiring is outcome-driven, making the best hiring decision depends not only on the particular skills, knowledge, experience, and attitudes of an applicant but also on the company's specific needs. This seems like common sense; but many hiring managers often focus more on what the position does than on what it specifically must achieve, produce, or contribute. One reason may be that the job position and specifications are poorly defined or outdated.

Case Study

A newly formed human resource development department for an expanding company was recruiting high-level, highly educated applicants to work in a team environment as development consultants. The department's vision was to move away from traditional training toward a "learning environment" using Intranet-based learning and in-field learning support specialists who reported to field managers.

When one applicant asked for a job description, the department director faxed a description for a *training specialist position* she had managed at a previous company. While uneasy about the lack of a clear job description, this applicant joined the team.

The applicant was hired, along with several other highly qualified consultants, with six-figure salaries and guaranteed bonuses. The team collaborated to write their job descriptions and specifications, based on the department and company vision.

Within 18 months the department's vision had turned 180 degrees – becoming a traditional training department. Three of the 11 consultants left the department (27%). Remaining consultants who did not resign or were not terminated were doomed to fulfill the "training specialist" prophecy of the original, inappropriate jobs description, since almost all of their work focused on designing courses. Imagine the costs to this department – from recruiting and hiring highly paid professions, to turnover and re-organization, to underutilization of capacity of consultants-turned-training-specialists! All because the company and director did not know what the position should be.

Lesson:

Why New Hires Leave

A new or vacant job position must be evaluated and defined in a way that clearly fits the unit's goals, which in turn rolls up into the company's goals. Without exact job position descriptions and specifications to drive the right outcomes, the chances of keeping the *best* fit will be approximately 20%.

Why are clear, aligned goals and exact position expectations critical to finding and keeping the best hire? Many employees leave their companies — either by choice or termination — within the first three years because the “fit” is not right.

Common reasons why new hires leave include:

- The company culture is not what the employee “expected.”
- The job was defined poorly, and the actual work required does not match employee's expectations, qualifications, or career aspirations.
- The job was defined poorly, and the new hire's performance does not match the manager's performance expectations for the actual work involved.
- The job itself changed quickly and drastically, due to any number of external or internal factors, including re-organization, business downturns, and other market changes.
- The company is, without the interviewee's knowledge, “in transition” due to mergers, acquisitions, poor financial performance, high turnover, or infrastructure changes.
- The manager's managerial style conflicts with the employee's work style.
- The compensation or benefits systems change midstream: raises plummet, thresholds increase for bonus or gain sharing plans, premiums increase while benefits become more limited, “life-quality” benefits (for example, tuition reimbursement) begin to disappear.

- Elsewhere, the starting salary is higher and benefits are better.
- There is little or no chance for promotion, lateral movement, or professional development.
- The new hire is thrust into a dysfunctional team environment.
- The new hire lacks faith or trust in company leadership.

? Turnover can have some benefits. For example, turnover allows you to try different configurations for work functions, to solve morale or performance issues, and to hire better performers. Yet, the above reasons for self-termination are costly. What are some other reasons related to “fit” that an employee would leave your company or unit?

[illegible]

Planning and Recruiting

? Also, what steps could you have taken, or can you take now, to ensure better retention of good performers?

? How could better alignment of the position description, specifications, and outcomes with the company or unit achieve retention?

Lesson:

Planning Hiring Strategies

Planning a hiring strategy provides a framework that links the hiring process to company and unit needs.

The Role of the Human Resources or Hiring Manager: Advance Organizational Goals

Human resources (HR) as a functional unit may be configured many different ways and may provide a range of services from standard “blocking and tackling” (benefits and compensation management, and other traditional “personnel” functions) to organizational development (organizational design and efficiency, succession planning, performance appraisals).

Some companies’ HR departments may move into a strategic role linked to key business drivers and results. This is also true for other functional departments, as internal and external factors force managers to see the bigger company picture and to execute toward corporate goals.

Executive consultants recommend that HR and other managers be accountable for hiring by:

- Understanding the business — human resource (people) linkage from the CEO perspective. Know two or three key business priorities, and link human resources to them.
- Understanding priorities and market positioning that produce higher price-to-earnings ratios.
- Understanding the financial “anchors” that are parts of the company’s “formula for success”: for example, margins, velocity, returns...
- Understanding and anticipating the “shifting nature of the game” (positioning the business model internally and externally, industry and overall business context, competitors’ positions and value propositions, targeted customers).

- Planning and engineering the new “gene pool” needed for success. Hire the right people to execute the organizational objectives.

Linking Human Resource Planning to Strategic Planning

HR managers and other functional managers must link human capital to specific financial drivers and success indicators, and must assess how both financial and nonfinancial factors, such as innovation, drive overall shareholder value.

Key strategic drivers include:

- Providing acceptable return on investment
- Using appropriate technology to promote productivity
- Reaching the optimum level of operational efficiency
- Reducing costs and eliminating waste
- Fostering employee morale and retention
- Promoting the organization's image and perceived value

Human resource planning, like any other business process, must be aligned to corporate strategic planning. Many companies use succession planning programs to train and groom internal candidates for high-level positions, which have a large impact on the strategic objectives of the organization.

✂ Define three or four key business or value drivers at your company. Start your list with the most important.

Defining Position Needs: Analyzing Internal and External Factors

What factors affect an organization's potential for success and its needs for human resources? The following provides a brief summary of those internal and external factors.

Forecasting Needs and Defining Your Job Position

✂ This activity includes two parts. The first part addresses how you will align your open position with the company's needs — now and in the future. The second asks you to examine specific factors to shape your position description and begin your recruiting strategy.

1. Read each of the factors listed below.
2. Then, as an entire group, generate an example or two of each, as it relates to your companies.
3. Next, individually, generate the following:
 - **Defining Statement:** Using the space below each description, record specific aspects of each factor that you believe are important to your hiring efforts. These Defining Statements will help ensure your job description and specifications meet company and unit needs. It also will be used later, as you formulate your recruiting strategy. If you do not have an immediate opening, project your hiring needs over the next 6 to 12 months.
 - **Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:** Next, for each factor, record key points to be addressed in the job description and specifications. Note specific changing needs.

Targeted Job Title of Position:

--

Physical Location

The physical location of a company (for example, national or international, rural or urban) is its most basic environmental factor. The physical location also has political and social impact on the organization and on its employee base: where they live, means of transportation, cost of living, and quality of life. Location also defines the depth of and competition for the labor pool.

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Political Environment

The political environment may range from new environmental protection and labor laws to the actual political dynamics within a particular geographic area's government, which may determine the amount of influence held by building contractors, suppliers, or other well-connected companies.

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Economic Conditions:

The company's economic stability affects management's staffing decisions. Conditions, both actual and projected, affect the products/services and the staffing needed. In some industries, the labor union influence on organizational productivity is substantial. Changes in the composition of the labor market and the overall economy in the geographic are also economic factors. Consider, also, changes in industry demands; for instance, the decline of dot.coms has created a market of IT professionals seeking lucrative but short-term contract work, rather than full-time work.

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Organizational Factors

An organization's structure, technology, and "climate" affect its hiring needs and practices. They shape specifications for certain company and job competencies, skills, and cultural fit.

Organizational factors also help the job applicant determine if the company aligns with the applicant's work concepts and values.

The savvy interviewee will ask you about reporting structures, the technology infrastructure, communication channels, and interpersonal norms (formal communication, open-door policies, etc.).

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Company Structure, Size, and Complexity

The organization might be a conglomerate or a single ownership venture — small, medium, or large — localized or spread across countries and continents — specialized or diverse in products and services — privately held or publicly owned. What impact does structure, size, and complexity have on defining the position?

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Managerial Style

Every organization has at its core a management style that is consciously adopted, naturally evolved, or molded by strategic design. The organization's managerial style has a direct effect on its employees and on its hiring strategies, whether that style is task-oriented, democratic, laissez faire and "laid back," authoritarian, innovative, proactive, or "stagnant" — maintaining the status quo. In addition, this factor is defined by who sets the goals and influences/makes decisions, how resources are distributed, what style of motivation is favored (carrots or sticks), how/what information is communicated, how change is instituted, and where formal and informal power centers are located.

Defining Statement:

Effects on Defining/Re-Defining the Position:

Developing Structuring Statements

Structuring statements can be used for a number of purposes – from developing advertisements and postings, to introductions about the position at job fairs and initial interviews. A structuring statement captures the essence of the company and the position, indicating key information to “sell” the position/company, distinguish the position/company from competitors, and help you with initial screening of potential applicants.

✂ In this second part of the activity, you will begin to develop a structuring statement that helps shape your entire hiring process – from advertising and screening, to interviewing and selection.

A typical structuring statement might read as follows:

“As a [position title] responsible for [X, Y, and Z], you will work for [company name] — one of the fastest growing [industry type] companies in the north metro area and the state. For the right candidate, with strong [list competencies, skills, experience, etc.], [company name] provides [list benefits, specifically tailored to the audience: for example, access, work environment, unique benefits, growth opportunities].”

1. For each factor below, provide a brief structuring statement defining the job need and its appeal to a potential job applicant based on the factor as it exists today and may in the future.
2. When you have a brief structuring statement on each factor, use the space at the end of the activity to draft an overall structuring statement for the position that reflects key factors.
 - To help you with this activity, imagine that you are at an industry job fair that has attracted thousands of hopeful job seekers. Your table is located right near the entrance doors to the convention hall. You have 30 seconds to snag applicants with your structuring statement.

Physical Location

Structuring Statement:

Political Environment

Structuring Statement:

Economic Conditions

Structuring Statement:

Organizational Factors

Structuring Statement:

Company Structure, Size, and Complexity

Structuring Statement:

Managerial Style

Structuring Statement:

Overall Structuring Statement

Lesson:

Defining Position Descriptions and Specifications

Job Analysis

Every job is a collection of tasks and responsibilities that drive results. A task is a unit of work or sequence of activities that produce a specific result. Some complex positions may include a large number of tasks within a single function.

Job analysis links the desired outcomes, tasks, and functions of the position to business needs. Analysis also helps align job descriptions and specifications with well-established industry standards for positions (such as those defined in the Standard Industrial Classifications).

Many small- to medium-sized companies make minor adaptations to their job descriptions and specifications based on the regional labor market pool and the competitor climate. This differentiates the company from competitors — often in subtle ways — and attracts top talent through such factors as competitive starting salaries, incentives, benefit packages, development and career growth opportunities, and other “plusses” geared toward the targeted labor pool.

Job analysis has many applications:

- Establishes a job title and set of tasks or functions that clearly define the position and its outcomes within the organization.
- Defines or describes performance that would “meet” initial or long-range expectations for the position (for example, “Must be able to initially work with little supervision”).
- Advances organizational goals by providing information needed for recruitment and selection; compliance with affirmative action, EEOC, and ADA requirements; organizational development; and training and development.

Planning and Recruiting

- Anticipates longer-range goals of updating job descriptions and requirements to anticipate future needs for the position, based on the company's strategic planning and direction.
 - Provides the basis for defining performance metrics that drive results.
 - Allows design of performance levels used in employee appraisals.
- ❖ One of the best ways to set performance levels during a job analysis is to identify current employees who are top performers or who were "quick starts" in the position. Define their "best practices" and the competencies, skills, and other attributes that contributed to their success. New hires typically are expected to perform at a designated "competent" level for entry into the position. Selecting top candidates entails knowing what results (productivity levels) the new hire must reach. To help you set levels and time frames, job analysis provides a clear understanding of the set of competencies, knowledge, experience, and "fit" that will most likely yield progressive performance improvement.

In many cases, the HR benefits/compensation or organizational development manager will lead the job analysis, with input from:

- the position's supervisor or manager.
- representatives in other functional units whose work dovetails with the unit and the position.
- incumbents who have exhibited "best practices".
- senior and executive management, who must examine a position's fit within the larger context of cross-functional or company-wide business objectives and compensation banding.

- ✕ List personnel who should help you with position analysis, writing the position description and requirements, and ensuring the right productivity or performance levels.

Position Analysis	Writing Description	Performance Levels

Job Analysis Methods

Job analysis methods may include:

- Reviewing job classification systems, creating task inventories, examining incumbent work logs, studying previous job analyses and current job description.
- Surveying or interviewing workers, supervisors, and incumbents.
- Observing directly on-the-job behaviors, processes, and functions.
- Videotaping job activities.

Other key components of a job analysis include examining organizational charts, operating policies, procedure and training manuals, strategic plans, and business plans.

Planning and Recruiting

Certain types of job analysis methods may be more useful in defining job descriptions and specifications. For example, observation provides the most vital information on such positions as machine operator, skilled crafts worker, flight attendant, construction worker, and other similar jobs that require precise and repetitive tasks or functions.

- ✂ Briefly list several methods that help you define or redefine an existing job — or define a new position. Be as specific as you can in targeting your methods.

Writing Job Descriptions and Specifications

There are a number of ways to effectively create job descriptions and specifications to help you attract top applicants, select the best fit, and achieve desired results:

- Structure sentences to focus on verbs [action] and objects [things acted upon]: for example, "Monitors [verb] water levels [objects] in overflow tanks."
- Also focus on explanatory phrases of outcomes: for example, "Reviews and approves [verbs] purchase orders [object] to ensure within allocation for line item [desired outcome]."
- Use present tense verbs: "Reviews," "Approves," "Cleans."
- Verbs should clearly define the most *critical* type of action required and the *highest level of accountability* for the task or function: for example,
 - Directs (as opposed to "Works with...")
 - Manages (as opposed to "Oversees...")
 - Controls (as opposed to "Contributes to...")
 - Maintains (as opposed to "Helps maintain...")
- Use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where, or when (how often) a task or function is to be performed. This adds clarity and creates a precise account of the position's scope of accountability: for example, "Checks potassium levels on hourly basis to ensure levels are within operating range."
- Also, when possible, refer to documents, policies, or other written processes, standards, or procedures that guide the effective and safe execution of a task or function: for example, "Adjusts levels as needed using *Operating Procedure* specifications."
- Use unbiased gender terminology: for example, avoid gender bias in developing job titles: for example, "Bartender" instead of "Barmaid."
- Avoid ambiguous words or modifiers: for example, "daily" is better than "routinely" when specifying how often a task must be performed.

Elements of a Job Description and Specifications

A job description should include the following:

- Job title
- Job objectives or overall purpose statement
- Geographical and organizational location of the job
- Job grade and/or classification
- List of duties, tasks, or functions to be performed. In some cases, these may be framed as
 - “Accountabilities” (areas where the job incumbent has direct accountability and, in some cases, authority for outcomes) or
 - “Shared responsibilities” (areas that overlap with other job positions and require the incumbent to coordinate, communicate, and collaborate to achieve desired results)
- Percentage of time (estimate or qualitative – for example, “most,” “primarily,” “main”) — to be spent on each major duty
- Description of the relationships/roles of the position with other positions held internally (supervisor, subordinates, coworkers) or externally (vendors, clients, customers, etc.)
- Conditions of employment (hours, wage structure, special shifts, and unique or unusual environmental conditions)

Job specifications should include:

- Specific knowledge, competencies, behaviors, skills, and/or experience needed to execute the job at an entry level of performance. (While minimum specifications are indicated and communicated through the recruiting process, use those minimums for consistency in the screening and hiring process, not as the benchmark for *selecting* the *best* candidate.)
- Educational experience

- Physical, visual, auditory, and emotional effort required
- Equipment to be used in the performance of the job
- Collective bargaining agreement
- Nonessential or additional requirements (for example, "...may require...")
 - Preferred qualifications may also be cited, in addition to minimum.

For internal use, the specifications include criteria for recruiting and selecting new employees, developing and training them, establishing competitive and fair compensation plans, and conducting realistic performance evaluation and review processes (while some companies see these items as optional, setting such criteria pays returns in the long run).

Adjusting Job Descriptions and Specifications to Changing Strategic Needs

If you are redefining a job or establishing a new position, consider the following questions:

- What strategic result will the new or re-defined position achieve?
- How will a change in strategic direction affect organizational structures for the position?
- What core company competencies must be achieved? Which specific competencies and performance levels are required for this position to achieve desired goals?
- How do roles and relationships, both internally and externally, need to be modified?
- What new outcomes or measures of success will be needed for the particular position?
- How will levels of success be measured in relation to new or refocused value drivers?
- What is the “fit” between the current job incumbent and the projected need?
- How will “best practices” be defined for the new description and specifications?
- What resources, training, support, or hiring will be needed?

Common Resources for Identifying Job Descriptions and Specifications

Below is an abridged list of resources to help you identify job descriptions and specifications from Occupation Information Network:

- Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) Index
 - U.S. Office of Personnel Management General Schedule Position Classification Standards
 - DOT (Dictionary of Occupational Title)
- ☛ When working with placement or recruiting agencies, be sure that the agency you choose has done a thorough regional analysis of the position and has clear specifications.

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- Over 90% of all hiring decisions are made by a single interview.
- It will cost at least 150% of a person's base salary to replace him or her. The higher the initial salary and the better the performance, the more you will pay for a replacement.
- Whether you use the general replacement cost or assess total common costs, replacing an employee costs your company between 150% and 200% of the position's base salary.
- Because hiring is outcome-driven, making the best hiring decision depends not only on the particular skills, knowledge, experience, and attitudes of an applicant but also on the company's specific needs.
- Many employees leave their companies — either by choice or termination — within the first three years because the "fit" is not right.
- Human resource planning, like any other business process, must be aligned to corporate strategic planning.

Planning and Recruiting

- A structuring statement captures the essence of the company and the position, indicating key information to “sell” the position/company, distinguish the position/company from competitors, and help you with initial screening of potential applicants.
- Job analysis links the desired outcomes, tasks, and functions of the position to business needs.

Unit Activities

Assessing the Cost of a Poor Hiring Decision

Think of a poor hiring decision you made — someone who remained on your payroll for more than 90 days but either left (by termination or voluntarily) or did not perform as expected. It may be difficult for you to remember the exact costs and consequences: so try to select a recent hiring choice that took a wrong turn.

You need not fill in all the areas listed below. Do as much as you can in the time allotted. And make rough estimates. (If your company currently does not have methods to assess hiring effectiveness, Next Step Learning can assist you in building metrics to measure hiring success.)

"Impact" Category on Poor Hiring Decision	Estimated Costs
Your Time	\$\$\$\$\$
More extensive orientation required	
Closer supervision required	
Extra – perhaps simplistic/unnecessary – questions from the new hire	
Extra on-the-job observation	
More time spent on performance conferences	
More time spent on disciplinary processes, actions, and paperwork	
Responding to complaints from coworkers or others in the company	
Responding to complaints from clients or customers	
Distraction from your own accountabilities	

Planning and Recruiting

Distraction from your management and strategic/leadership functions	
Your Operating Budget	\$\$\$\$\$
Lost credibility with customers/clients	
Lost business	
Lost advertising, recruitment, interviewing and hiring time/dollars	
Other Staff Members at Work	\$\$\$\$\$
Concern for losing their own job, if the employee was terminated	
Increased stress	
Lower productivity	
Absenteeism	
Poor morale	
Resentment and emotional distraction	
Staff Development Budget	\$\$\$\$\$
In-house or outside seminars and workshops needed	
Staff coaching and other help provided	
Costs for Dismissal, Arbitration, and/or Severance...?	\$\$\$\$\$
Legal services	
Staff involvement	
Deposition time for staff	
Wrongful dismissal settlement	
Total Cost of Poor Hiring Decision	\$

Hiring and Retaining

Your instructor will divide the class into groups for this activity.

1. As an entire group, determine one or two key drivers that will shape your hiring processes.
 2. Then, consider the following list of factors that are often used to clearly define, communicate, and shape appropriate position descriptions and specifications; achieve recruiting efficiently; and hire top performers.
 - Company Mission, Vision, Core Values, Core Competencies, and Operating Principles
 - Strategic Direction
 - Company Core Business Drivers or “Formula For Success”
 - Specific Company Business Goals and Current Results (YTD)
 - Organizational Climate, Culture, and Work Environment
 - Organizational Structure
 3. In your group, discuss other factors that help you better adjust your entire hiring processes to increase your chances of hiring and retaining top talent.
- ❖ For this activity, you will need a current or draft version of the job position you wish to fill. Use the grid on the next page to define the job description and specifications in relation to corporate strategic planning. Although a thorough job analysis is best, you can begin to develop a basis for your hiring process.

Planning and Recruiting

Job Title: _____ (If Title Changes: From _____ To _____)

Major Duties/Tasks/ Functions	%	Rating*	Education	Salary & Grade	Competencies. Skills, Knowledge, Experience**	Roles & Relationships

Planning and Recruiting

Major Duties/Tasks/ Functions	%	Rating*	Education	Salary & Grade	Competencies. Skills, Knowledge, Experience**	Roles & Relationships

* Relative importance of the duty, etc., in relation to other duties and to position success.

** This column could include best practices or critical success levels. Also indicate any specialized equipment, software, or other position-specific needs.

Planning and Recruiting

✂ If you already have a job description and specifications, use this time to make adjustments. You may want to use the space provided below to explore “best practices” for the position and your plan for accelerating the productivity curve. What development, training, or resources would support increased performance? What kind of applicant could accelerate productivity without costly training or other support?

[illegible]

1. What criteria will distinguish a superior applicant for this position from a more entry-level applicant who will require a greater investment of resources (training, your time, etc.) and a longer productivity curve? Be sure to specify levels of competencies, knowledge, skills, behaviors, and experience. Use quantitative measures or exact requirements (for example, machinery, types of software/hardware) whenever possible.

2. How will you position the unique benefits or opportunities of this position to attract the most qualified applicants. How will you "market" the position and "target" applicants to attain the best hire? List three or four key "selling" points. (Refer to your structuring statement.)

Unit:

Recruiting Applicants

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- start a recruiting search.
- use an advertising strategy.
- write effective job placement ads.
- use electronic advertising.
- explore other sources of recruiting.

Lesson:

Starting Your Search

When you start searching for candidates to fill a position, utilize both external sources and internal sources for candidates.

Identifying Internal Sources and External Sources

It is tempting to think you must recruit outside your company to find the best applicant. Especially when strategic business directions require new sets of core competencies, recruiting outside the company may bring the new “gene pool” needed to affect change.

However, some companies anticipate shifting human resource needs and use planning processes that ensure bench strength through career-pathing, retention strategies, and training.

Discussed below are methods for targeting applicant availability, both externally and internally.

Internal Sources for Locating Candidates

Several methods will help you build a pool of candidates for current, new, or expanded jobs:

- **Succession Planning:** Typically uses set criteria for success and targets critical company positions. Analysis is needed to select candidates for succession planning and to map development plans for these individuals. Interviews with position incumbents and other routine methods (defined above) help define job requirements. Analysis also must profile the success factors for the job as it currently exists and as it may exist.

- ***High Potential Programs:*** Similar in some ways to succession planning, high potential programs identify personnel who have track records of performance in their current positions (often exceeding expectations) and exhibit — or may be capable of developing — additional skill and abilities to grow into positions of expanded responsibilities or in other departments. Set clear development criteria, plans, and evaluation methods to ensure the candidate is ready to assume the new position within specific time frames.
 - ***Skills Inventories:*** Some companies have developed extensive databases on employees, listing skills, education, experience, and specialized knowledge that may be suited for open or new positions. Inventories allow efficient internal recruiting through precise searches based on key qualifications and experiences. While internal jobs should be posted, a skill-based online inventory allows targeted recruiting and shortens the posting-to-hire time frame.
 - ***Performance Appraisal/Evaluation Development Plans:*** During performance appraisals, the manager and employee should work jointly to set performance and development goals for the coming year (or review period). Current-position development focuses on performance improvement in the employee's existing position. Cross-functional and intra-departmental development plans should be part of the overall development process, to allow internal backup for each position and to better integrate cross-functional operations.
 - ***Career Development Plans:*** Career — or professional — development plans help employees and managers engage in realistic dialogues about the employee's career goals, current experience and competency levels, and any gaps that might exist.
- ❖ Note: Career development plans can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, they motivate employees, play to their strengths, and establish a more strategic human resource plan. On the other hand, some employees may not have the potential to achieve the experience, education, or competencies needed for certain positions. Also, there may be little opportunity for upward or lateral movement.

- ❖ An advantage of career development plans, however, is that managers and Human Resources have a clear picture of the employee's own sense of direction and "best fit."
- ❖ Also, a database of employees' career objectives and desired "next-step" job moves is one more tool for retention, development, and targeted internal recruiting.
 - **Identifying At-Risk Employees:** Develop processes to identify and retain at-risk employees – those top performers who, for whatever reason, may be vulnerable to offers from your competitors or headhunters. Turnover rates tell us much about a company. However, turnover rates with **top** performers tell us even more. The cost to retain such employees — or selectively promote them into new or expanded positions — may be vastly less than the cost to replace them and climb the productivity curve.
- ✕ List three or four sources that will help you with your current or future searches internally:

External Sources for Locating Candidates

Listed below are common, but not all-inclusive, external sources for locating job candidates. Use the questions to generate leads.

The Educational Pipeline:

- What programs do area high schools, vocational schools, post-secondary institutions offer?
- Which institutions have the best reputation?
- How do degree programs match your needs for specific kinds of positions?
- Which institutions are most apt to provide the industry — or job-specific pool you need?
- What do continuing education programs provide to the labor force in your region?
- What for-profit educational companies exist? What do they offer?

Recruiting from Competitors:

- Which of your competitors cannot offer the salary, benefits, growth potential, etc., you can?
- Which companies are undergoing “transitions”?
- In the “help wanted” publications, what kinds of positions to you see most requested?
- Where are the gaps in supply and demand for certain positions?

Government, Community, or Professional Organizations:

- What contacts can you make through the Department of Labor, Chamber of Commerce, and professional organizations and associations?
- Which groups provide “Position Sought” listings in newsletters or online sites?
- Which list job postings? How can you get your job posted?

- Which keep databases of member bios and are willing to recommend potential candidates?
- When do the organizations meet? What recruiting plan do you have for networking? What marketing materials, etc., do you have for distribution at meetings?

Colleagues:

- Who do you know — friends, neighbors, colleagues — who could recommend a candidate?
- Could your contacts provide leads on additional contacts?

Recruiting or Placement Agencies:

- What pool of talent is available from headhunters, recruiters, and other placement agencies?

✕ Use this space to plan for recruiting internally and externally. Be specific, with deadline dates — and leave room for filling in contact information when you return to work.

Action To Be Taken...	...Using What Method/Contact...	...by What Date...	...with Contact Information Needed

Lesson:

Using an Advertising Strategy

While many types of advertising strategies exist – from classified ads to direct mail to special event recruiting — our emphasis in this section is on developing the most effective print-based (traditional newspaper or radio) and online advertisements.

Many recruiting specialists claim that advertising is one of the least effective and cost-efficient way to attract the right pool of applicants; however, somewhere between \$10 and \$12 billion dollars is spent each year on help wanted advertising in the United States. We will explore ways to increase your return on your investment and target the right medium.

...But First, A Word From Our Sponsors

You all have likely been exposed to a range of advertising strategies — whether your perspective was from the hiring or job-hunting end. Use that experience now — as both provider and consumer of job advertising — to complete the following activity.

? What types of advertising have you used or what types have been exposed to you?

? What are the benefits and results of certain types of advertising?

? What are the disadvantages of certain types of advertising?

Lesson:

Writing Effective Job Placement Ads

Target the Ad

Job seekers often search for positions through sources most appropriate for their occupation and industry. Effective ads address location, industry, and job category. Also, the nature of the ad or listing shapes the kind of initial information you will receive from a job seeker via a query, cover letter, resume, or call. The better you position and define your job opening, the better your chance of getting the best talent and information you need to evaluate the fit.

- Before deciding which industry and job category options to use for ad placement, review local news publications and other media (for example, professional association newsletters) to determine where similar job positions are advertised. This also helps you determine if the position needs to be cross-listed: for example, a training position for manufacturing may be listed in the "Manufacturing" industry category and in the "Training" job category.
- When posting an ad or job announcement using online sources, run a quick "search" to determine where similar positions can be found. Also, use specific job sites (for example, monster.com, headhunter.net, careerbuilder.com) to search for similar positions by location, by industry, and position type. This allows you to strategically place your ad or listing, determine the competitive strategy for writing the ad, and the appropriate search words.

Compose Your Ad or Listing

What should your ad or listing contain? The following are typical components.

Job Title: What differentiates your posting from perhaps hundreds of similar jobs? Is the title realistic and recognizable by your target audience, yet distinguishable (shows a particular niche: for example, "UNIX System Administrator" as opposed to "System Administrator")?

Company: What will you “sell” about the company?

- Brief description of the organization: What key features represent your company’s core identity? Consult with your Marketing department.
- Products and/or services your company provides: What will attract the kinds of candidates you want for the job?
- Define your corporate culture: Why would someone want to work for your company? What benefits might attract them, from value-add benefits packages (for example, on-site dry-cleaning pick-up, relocation expenses) to working conditions (for example, flex hours, telecommuting). Why your company is a good place to work.
- Reason/need for opening: Is there growth, expansion, or need for a new position? List this only when there is a positive reason or need for a position to be filled.

Job Description: What are the responsibilities for the job? What is the scope of impact of the job’s results? How important is the job to your company?

- Description of the responsibilities: What will the successful candidate do routinely (day-to-day, weekly, monthly) or occasionally?
- Scope: Who will the new hire work with: departments, company levels, customers, and vendors?
- Nature of the job: Part of a team, managing, working independently, self-starting, and trainee?
- Organizational location: What is the department? What is the location of the position within the department and company?

Requirements and Qualifications: What are the key requirements and qualifications for a new hire to perform competently at an entry or advanced level in the position?

- Educational minimums/preferences: Types of degree/majors required or preferred?
 - Are there any special certifications required?

Recruiting Applicants

- Knowledge, skills, and abilities: What is needed? Should you state the knowledge, skills, and abilities specifically or generally (for example, “strong communication skills” or “strong online communication skills for frequent client contact online”)?
- Previous experience: What successful work or professional experience should the applicant have? What is the minimum or range of years experience sought? Must the experience be with certain types of industries, equipment, hardware/software, or companies?
- Willingness to relocate: List if “reach” of ad or listing is outside your geographic area.

Salary and/or Salary Requirements: Is it a competitive advantage to list the starting salary or range? Will it help you screen candidates if you ask for their salary requirements?

How To Apply and What To Include: What does the applicant need to provide you at this stage? What is the most effective way for the applicant to submit required material?

- Typical material: Cover letter, resume, references, work sample.
- E-mail: Fastest and easiest way to receive application material. Using a third part (for example, online placement) will determine, in part, where the materials are sent electronically. Can be sorted quickly and stored. Also allows quick scans of cover letters and resumes for key words. Files should be printed and filed. E-files are easy to circulate and archive, but ensure confidentiality. Direct e-mail also invites, at times, follow-up e-mail messages from candidates that may consume time. Some companies have special e-mail addresses for applications. How will you specify the format for submission? Will applications come to the hiring manager, to Human Resources, or to some other centralized area for screening?
- Fax number: This option is fast — when you need to fill a position quickly — but it creates lots of paper and interruptions. The above questions apply to faxed applications.

- Phone: Most companies choose not to list a contact number, preferring to screen applicants based on the submitted material's "fit" with the job ad or listing. Others encourage questions or contact from applicants. Typically, the higher the job level, the greater the chances you will invite a potential applicant to contact your company. Again, who will receive the call?
- Mailing address: P.O. Box, centralized third-party location (placement agency, recruiter), centralized company address (typically, human resources), or direct to hiring department.
- Web site: Decide if you will offer a link to the company's home page or employment section page. Is there a place where applicants can submit through your Web site(s)?
- Electronic application forms: Used from various online sources, including company Web site.

Affirmative Action/EEOC Statement: Federal law requires that any company holding a government contract or loan must include a phrase indicating that it is an equal opportunity employer. Sample statement: "All applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, creed, sex, or national origin." Check with your Human Resources department to see what federal, state, and local laws require.

Lesson:

Using Electronic Advertising

E-mail Lists: Professionals subscribe to different types of e-mail lists, by specialty, to search for jobs. Many lists have between 1000 to 5000 subscribers, and almost all lists are focused on a specific topic, industry area, or geographic area. Check out the list's Web site to see if they have instructions for employers wishing to post a job ad. Write to the owner of the list telling the owner about the position you have available and ask the owner to send your post to the list.

Newsgroups: Newsgroups require special software, which is often bundled with the end-user's web browser. Users subscribe to newsgroups of interest, and download recent messages using their newsgroup software. Unlike e-mail, which is downloaded directly when collected by the end-user, newsgroup users download the most recent posts. Newsgroups make it easier for the user to search when they need to, without becoming a regular, long-term subscriber who receives all posts sent to a group. To place your opening in a newsgroup, use the same process as above.

Web-based: Post your job opportunity on your company site. Note benefits and other related information, including how to submit or find out more information. Also, numerous web-based recruiters reach thousands of potential job seekers. Determine which online recruiters have the greatest chance of reaching the quality applicants you seek.

If you are searching for first-time employees, consider a section on your company Web site that profiles some current employees. Include their background, testimonials, and a "day-in-the-life" story about a typical day.

Some companies may even be able to build and use an online "quiz," which tabulates the match with the job and encourages the viewer to apply.

- ❖ If you post jobs online, keep listings up to date and give careful instructions about how to apply and when the search closes.

Lesson:**Exploring Other Resources for Recruiting**

Visiting Campuses

Establishing and maintaining contact with appropriate educational institutions allows the HR manager access to entry-level, trainable candidates. Many organizations send recruiting representatives to colleges and other educational institutions to interview and recruit graduating seniors. Companies may use this recruitment source because college and university campuses have a concentration of talent with the desired education, but without the desired work experience.

Common questions to ask college students include:

- What are your long- and short-range goals? Why did you set these goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What internships, co-operative experiences, or other work have you successfully completed? What did you learn? How would those experiences help you succeed with our position?
- How has your course-work helped you understand practical, work applications? Give me examples of course assignments that helped you apply concepts to actual work situations?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will succeed in this position?
- In what kind of a working environment are you most comfortable?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
- What do you know about our company?

Recruiting Applicants

- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
- How do your grades indicate your chances for success with us?

Internship Programs

Some companies work with local schools to provide student internship or co-op programs. Internships supply organizations with personnel for accomplishing specific projects or for augmenting its regular employment force, while students earn credit and valuable experience. Management can observe the students in the work environment and determine if they should be hired on a permanent basis. Also, such relationships help with recruiting efforts from colleges. Student interns “advertise” about your company with fellow students. Word of mouth is a powerful tool. Interns can reward the organization indirectly by reinforcing its reputation on their campuses. Programs can be a productive source of candidates if designed to give the interns an understanding of the company’s business while involving them in a specific task or project.

Job Fairs

It is common for industry or professional organizations — or groups of companies within certain industries — to sponsor job fairs. Local news publications and association newsletters, e-mail messages, or Web sites advertise these widely. Ensure that your company recruiters are up-to-date on what fairs are being held and on how you can take part in them. It is best to be proactive: you and your company can actively seek opportunities to be members of associations or professional organizations that develop and sponsor such fairs.

Employment or Recruiting Agencies

Employment/staffing agencies (including temp, direct-hire, or transitional) have candidate databases and sell those to you or offer individuals who may match your needs.

Recruiters/headhunters analyze your needs, conduct searches, pre-screen and send the most qualified applicants to you. They negotiate the best deal for you and the applicant. When the recruiter finds the right person and you are ready to hire, you can usually get a replacement guarantee from the recruiting firm specifying if the candidate leaves within a certain amount of time, he or she will be replaced at no extra charge. Fees range from 20 percent to 30 percent of the candidate's first-year salary. The main saving is found in the quick placement of open positions and the quality of the candidates.

Be sure to determine the cost/benefit in using a staffing agency or recruiter/headhunter. This includes assessing the value of the position to the company, its base salary, the urgency of filling the position, and the cost of outside recruiting. There may be hidden costs in using agencies or recruiters. Ensure that there is a clear account of what your company and what the agency is accountable for, and that this is communicated to potential applicants. A staffing agency may even "hire" the applicant as an employee of the agency, paying benefits directly. Require written agreements with any third party you recruit through, and ensure your HR and Legal or Compliance departments have reviewed and accepted the terms.

Competitors

The best potential employees for your company may be working at your competitors. Such employees generally are not reading the classifieds and probably are not calling you directly, even if they are considering a change. Applicants often use recruiters who can find a new job for them efficiently, quickly, and confidentially.

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- You can create an internal pool of applicants by using succession planning, high potential programs, skills inventories, performance appraisal/evaluation development plans, career development plans, and identifying at-risk employees.

Recruiting Applicants

- Many recruiting specialists claim that advertising is one of the least effective and cost-efficient way to attract the right pool of applicants; however, somewhere between \$10 and \$12 billion dollars is spent each year on help-wanted advertising in the United States.
- The better you position and define your job opening in a job placement ad, the better your chance of getting the best talent and information you need to evaluate applicants' fit.
- If you post jobs online, keep listings up to date and give careful instructions about how to apply and when the search closes.
- Establishing and maintaining contact with appropriate educational institutions allows the HR manager access to entry-level, trainable candidates.
- Internships supply organizations with personnel for accomplishing specific projects or for augmenting its regular employment force, while students earn credit and valuable experience.
- Ensure that your company recruiters are up-to-date on what fairs are being held and on how you can take part in job fairs.

[illegible]

Recruiting Applicants

2. What is the “reach” of the medium you would like to use to reach the target pool (geographically, number of readers, scope of distribution, distribution method, etc.)? How many qualified candidates do you expect will access your ad through this medium? Given the medium, what are the best distribution sources for your ad (for example, local newspaper or a state-wide publication, a newsletter distributed through a large but broad-based professional organization, an e-mail distribution list through a specialized industry organization)?

3. How many potential applicants must read the advertisement for you to generate an appropriate pool? Based on employment conditions, how many do you think actually will? How many who are qualified will be interested in the position? How many of those who are qualified, who read the ad, and are interested will respond?

4. What percentage of the resumes you receive will be “qualified” applicants? What will be your return on your advertising dollar for this pool?

5. What will your competitors learn about your current company status or strategy through your ad that you do not want them to know? What will your own current employees learn?

Unit:

Screening Applicants

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- describe the importance of screening applicants.
- evaluate resumes.
- conduct phone or initial screening interviews.

Lesson:

The Importance of Screening Applicants

The importance of thoroughly screening applicants and conducting background is vital to an organization's success.

Consider the following statistics:

- 37% of job-seekers overstate their job titles, responsibilities or education
- 18% supply false Social Security numbers
- 30 % have lied about their criminal records
- 23% have serious motor vehicle violations that involve drugs, alcohol, or revoked licenses
- 30% of resumes have altered dates
- 22% make false claims
- 41% inflate salary claims
- 33% inflate title and responsibility
- 25% list a phony former employer
- 34% give untruthful termination reasons
- 27% falsify records

Lesson:

Evaluating Resumes

A standard resume typically contains:

- Name, address, home phone, work phone (sometimes confidential) and e-mail address
- Objective
- Summary of experience
- Education
 - College names, city, state, graduate date, degree/certificate earned, major/minor, relevant courses, internships/research topics, GPA, honors, activities, clubs
 - High school name, city state, graduation date, course of study, relevant courses, average grade point average, activities, clubs
- Employment for each job
 - Position(s) held
 - Company
 - Location
 - Dates worked (month/year to month/year)
 - Phone (sometimes confidential or optional)
 - Responsibilities and accomplishments (scope, cost reduction, revenue increase, time reduction, etc.)
 - Supervisor's name and title

- References
 - May include name and title, company, address, and phone, or may be provided upon request

Evaluating the Resume

When evaluating resumes:

- Look for length of time on the job. Candidates with several short-term employers could mean a lack of commitment — or that that industry downturns made their type of position vulnerable. Check references carefully, especially if the company is still in business.
- Look for employment gaps and ask for explanations. Long periods out of work could signal time out to update education — or it may indicate some other suspect activity.
- Watch the employment dates for overlaps. This could be a simple error, but also might indicate that the candidate is not being truthful about previous employers.
- Have a copy of the job description in hand when you review resumes. Use checklists based on the job responsibilities and requirements to match what you see in the cover letter and resume. Focus on what applicants achieved that matches your needs. This helps generate specific questions to ask a candidate when using phone screening or other interviews.
- Sort your likely resumes into three stacks — one for those that look perfect to you, another for those who look good, the third for unqualified applicants. If time permits, call and prescreen the perfect ones: ask them why they want to work for your company and other questions addressed later in this course. Ask key questions based on the resume review. Pay attention to your instincts. Test at that point for the qualities you are looking for and for the “fit.”

Red Flags

Resume aspects that raise red flags include:

- Focuses mostly on job duties or responsibilities — a shopping list, rather than a clear profile of the applicant and his or her specific accomplishments.
- Contains general objective statement — or too specific to your particular add.
- Lists irrelevant information (for example, why he or she moved to your geographic area; hobbies that have no value in profiling the applicant).
- Is a functional resume when the person has a good career history.
- Contains a summary section that does not make a hard sell of skills and competencies central to the position.
- Lacks keywords related to job description and specifications.
- Contains typos. Poor “presentation” (materials not professional — or too overdone: for example, full color, brochure-style is inappropriate for certain job position levels and profiles).

Reference Checks

When checking references:

- Verify basic requirements such as years of experience and education.
 - You can require written documentation.
- Talk to at least two former supervisors.
- Talk to the people who actually reviewed and saw the quality of the work performed.
 - Your second choice: an administrator or person who has seen work results.
- Prepare ahead of time: target your questions.
 - Know what you really need to find out before you start
- Get the permission of the candidate before beginning the check — via application form.
- Ensure, before you conduct your checks, that you are within legal requirements.

Sample Reference/Education Verification Questions

- Before using the questions below, verify that they are approved by your HR department and are aligned to the position you want to fill. It is important that questions are both appropriate to the position and needs, and legally acceptable.
- What was the reference's relationship to the applicant?
- What were the applicant's responsibilities in order of importance?
- Why did the applicant leave or why is he or she interested in leaving?
- What impact did or will his or her departure have on the organization? Eligible for rehire?
- Describe the applicant's ability to react to change.
- What is the most challenging aspect of the applicant's position?
- How well did the applicant meet that challenge? What could have been done differently?
- Who has the best performance record in the applicant's department or on the applicant's team? Why?
- How did the applicant compare?
- Give an example of the applicant's most significant contribution to the company and department/team.
- Validate two job competencies with examples of professional accomplishments.
- In what areas does the applicant need improvement and/or more exposure?
- What reservations do you have about the applicant or his or her suitability for this type of position?

Selecting Candidates to Interview

When selecting interview candidates:

- Start with the most important and job-related requirements, such as education, and required work-experience range.
- Analyze other requirements, such as achievements demonstrating required knowledge and abilities.
- Look at the most common and important tasks and responsibilities of the job that you are filling.
- Double-check in the resume stacks to ensure consistency.

Avoiding Discrimination in Selecting Applicants for Screening and Interviewing

The definition of discrimination and what is illegal discrimination varies somewhat from state to state. Generally, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone because of race, religious preference, sex, and national origin or physical disability with the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have conducted a good job analysis and know what the key duties of the position are and what it takes to perform them, you are in a strong position to field discrimination complaints.

You must wait until you have chosen who will be best for your position before you inquire regarding the person's physical abilities. Do not send the person for a medical or psychological exam until you make a conditional offer of employment. Seek assistance from your HR representative.

If a person with disabilities approaches you with a problem during or before the selection process, make notes regarding what they tell you and attempt to assist them in the selection process by making concessions to their needs such as allowing a reader for a visually impaired person to take a written test.

Lesson:

Conducting Phone or Initial Screening Interviews

You now have determined the applicants to screen or interview — based on their match with the job description and specifications, and on reference checks. The next phase is to either conducting screening interviews, by phone or in person, or move to the full interview stage.

Regardless of your next step, it is important to construct basic communication to the applicants, including a structuring statement.

Structuring Statement

A structuring statement provides the applicant with:

- A brief overview of the company
- A brief summary of your own history with the company and/or department
- The position title and department for which the applicant is being interviewed
- The amount of time required for the interview and what you want to accomplish in that time
- Mention of your note-taking process (for in-person interviews)
- An explanation of your approach: behavioral — or performance-based questions, standard questions, follow-up questions based on resume, cover letter, and/or reference.

For example, consider the following phone conversation:

You: "Hello, may I speak with [applicant name.] [Mr./Ms. Applicant last name], I'm [your name] with [company name], and I'd like to know if this is a good time for us to talk based on your application of [position title.]"

Applicant: "I've just stepped in the door. Is it possible for us to talk at another time?"

You: "Yes. We are interested in talking with you about the position and asking a few questions. Could you give me some times when it might be more convenient to call? Or I could give you some times for tomorrow that you can call me. Let's set it up now."

Applicant: "Sure. That would be great."

You: "Great. We'll probably take about 20 to 30 minutes. Will that work for you? Let me tell you briefly about my job position here at [company] as [title] director of [department]. [Give brief account of your job, including years in position/company.] You've applied for [position], which entails mainly [give brief account of key job duties and what you're looking for in a candidate]. You've worked at [refer to resume notes] as a [refer to notes], right? [Continue using questions from notes, reference checks, or from standard questions listed below.]"

Some Common Screening and Interview Questions

- Tell me a little bit about what you're looking for in a position.
- Can you give me some information about why you're interested in this position at [company]?
- You've worked [number of years] as [position] for [current company] and [number of years] as [position] for [other company]? Can you briefly describe your duties and responsibilities in those positions? What did you do that had the most positive impact on the company?
- [If still at a company] Do you mind talking about your current position and what kind of change you are looking for?
- Why did you join [applicant's current company] as a [current position title]?
- Tell me about your favorite duty in your [last] position.
- How might some of your previous work and achievements be right for the [position title]?
- How might you tackle [name one of the challenges about the position]? Tell me what you've done in the past that might help you succeed.

The grid on the following page also contains questions that can be used for screening and interviews..

Traditional Tracking/Interview/Screening Areas

Employment History							
Previous Companies	Titles	Start/End Dates	Typical Work Day	3 Important Duties	Likes/ Dislikes	Reported To	Why Left?
General							
Current Compensation Package	Commuting Hours Relocation Salary expectations	Current Benefits Package	If you get a job offer, what will you do if your present employer makes you a counteroffer?	If you accept a new position, how much notice are you required to give your present employee?			

Screening Applicants

Skills Assessment		Computer/Technical Skills?	Adjectives Co-Workers Use To Describe You? Adjectives Your Supervisor Uses To Describe You?	Adjectives Clients or Customers Use To Describe You?	Strengths?	Areas To Improve?	
Achievements That Made You Stand Out Among Your Peers?	Skills (Hard/Soft) that Make You Proficient At Your Job?						

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- The importance of thoroughly screening applicants and conducting a background check is vital to an organization's success.
- When evaluating resumes, have a copy of the job description in hand when you review resumes. Use checklists based on the job responsibilities and requirements to match what you see in the cover letter and resume.
- When checking references, verify basic requirements such as years of experience and education and speak with at least two of the applicant's former supervisors.
- When selecting interview candidates, start with the most important and job-related requirements, such as education, required work-experience range.
- Generally, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone because of race, religious preference, sex, and national original or physical disability with the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have conducted a good job analysis and know what the key duties of the position are and what it takes to perform them, you are in a strong position to field discrimination complaints.
- A structuring statement provides the applicant with a company overview, your history with the company, the position title and department for which the applicant is being interviewed, the amount of time required for the interview and what you want to accomplish in that time, your note-taking process (for in-person interviews), and an explanation of your interviewing approach.

Unit:

Preparing for Interviews

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- set up interviews.
- use different types of interviews.
- use structured- and performance-based interviews.
- develop questions.

Lesson:

Setting Up Interviews

The interviewing process should be as efficient as possible. This includes ensuring that the applicant is well informed of what to expect:

- Date and time of the interview
- Approximate duration of the interview
- Location and directions
- Persons with whom the applicant will interview or meet
 - Agenda, listing interview or meeting times, names, titles, departments
- Documents the applicant needs to bring to the interview: for example, Social Security card, birth certificate
- Any testing that will be conducted (for example, personality, cognitive, physical, application, work sample, self-assessments, drug-screening)
- Information on travel-related expense reimbursement and contact information for preferred hotels or motels

You or a designated member of your staff or HR will have the responsibility as coordinator for contacting applicants, distributing materials, and organizing interviews and testing. The coordinator should work with all areas involved in the interviewing and testing to ensure scheduling. For example, those conducting interviews, representatives from benefits or other employee services areas, and testing personnel.

The following lists key functions of the coordinator:

- Centralizing all applicant materials.
- Contacting key internal personnel to schedule and block their time for the interview.
- Contacting the applicant to set up the interview.

Preparing for Interviews

- Sending the applicant necessary information noted above.
- Setting up logistics (may include phone conferences, hotel bookings, conference rooms, travel to and from the airport).
- Distributing the applicant package to those involved in the interview, including job description and specifications, cover letter, resume, and interview form, which allows interviewers to record notes in categories that are standards for all interviews: for example, categories may include “strengths,” “challenges,” “reservations,” “recommendations.”
- Greeting the applicant and coordinating the applicant’s movement through the process (introducing the applicant to key personnel, showing the applicant the location of the amenities), handling “hand-offs” (one interviewer will walk the applicant to another room).
- Setting the deadline for interviewers to complete the interview form, and collecting — and potentially compiling — the responses on the form.

Lesson:

Types of Interviews

Determining the Best Methods for Your Company and the Specific Position

Which interview method or combination of methods is best for you and your company? The following section addresses interview strategies, including benefits and potential shortcomings.

As you review these methods, consider which may be most appropriate for uncovering key information to select the best applicant. Also, work with your HR division and others who conduct interviews often in your company to “debrief” on previous interviews strategies and their success rate in selecting high performers. One sound practice — on an ongoing basis — is to track the results of your standard interviewing processes to key measures, once the new hire begins. For example, based on your new hires within the last six months to two years:

- What is the percentage of turnover or involuntary termination?
- How long was the curve (weeks) to full productivity?
- What have been their evaluation scores?
- Which competencies, skills, knowledge, or attitudes generally are below your expectations?
- Were there indicators of potential issues during the interview process that you missed?

Preparing for Interviews

- How could the interview process be refined to better predict the kind of success you seek?
 - Are there tools to maintain consistency in interviews?
 - Are interviews structured around targeted competencies, skills, knowledge, and attitudes demonstrated by top performers? Is there a profile of a top performer?
 - Have competencies and other attributes been verified based on actual results of current personnel in the position?
 - Have any cognitive, personality, applications, etc., testing been more accurate in predicting success than others? (Ensure legality of testing and timing in the process.)

Lesson:**Structured Interviews and Performance-based Interviews**

Benefits of Structured Interviews

Structured interviews obtain core information from an applicant through a standard set of questions addressing skills, attitudes, and abilities. Structured interviews include behavior-based and competency-based approaches that require the applicant to provide examples and explanations of how his or her skills and competencies were applied in previous work situations. (Behavior- and competency-based methods are addressed in greater depth later in this module.)

Structured interviews help establish consistency in questions asked to a pool of job candidates, allowing rating scales to be used in ranking candidates. Also, if several persons are interviewing a candidate over time, the structured interview allows interviewers to ask a core of similar questions or divide questions among interviewers. The multiple perspectives gained create a fuller profile of the applicant and ensure consistent questions from interview to interview.

Questions can be structured for (1) stages in the interview process and (2) for a particular area of importance for each interviewer. For example, an initial interview — whether conducted by phone, through a brief formal interview, or even during a lunch — may focus on expanding and clarifying the candidate's qualifications, as stated on the resume; explaining the job and its requirements; and helping the interviewer obtain vital information on the candidate's "presence" and interpersonal and communication skills.

Multiple — or group — interviews may focus on specific areas of importance: for example, while the hiring manager may focus on more technical questions related to job specifications, other management levels may look for the candidate's potential fit with company culture and how the applicant might effectively work with various departments and management levels.

Potential Shortcomings of Structured Interviews

While structured interviews provide consistency and help obtain the applicant's perceptions of how previous behavior, skills, or competencies led to certain results, applicants typically are very experienced with these types of interviews and the kinds of questions asked. Structured interviews may be too comfortable of an interviewing atmosphere for some applicants, leading to information repetition, "canned" interaction, and — consequently — poor hiring decisions. Candidates may memorize answers to structured interview questions, and interviewers sometimes can unknowingly give applicants help during the interview by asking leading questions that, in essence, tell the candidate the "correct" response (for example, "Do you enjoy interacting with diverse types of clients? Give me an example of when you've had to shift your communication style from client to client.")

In addition, applicants are providing self-perceptions of themselves, their previous experiences, their potential to do the job, and even how they believe others perceive them. Applicants self-select situations when answering a structured or competency question that place them in the best possible light. As you will see later in this workshop, a skilled interviewer can learn to discern perceptions from more accurate accounts; however, the structured nature of the questions can invite rehearsed or "best-case" answers from the candidate, as well as varying degrees of interviewing complacency from busy, often untrained interviewers.

The repetitive nature of structured interviews also can result in inflated ratings, especially as the candidate moves through the process from initial screening to final selection. A related rating problem occurs when managers deviate from the structured interview process. When this occurs, ratings from interviewers cannot be compared accurately. Some managers may have favorite questions they want to ask, may be unsure about using behavior-based or competency-based approaches, or may believe they have greater intuitive skills. Whatever the reasons, individual managers may still use *unstructured* interviews even though their HR departments have officially adopted behavioral or competency interviews for the organization.

Another emerging problem with structured behavior — or competency-based interviews is that they often evaluate applicants based on *previous* work experience, as opposed to each applicant's ability to *apply* their knowledge and experience to the performance required on the *new* job.

Benefits of Performance-based Interviews

Performance-based interviews avoid some common problems of structured interviews and help identify a top performer who meets or exceeds your expectations. They can provide a seamless addition to your process if you already use structured interviews.

Performance-based interview questions are specific to your vacancy, company problems, and company culture. By focusing on performance for the position at hand, the interview and any application testing expose the strengths, weaknesses and organizational, personal, and cultural fit of your preferred applicants.

Each applicant receives the same set of questions and is scored by interviewers using suggested or recommended responses. The “correctness” and “completeness” of applicant responses are evaluated. Applicants are asked to do work and/or verbally resolve problems that would be typical of the job. In a sense, applicants have begun performing critical components of the job. This ensures you identify who can *do* the work and *solve* your problems, instead of identifying who can *tell* you what they *did* at another company.

Questions can be quickly developed because they come directly from the job duties.

Also, changing one or more of the critical dimensions of the background information or questions asked requires an entirely different response, preventing applicants from memorizing responses and allowing interviewers to change questions to keep pace with evolving positions.

Potential Shortcomings of Performance-based Interviews

Performance-based interviews require a complete understanding of the essential qualifications of the job vacancy and interviewer training to ensure the interview and rating scale are correctly administered. (Interviewer training is also required for behavior-based interviews.)

There may be some resistance or reluctance to change interviewing habits at some companies, because they have invested significant time and money in competency or behavioral interviews — or they do not want to admit that the existing hiring process takes too long and does not always results in top performers.

For new positions in a changing organization, such interviews can be problematic because there is no clear demonstrated top performance in the position. It is a trial of sorts, especially if the new position has not been clearly defined and outcomes assessed.

Lesson:

Developing Questions

A common core of questions constitutes most interviews. However, create and select questions most appropriate for the interviewing situation, including structured- and performance-based.

By learning how a candidate has used competencies and skills in past specific experiences, you will have a greater chance of understanding how effectively the candidate can apply the skills in future work situations. As important is providing opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate how past ability transfers to the new job position.

Using Open-ended and Closed-ended questions

Using questions that are “open” or “closed” helps you gain new information, identify attitudes or subjective information, and confirm information.

Open-ended Questions:

Open-ended “what,” “why,” and “how” questions help you discover attitudes, assumptions, reasons for conduct, and behaviors. Open-ended questions are useful in beginning or expanding interviews and discussions. They help the applicant describe competencies, past accomplishments, and situations in his or her own words.

Preparing for Interviews

Open-ended questions allow applicants to elaborate on responses and often expose the kind of information that will let you separate out fact from fiction. For example, if you asked a closed-ended question such as, "Were you successful in completing the conversion project on time?" you may receive a "yes" answer. Had you asked, "What key skills did you use in coordinating the project and getting the cooperation you needed to complete it on time?" or "What were the results? How did you measure them?" you will obtain additional information or confirm earlier remarks by the applicant on his or her coordinating skills: for example, "Well, I not only had to get the commitment of Marketing and IT directors, but I also had to lead the team in setting up a realistic plan and communication vehicle. In fact, we used _____ software to plan, update, and communicate throughout the project."

Examples of open-ended questions include:

- "What happened when you found out that the deadline had been moved up?"
- "How did you get the buy-in from Marketing and IT directors?"
- "Why do you think you had the most difficulty getting commitments from IT? Tell me what that director said."
- "The position you're interviewing for will need to work with several units on a similar conversion. How would you handle the project lead in this environment?"

Closed-ended Questions

This type of question limits and focuses the interview. Closed-ended questions shape the options that the applicant has in giving responses. They typically require a "yes" or "no" answer, or ask for specific data (ranging from simple responses, such as "I was employed from May 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001," to complex answers involved analysis methods or results). Closed-ended questions are easy to answer and get quick responses.

You can also use closed-ended questions as a starting point for open-ended questions to uncover thinking and reasoning behind the "facts." For example, follow factual information with "why" and "how" questions that move the applicant to explain how competencies achieved results.

Closed-ended questions can be used to confirm what a speaker is saying.

For example:

- “So you would say that the implementation was successful?”
- “You mentioned that the results exceeded expectations? What measures did you use? How did it impact productivity, in terms of error-reduction?”
- “You supervised how many people during that project?”

Closed-ended questions also reduce the pressure that open questions sometimes create: for example, they help avoid emotionally charged answers. They get to the facts.

Closed-ended questions can help determine an applicant’s knowledge and ability to use company-specific hardware, software, processes, and procedures. For example, you may ask an applicant what kind of approach they would use in the job with inventory-tracking software. These kinds of questions help you understand whether the applicant has “conversant with,” “knowledge of,” or actual “hands-on” experience with key equipment, processes, and other tools.

Also use closed-ended questions with specific job scenarios applicants will face by asking them to work through how they would arrive at the most appropriate solution or alternative. In this kind of questioning, you provide the “givens” for the project, and ask for the best solution. You not only “see” the applicant’s analytical and problem-solving process, but also determine how well the applicant can use given data to arrive at a correct or preferred answer. You may also discover how intuitive the applicant is in asking you questions that pull out additional data needed to arrive at a solution, including information that is more qualitative in nature – such as political climate, working relationships among departments, work styles of individuals, company shifts in vision and mission, etc.

Deriving Structured Questions from Job-related Behaviors and Situations

This section describes structured (behavior- and competency-based) interview questions. For simplicity sake, this section refers to this approach as "behavioral event" interviewing.

The key propositions of behavioral event interviewing are:

- The more recent the behavior discussed, the greater its predictive value.
- The more longstanding the behavior, the greater its predictive power.
- One criterion for behavioral event questions is that they obtain information about a performance factor or competency that is job-related. This requires that the position is clearly defined in terms of specifications and qualifications, and expected outcomes and results.

By focusing on past performance, behavioral event interviews increase our ability to predict whether a person *has been* a "top performer". Combined with performance-based interviewing, your chances of successful hiring are increased greatly.

The following is an example of a behavioral-event question:

"Thinking back over your recent job positions, in which job position did you make the best use of your technical or problem-solving skills? Please describe the specific technical challenge in that position that brought out the best in your technical skills."

Questions typically address common technical/functional competencies and behavioral competencies.

Technical/Functional Competencies	Behavioral Competencies
Composed of skills that candidates learn:	The sum of the candidate's life experiences. They show themselves in work habits and attitudes that affect

Technical/Functional Competencies	Behavioral Competencies
▪ In school ▪ In training programs ▪ On the job They appear in every job description as specific duties, tasks, functions, or responsibilities.	performance. They may be related to: ▪ Personal characteristics such as self-confidence ▪ How we interact with or relate to others ▪ How we deal with the work environment or accomplish tasks

Types of Behavior-event Interview Questions

Interpersonal Skills: These include basic communication skills such as attending, listening, providing feedback, and clearly stating information.

- Tell me about a time when you were able to establish rapport with a “difficult” person. How did you go about it? What were the results?
- Give me an example of a time when you sensed that a customer or client was upset but did not specifically say so. What cues did you use to make that judgment? What did you do?
- Describe a situation when a customer was frustrated with you because you didn’t understand what he or she was saying. What did you do? What were the results?
- Give me an example of when you had to explain a complicated procedure to someone who was new to the situation. What did you do? What were the results?

Preparing for Interviews

- Describe a time when you were unclear about the directions given to you for a work assignment. How did you clarify the directions?

Problem-solving Skills: Such skills include the ability to identify causes of problems and develop appropriate solutions to address the causes.

- Describe a time when you didn't have the answer to a question that a customer wanted right away. How did you handle it? What was the customer's reaction? What was the outcome?
- You've made difficult decisions before. Give me an example. What information led you to make the decision you made? What other solutions were possible? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you recognized a problem before anyone else. How did you work with others to explain the problem? How did you solve it? Describe the level of success?
- Describe a work-related problem you had to face recently. What procedures did you use to deal with it? What was the outcome?

Planning and Organizing Skills: These include skills related to planning and prioritizing work, and completing work in an organized fashion.

- Explain a time when you needed to update or inform a wide variety of people on an on-going basis. What steps or process did you use? What were the results?
- Many people often have multiple tasks to accomplish in a day. When have you had to handle many competing priorities? How did you determine which activities should have top priority?
- Tell me about a time when your schedule was interrupted unexpectedly. What did you do to address the situation? What was the outcome?

Other Personal Attributes: Included are characteristics such as ability to learn, adaptability or flexibility, reliability, and attention to detail.

- Tell me about a situation when others knew more than you. How did you close the gap?
- Was there a time when you worked hard on something, then were told your priorities had changed or to do it some other way? How did you handle it? What approach did you use?
- Describe a work-related situation in which you suffered a major disappointment. How did you deal with that? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you followed a project or assignment from start through completion. What steps did you follow? What did others have to say about your reliability?
- When were you rewarded or complemented for dependability? What did you do to earn it?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you were glad you had paid attention to some particular detail. What happened? What were the results?

✕ For each item below, indicate if it is a behavioral event question. Your facilitator will review the correct responses with the entire group once you are finished.

Statements or Questions to Job Applicant	YES	NO
Briefly describe your duties and responsibilities in your last job.		
In your view, how should a performance appraisal be conducted?		
What data processing courses have you taken?		
Tell me about your favorite duty in your last position.		
Tell me about a time when you were required to make an important presentation and it went well.		

Preparing for Interviews

Statements or Questions to Job Applicant	YES	NO
Have you ever received any particular recognition because of the way you performed your duties?		
How long did you stay in your last position?		
Tell me about your duties relating to budget control.		
Things are not always busy at work. Tell about the slowest period on your last job.		
You mentioned that you had been responsible for maintaining unit records. Tell me what this responsibility entailed.		
If you saw a fellow worker begin to work without wearing proper safety gear, what would you do?		
Tell me about a time when you felt the least effective or were most frustrated in your efforts to deal with a conflict between yourself and a coworker. What did you do?		
Tell me about the last time you were complimented on your project work.		

Avoiding Illegal Questions

Local, state, and Federal law may prohibit you from asking job candidates certain questions that are personal or are related to race, creed, origin, sex, age, disabilities, physical skills, and past compensation claims.

Here are some common examples of illegal questions:

- Are you married?
- Do you have any kids? Are you planning to have any (anymore)?
- What political party do you belong to?
- Do you have any illnesses we should know about?
- What nationality are you?

- What church do you go to?
- Do you smoke?

✂ Take a few minutes to read the following questions. Is it legal or appropriate to ask the question during an interview? Check the box that applies.

Question	Yes	No
What are your strengths? Weaknesses?		
Why are you considering a change in position?		
Can you work overtime? Weekends? Night shifts?		
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?		
Have you ever been arrested?		
Why did you really leave your previous position?		
Do you think you are overqualified for this position?		
To what clubs or organizations do you belong?		
Have you signed a non-compete or non-disclosure agreement with a prior employer?		
This job will require a lot of training. Do you intend to have children in the near future?		
What type of discharge did you receive from the service?		
What is your marital status?		
Why do you want to return to work?		
Do you have a telephone number where you can be contacted?		
What is your race?		

Preparing for Interviews

Question	Yes	No
Have you ever had any back injuries that may prevent you from doing this job?		
Do you own an automobile?		
Since the salary for this job is lower than you were previously making, can we reasonably expect you to stay with us for at least two years?		
Will you relate your likes/dislikes about your previous job?		
May I talk to your former employers regarding your work performance?		
What year did you graduate from college?		
Are you able to travel extensively?		
Were you ever known by another name?		
What was your maiden name?		
Will you relate your educational background?		
How many years of job-related experience do you have?		
Are you a US citizen?		
Can you provide the company with evidence that you are a US citizen, or are you an alien authorized to work in the US?		
What is your birth date?		
What does your wife/husband do?		
Will you take a drug test before being hired?		
Do you have any handicap that might prevent you from performing the job for which you are applying?		

Question	Yes	No
Have you every applied for Workers' Compensation?		
Have you ever tested positive for the AIDS virus?		
What is your age?		
Where were you born?		

? Would you ask any applicant the following questions?

- How do you feel about having to work with members of a different race?
- Your supervisor will be (white, black, Hispanic, younger than you, etc.) Does that create any problems for you?
- Did you ever receive public assistance?
- What do your parents do for a living?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters?
- That's an unusual name. What nationality are you?
- Were you born here?
- Do you have people in the "old country"?
- Are you active in any church group?
- What church do you attend?
- You wear a cross – are you Catholic?
- Do you miss work to attend services on holidays?
- Do you think you'll get along well with the younger people in the office?
- Would you be willing to work for a person who is younger than you are?
- Are you on any type of medication?

- Are you physically able to do this job?
- ❖ A NO answer to any of these questions would indicate that the interviewer's technique is fairly well designed to avoid charges of discrimination. Any YES answer suggests that an interviewer should carefully consider his or her pre-employment interviewing techniques.

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- To set up an interview, provide applicants with the date and time of the interview; duration; location and directions; persons with whom the applicant will interview or meet; documents the applicant needs to bring to the interview; any testing that will be conducted; and information on travel-related expense reimbursement and contact information for preferred hotels or motels.
- To "debrief" on previous interviews strategies and their success rate in selecting high performers, work with your HR division and others who conduct interviews in your company.
- Structured interviews help establish consistency in questions asked to a pool of job candidates, allowing rating scales to be used in ranking candidates.
- Candidates may memorize answers to structured interview questions, and interviewers sometimes can unknowingly give applicants help during the interview by asking leading questions that, in essence, tell the candidate the "correct" response.
- Performance-based interview questions are specific to your vacancy, company problems, and company culture.
- A common core of questions constitutes most interviews. However, create and select questions most appropriate for the interviewing situation, including structured- and performance-based.

- Open-ended questions are useful in beginning or expanding interviews and discussions. They help the applicant describe competencies, past accomplishments, and situations in his or her own words.
- Closed-ended questions shape the options that the applicant has in giving responses. They typically require a "yes" or "no" answer, or ask for specific data.
- By focusing on past performance, behavioral event interviews greatly increase our ability to predict whether a person *has been* a "top performer".
- Local, state, and Federal law may prohibit you from asking job candidates certain questions that are personal or are related to race, creed, origin, sex, age, disabilities, physical skills, and past compensation claims.

Unit:

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- apply general approaches to interviewing.
- plan an introduction.
- conduct interviews.
- take notes during interviews.
- rate responses.
- manage and recognize nonverbal communication.
- close the interview.
- conduct group interviews.
- select the best applicant.
- extend an offer.
- notify other applicants.

Lesson:

General Approaches to Interviewing

Now that you have determined the best interview approach to take – and have developed questions that are appropriate and productive in your hiring decision – it is time to actually conduct the interview. Remember, interviews should be controlled to yield the most useful information for your decision – and to provide the applicant with the most accurate picture of the position and the company. This section addresses approaches to conducting and controlling individual and group interviews.

Here are some general guidelines for conducting interviews:

- Listen carefully to what the applicant is saying — and to what is *not* said.
- Take notes — and ask the applicant if he or she minds you taking notes, for accuracy.
- Maintain eye contact and a neutral body position.
- Restate or paraphrase what you have heard to confirm information.
- Summarize the main points of what the applicant is saying, as you understand them.
- Confirm that you have heard both the message (ideas and concepts) and the meaning (how the applicant feels).
- Explore with open-ended questions to gain more information. Use phrases like, "How do you feel about that?" "Why do you think you would handle that in this job?"
- Use silence when the applicant is unclear or may not know an answer. Wait until the person is done speaking, even if you are sure you understand the applicant's thinking. Give time for the applicant to answer his or her own questions related to qualifications or experience.

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

- When an applicant seems uncomfortable, limit your use of silence. Instead, ask if the applicant would like something to drink, if the temperature is okay, etc. (Be aware, also, that discomfort sometimes signals that the applicant is not interested in the position, that your questioning is “hitting nerves,” or that your questions are borderline legal.)
- Recognize the applicant’s point of view verbally (“Okay,” “I understand”) and nonverbally (nodding your head, leaning forward) — even when you do *not* agree with that point of view.
- Never mislead an applicant by suggesting, either verbally or nonverbally, that the applicant will be made an offer (unless you actually will). Remain encouraging and engaged, but neutral in your messages about the applicant’s status.
- However, do not feel restrained in giving compliments, highlighting positive points made, or generally maintaining respectful and appreciative interaction.

Lesson:

Planning an Introduction

By the end of the interview, you want to predict as accurately as possible whether the applicant can and will perform on the job. Predicting future performance requires accurate assessment of skills, preferences, and behavior patterns. To do this, you need a carefully orchestrated interview — from the greeting at the reception desk through to your parting comments to the applicant.

When planning an introduction:

- Ensure all logistics (transportation from an airport, lunch arrangements, availability of interviewers as scheduled) have been attended to.
- Ensure the receptionist greets the applicant by name and provides amenities.
- Ensure you are on time and have “cleared” your mind to focus on the interview.
- Ensure that you will not be interrupted during the interview.
- Have resume, cover letter, and other materials (rating or feedback form, questions) available, along with pre-written questions.
- Ensure others involved in the interview process have the agenda, resume, etc., and are prepared to use a rating or feedback form.
- Know exactly what you want to accomplish by the end of the interview period.

Revising Your Structuring Statement

Before the interview, you can revise the structuring statement to be more specific to the applicant and the position. You might want to revise the:

- overview of the company.
- brief summary of your history with your company.
- position title and department for which the applicant is being interviewed.
- amount of time required for the interview(s) and what you want to accomplish in that time.
- explanation of questions you will ask.

You also may give the applicant an agenda for the day, ensure he or she is comfortable and aware where amenities are, and provide additional materials (such as job description and specifications) and other application paperwork that must be completed. If the applicant will undergo any type of testing, you should remind the applicant of the testing to be conducted.

- ✂ Review your structuring statement developed earlier in the workshop. Revise the statement for a specific position you are now considering or will in the near future.

If you are using group interviews or a series of interviews with others, share your structuring statement with the group or with those who will conduct individual interviews. This helps ensure interviewers are aligned and allows individual interviewers to build upon a common message to the applicant. For example, giving information about themselves and their departments.

Lesson:

Conducting the Interview

Greeting the Applicant

The opening of an interview is important because it establishes the atmosphere for the remainder of the interview time. If you establish a positive rapport during the opening, you increase the likelihood of the applicant feeling relaxed and able to effectively demonstrate qualifications.

The first few minutes of an interview are critical to success. Balance warmth, friendliness, and empathy on the one hand and an objective, business-like formality on the other.

When greeting applicants:

- Greet the applicant in the lobby or have a designated person usher the applicant to your office or the interview room.
- Use a handshake and a sincere, friendly but business-like smile.
- Establish appropriate eye contact.
- Nonverbally, show you are listening by nodding your head and varying your posture and body position. Your tone of voice should reflect sincerity and respect.
- Two to three minutes of small talk are sufficient.
- Avoid seemingly harmless questions that you wouldn't ask formally.
- Describe the interview plan and share/review the agenda.

? What actions would you take in greeting the applicant to reflect your company culture and your management style?

? What office arrangements will help the applicant feel at ease?

When conducting interviews:

- If possible, conduct the interview over the corner of the desk, instead of from behind it.
- Ensure there will be no interruptions. Notify your colleagues or staff — no matter how “urgent” issues may seem. Even if an applicant should understand how fast-paced your work environment is, an interview is not the time to short-change the hiring process. (Remember the costs of poor hiring decisions.) Any applicant who is taken on a tour of your building — as they should be — will get a sense of the pace.
- Put your phone on hold.
- Position the applicant’s chair so that there are no distractions (for example, facing a window with the direct sunshine). Close the blinds, if needed.
- Ensure proper temperature control.
- Keep your work area clean.
- In a similar tone, arrange your office the way you would for a customer or client. You want to project the best image possible. Your applicant is there on a “sales call.”

? What topics should you use or avoid in opening small talk to set the tone?

When selecting topics:

- Avoid topics in which the applicant may have no interest or that suggest a gender or other bias (for example, hobbies, organizations, church, sports).
- Make sure to keep small talk to legal topics. This portion is part of the interview.
- Avoid topics that may recall stressful experiences (for example, applicant's past week, the drive to your office).
- Safe topics include position- or company-related statements or questions about amenities.
- Two or three minutes of small talk are sufficient.

Conducting Interviews

When conducting interviews, have the applicant's resume and a list of prepared questions based on behavior- or performance-based targets that will provide you the best information, given the job description, specifications, and your needs. Your questions should be prioritized, in case you need to adjust based on time constraints. The best-case scenario is to use a rating scale for potential responses, which you have based on your job analysis and the descriptions of "best practices" from your top performers. The low end of your scale will describe behavior and application of skills and knowledge that you consider unacceptable for the position. The middle range reflects minimally qualified behavior or performance – which may be acceptable to begin a position but may not yield the best potential hire. Top ranges show "best practices."

Using "anchored" ratings and descriptions helps everyone involved in the interviewing process rate applicants on the same criteria, which you have defined for the position.

Also, you should have several potential statements to close the interview, depending on your on-the-spot assessment of the applicant's fit. For example:

- "We hope to have the position filled within the next few weeks. And we have several more applicants during the next few days. Let me contact you by the end of the week to see what may be the next steps."
- "I appreciate your time and I enjoyed our discussion. Is there anything else you would like to ask before we close?"
- "You seem like you have the experience we seek, although we do have several other applicants to speak with. Feel free to call me later this week."

? What are some other potential closing statements?

The introduction of the interview should review the structuring statement. Signal that the interview has begun with a phrase such as “Shall we get started?”

- It is appropriate at the beginning of the interview to review or confirm the applicant’s resume material. This sometimes puts the applicant at ease and “primes the pump” for them to answer your interview questions by referring to specific positions, accountabilities, and accomplishments. It also helps you target questions, rather than use generalized questions that leave answers entirely up to the applicant’s discretion to choose the previous position, experience, skill, or knowledge. Furthermore, it shows that you are familiar with the applicant’s experience.
- Note: The time you spend reviewing or confirming should be kept brief — focusing on high-yield questions, not on ones that pick through the resume (“You show a gap in employment in 2000. Could you explain?") By this point, you should have already clarified the “basics” of the resume screening and be ready to expand your understanding of what the applicant might bring to your company.

Using Behavior-event Questions

The challenge with using behavior-event questions is getting people to respond to behavior-event questions with behavior-based answers. A behavior-event interview is a new experience for most candidates. Thinking of experiences takes time and energy.

- Do not read all of the parts of a question at once. The questions have multiple parts designed to get a thorough example from the applicant.
- However, state the first part (for example, "Tell me about a time when..."; "Describe a situation in which you needed to...")
- It is sometimes appropriate to ask the second part of the question (for example, "What did you do?"). But then stop.
- Allow the candidate to respond.
- Ask any additional parts, if necessary. In many cases, those additional questions will be answered during the applicant's initial response.
- Continue to review the rating scale during the candidate's responses. This helps you identify areas where you need to ask follow-up questions to clarify or obtain more detail.
- Keep your follow-up questions as open-ended as you can to avoid leading your applicant, unless you are asking for specific "facts" or for quantitative information, such as results:
 - "Why did you take that action?"
 - "What happened because of your action?"
 - "When did you make that decision?"
 - "How did you respond?"

- Ask questions until you are satisfied you can make a fair judgment about the applicant's ability. If there is an area they have not addressed, use an open-ended question to point them in that direction, without leading them. For example, "Did you do anything else?"
- When evaluating the applicant's answers against the rating scale, assign a score of 1 to 5. If an applicant's response clearly exceeds a 3, but does not qualify for a 5, give a 4. The same rules apply for assigning a 2.
- If you add new criteria along the way, you risk not having consistent, reliable selection decisions. It is important now to compare the applicant's responses to your rating examples (not other applicants, not your personal standards).
- Stay focused on one competency or behavior area at a time. For example, do not let an applicant's level of "analytical thinking" affect his or her score on "understanding others."
- Take detailed note so that you can recreate the applicant's story in sufficient detail — especially if challenged. Use keywords and phrases; quotes as appropriate. Don't worry that the candidate will be offended if you are not making eye contact while you are taking notes.

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

? What challenges might you face with behavior-based interviewing?

Some challenges include:

- Applicants aren't sure how to answer.
- Applicants are unfamiliar with the process.
- Applicants talk around the question without providing valuable information.
- Sometimes candidates may not have the kind of experience the interviewer is searching for.
- Sometimes they may have difficulty thinking of the "best" example of such an experience.

Handling Inadequate Responses to Behavior-Based Questions:

You may encounter any of three types of responses when asking behavioral event questions:

- **Silence:** A person finds it difficult to come up with any answer and responds to questions with silence. Avoid making unwarranted judgments about the reasons for this behavior.
- **Bluffing:** A candidate may insist that a particular behavior never — or always — occurs and that citing a specific example would be impossible (for example, "I just can't think of a time when I was completely stumped," "I always have something to say," "That happens all the time").
- **Slipping:** This type of response may appear to provide the information you seek, when the interviewee lets it slip away from specific behavioral descriptions to credentials or opinions. Applicants may give you typical ways they do things, instead of describing specific examples. Listen for words like "we," "generally," and "always." Such clues help identify the "slip."

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

The following table contains techniques for addressing non-behavioral event responses:

If This Is The Response	Consider This Technique
The Silence	<i>Calculated Pause:</i> Wait for about 15 seconds before intervening in any way. Fifteen seconds may sound like a very slight time, but in an interview, it will seem like a very long. This calculated pause may give the candidate the extra time needed to think of a response. <i>You're Okay Statement:</i> If the applicant starts looking uncomfortable, put him or her at ease with a statement assuring the applicant that it is okay to take time to respond. Use supportive nonverbal as well as verbal messages (for example, smile, a nod of the head). The "you're okay" statement would be something like: "I realize it is sometimes hard to dig up these past experiences. That's okay; most people need time to think." <i>Question Restatement:</i> If the candidate is unable to respond, restate the question using different words. Question restatement may help the candidate better understand the desired type of response and trigger his or her memory.
The Bluff	<i>Sympathetic Persistence:</i> This response shows that you understand that thinking of a response is not always easy, but that you are really interested in a specific example of behavior: for example, "I realize it is tough to come up with examples, but could you think of a recent time you used the skills?"
The Slip	<i>Assumed Responsibility:</i> When it becomes apparent that the behavioral event answer is not forthcoming, the interviewer can note that the response given is not what is needed and the interviewer was probably responsible.

Creating Performance-Based Interviews

- ✕ Given the job description, requirements, and projected performance levels, compose a series of questions that require an applicant to explain or demonstrate how he or she would apply skills, knowledge, and abilities to specific situations or challenges the applicant would face in the position. When you return to your work setting, coordinate with others to determine a rating scale and examples of potential responses — ranging from “no practical application” to “best-case response.” Developing the examples helps (1) test the actual adequacy of the projected job outcomes and (2) obtains consistency in the interviewers’ view of what the position should do. When used with a form, the ratings and examples provide a solid tool for all interviewers to assess applicants’ potential for success.

Critical Performance Area	Performance-Based Interview Questions/Requests

Lesson:

Taking Notes During Interviews

To assess the applicant's responses to your behavior- and performance-related questions, you should take good notes on the applicant's responses. Taking good notes during an interview is a learned skill. It requires practice and attention to detail.

- ❖ Your notes should provide enough detail to help your memory so that you can evaluate the quality of the response after the interview.
- ❖ Remember that your notes should include only legal interviewing information.

When taking notes during interviews:

- Write your notes directly on question forms you bring into the interview. This allows you to keep all of your interview information together in one place.
- Label the situation or task. In your notes write down a short title that will serve to remind you of the situation or task the applicant told you about.
- Record only what the applicant says he or she did. Avoid making preliminary judgments at that time. Notes tend to be more objective.
- Develop a system that works for you. The best system you might try is to record the key words and phrases that the applicant uses to describe the event or circumstance.
- Finally, don't worry that the applicant will be offended if you are not making eye contact while you are taking notes. Documentation of the interview process is critical.

Lesson:
Rating Responses

Rating responses allows you to calculate an interview score for each applicant. These scores can help with the hiring decision by acting as a ranking system.

The following provides an example of how rating scales and response assessments can be constructed for behavior-based interviewing. (A similar process can be used for developing ratings and assessments for performance-based interviews, although questions would be specific to the challenges of the job — and assessment would show the range of most appropriate or feasible ways of addressing the position's actual challenges.)

It is always important to provide examples of the "best case" responses to questions, based on the actual success of top performers or the actual range of performance levels in your unit. For new positions, sample responses may be projected, based on the desired position's job description, specifications, and performance levels.

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

For example:

- Position: Recruiting Manager
- Key Behavior/Competency Being Rated: Selecting Top Applicants
- Interview Questions: "Describe a time when you interviewed a great applicant who didn't quite fit the position he or she was applying for. What did you do?"

Response Assessment		
"Hired the person for the existing position hoping that her or she would either grow into it or that the position could be changed to meet the applicant's strengths."	"Turned the applicant away because he or she wasn't the right fit, but kept his or her information on file."	"Looked for other possible opportunities in the company, since the applicant was highly experienced in our industry and showed high potential to be a top performer."
Rating Scale		
1	3	5

Lesson:

Managing and Recognizing Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication can tell you much about a job candidate. Some communication is obvious: an applicant shows up in casual dress for a high-level position in a company that clearly has a formal dress code. Others are subtler: the candidate sneaks peaks at your notes, looks away from you when answering a question, acts indifferent from the welcoming handshake onward.

Reading Nonverbal Messages

Nonverbal messages may include facial expressions, body movement, tone of voice, volume of voice, and eye contact. Here are a few examples:

Sally — a highly experienced applicant — does not look you in the eye when she tells you about her last employment, which lasted six months. She seems nervous: adjusting her position in her seat, clicking her pen on and off, putting her hand close to or over her mouth.

Is Sally showing unconscious nonverbal cues because she is not giving accurate information? Or is Sally just shy? Is she anxious because of a bad situation at her former company — a manager who will probably give her a bad reference, even though her work performance always exceeded job expectations? Is she moving in her seat because she's just tired — or she's thinking about hitting rush-hour traffic?

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

- ? What would you do to find out if Sally's nonverbal cues contradict, confirm, or cast doubt on the accuracy of her information? What questions would you ask?

Other Nonverbal Cues

- ✂ Your instructor will divide the class into groups for this activity. For each category, work with your group members to list several nonverbal cues that you might record while interviewing someone to help you confirm facts and make a good hiring decision:

Facial Expressions:

Body Movement:

Tone or Volume of Voice:

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

Eye Movement:

Verbal Cues

Verbal cues are intertwined with what applicants actually say. Verbal cues for hiring include:

- Exaggeration (for example, “always,” “never”)
- Loaded, subjective, or judgmental language, especially when applied to former managers, co-workers, or companies (for example, “stupid,” “lazy,” “had it in for me”)
- Assumptions about someone’s motivation (for example, “My previous boss just didn’t appreciate my work.”)
- Statements about the relationship between the interviewee and an employer (for example, “Bob was not only my boss, but a good friend of mine.”)
- Indifference (for example, “So what?” “I never really cared about that?”)
- Shopping (for example, “Yes, I’ve already talked to X and Y Companies – who have made offers – and have an interview next week with Z Company.”)
- Leveraging (for example, “I really like this position, and would love to work for you. I’m pretty sure John — you know John at X Company — said he would make me an offer this week — and to be honest, the pay will be more. I also think that my current boss will make a counter to keep me.”)

Lesson:

Closing the Interview

At the conclusion of the interview, you should wrap up with a statement that communicates your interest in the information you gathered. Also inform the applicant of what happens from here. You may be pressured by the applicant to give more cues than you want to. Resist. But keep the applicant engaged. And make a lasting impression. Even if you do not choose this applicant — or he or she does not choose you — you are always representing your company and laying the groundwork for your ongoing personnel functions. Word-of-mouth is a top recruiting tool.

Lesson:

Conducting Group Interviews

To prepare for a group interview, follow the suggestions noted above. This includes distributing resumes, rating sheets, feedback forms, and other materials that help all interviewers stay within the parameters you set for rating and selecting top applicants.

Also assign specific roles to each interviewer. This may be based on functional roles, the levels of interaction the new hire will have with the interviewer or interviewer's department, the management level, and the scope (for example, one interviewer may be more concerned about fit with company culture and understanding of the company's value drivers).

When conducting group interviews:

- Ensure all parties have an agenda.
- Ensure everyone knows his or her role. Give interviewers assigned areas, such as specific behavior- or performance-based questions, but encourage a free discussion.
- Communicate meeting time and place, and ensure all interviewers will be there.
- Set guidelines for interaction: one questioner at a time, limit cross talk among interviewers.
- Arrange room to maximize contact with the applicant.
- Take the lead in introducing the interviewers and ask them to briefly mention their role.

Lesson:

Selecting the Best Applicant

To select the best applicant, review all reviewers' input and look at your own notes and ratings. You may need to have further conversations with closely ranked applicants. In all cases, the initial work you have done to define the job, its requirements, and its indicators of successful performance should determine your final selection. It is also essential that your manager — and others who will "touch" the job position — are aligned with your decision.

If you have followed the processes addressed in this workshop, your ability to quickly and effectively make the right selection will be greatly enhanced. Selecting the best applicant depends on a number of factors — ranging from "fit" to salary requirements and availability. The key is beginning the process with clearly defined criteria for recruiting, advertising, reviewing resumes, screening, interviewing, and rating applicants.

Lesson:

Extending Job Offers

Making an offer is sometimes difficult. The hiring manager may make a verbal commitment to the applicant that the company will move ahead with the hiring decision. The hiring manager will have already work closely with HR and the department management to determine the appropriate salary range. The verbal commitment may be a time for negotiating salary and other total compensation (including bonuses, travel reimbursement, etc.).

In most cases, HR then extends the formal offer, both verbally and in writing.

Guidelines for Extending an Offer

- Hiring manager or recruiting manager extends the verbal offer.
- Terms of employment offer — a formal document — is sometimes used and should be completed by the new hire.
- The following information may be included in the offer letter or packet to be sent to the new hire:
 - Name, address, and phone number
 - Position/title
 - Location/department
 - Start date
 - Manager
 - Salary and bonus structure
 - Who made the offer and when it was accepted
 - Benefits election material

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

- Other related material important to the on-boarding process:
 - Tax forms, insurance forms, and other documentation that must be returned promptly to HR (provide envelope)
- The hiring manager or recruiting manager must also send the completed application and completed reference verifications to HR, to be filed in the new hire's personnel file.

Terms of Employment Offers

Terms of employment offers usually include:

- Salutation and name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Street address
- City/state/zip
- Phone number
- Position title
- Job number
- Start date
- Manager
- Salary
- Bonus/commission (as applicable)
 - Restrictions on bonus: for example, required number of months needed on the job
- Additional benefits
- Guarantee (as applicable)
 - Number of months

- Mailing instructions
- Offer made by
- Approved by

Lesson:

Notifying Other Applicants

As mentioned before, “rejecting” an applicant must be done to help ensure the applicant has a favorable, lasting impression of you and the company. Also, the applicant may be appropriate for another position now or at some time in the future. Maintaining a good relationship with the applicant helps with future recruiting efforts (for example, contacts, ready-made database of qualified applicants) and helps promote the company. Help the applicant understand, in positive terms, why the “match” was not right: again, your communication should be based on a clear comparison of defined job criteria and the applicant’s actual experience, interview/testing results, etc.

✂ Give an example of when you interviewed for a position, was notified that you did not receive the offer, and how the manager or recruiter handled communication.

? What did the person do to help maintain a positive image of the company?

? What did the person do that you make you *not* recommend that others apply to this company?

? What did you learn about your own development needs from the communication?

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

? How do you handle notifying other applicants of your hiring decisions?

✕ Use the space below to indicate how you normally — verbally or in writing — notify an applicant that he or she has not been chosen.

? How can you improve this communication?

Sample "Regret" Letter

Date

Name

Street address

City, State, Zip code

Dear Mr./Ms. [applicant name]: (Note, you may sometimes want to use the first name.)

We appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about [position title] with [company name]. I enjoyed speaking with you and learning about your experience and skills, especially [note one positive area that emerged during the interview process]. We are grateful for your consideration of our company as a place to pursue your career.

Since we last spoke with you, we have carefully evaluated your qualifications and compared them with the [position] criteria. In our opinion, you possess many fine qualities and attributes; however, the qualifications of another applicant more closely matched the needs of our current openings.

We regret that it is not possible to extend you an offer for [position], although we would like to keep your resume on file and hope that you will seek other opportunities to work for [company name].

It has been a pleasure becoming acquainted with you. Please accept my best wishes for a successful and rewarding future.

Sincerely,

[hiring manager/recruiting manager name]

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- Interviews should be controlled to yield the most useful information for your decision.
- When planning an introduction, know exactly what you want to accomplish by the end of the interview period.
- Before the interview, you can revise the structuring statement to be more specific to the applicant and the position.
- The first few minutes of an interview are critical to success. Balance warmth, friendliness, and empathy on the one hand and an objective, business-like formality on the other.
- When conducting interviews, have the applicant's resume and a list of prepared questions based on behavior- or performance-based targets that will provide you the best information, given the job description, specifications, and your needs.
- To assess the applicant's responses to your behavior- and performance-related questions, you should take good notes on the applicant's responses.
- Rating responses allows you to calculate an interview score for each applicant. These scores can help with the hiring decision by acting as a ranking system.
- Nonverbal messages may include facial expressions, body movement, tone of voice, volume of voice, and eye contact.
- Verbal cues are intertwined with what applicants actually say. They can include exaggeration, assumptions, and indifference.
- At the conclusion of the interview, communicate your interest in the information you gathered and inform the applicant of what happens next.
- When preparing for a group interview, assign specific roles to each interviewer.

Conducting and Controlling Interviews

- To select the best applicant, review all reviewers' input and look at your own notes and ratings.
- After making the hiring decision, the hiring manager or recruiting manager must extend a verbal job offer to the selected applicant.
- Sending rejection letters to applicants must be done to help ensure they have a favorable, lasting impression of you and the company.

Index

—A—

Advertising Strategy, 54
 Applicant Sources
 External, 52
 Colleagues, 53
 Competitors, 52
 Educational Pipeline, 52
 Government, Community, or
 Professional Organizations,
 52
 Recruiting or Placement
 Agencies, 53
 Internal, 49
 Applicants
 Discrimination, 75
 Greeting, 110
 Notifying, 136
 Selecting, 132
 Avoiding Discrimination, 75

—B—

Behavior-event Interview
 Questions, 95
 Interpersonal Skills, 95
 Personal Attributes, 97
 Planning and Organizational
 Skills, 96
 Problem-solving Skills, 96
 Behavior-event Questions, 116
 Inadequate Responses, 119

—C—

Calculating
 Common Costs, 12
 Replacement Costs, 11
 Candidates
 Selecting, 75
 Career Development Plans, 50
 Closed-ended Questions, 92
 Closing, 130
 Common Costs
 Calculating, 12
 Conducting
 Interviews, 114
 Consequences
 Hiring Practices, 7

Interviewing, 7
 Costs
 Invisible, 7
 Visible, 7
 Creating
 Performance-based Interviews,
 121

—D—

Defining
 Jobs, 20
 Position Needs, 20
 Defining Job Positions, 20
 Defining Jobs
 Company Structure, Size, and
 Complexity, 25
 Economic Conditions, 23
 Managerial Style, 26
 Organizational Factors, 24
 Physical Location, 21
 Political Environment, 22
 Developing
 Questions, 91

—E—

Electronic Advertising, 60
 E-mail Lists, 60
 Newsgroups, 60
 Web, 60
 Employment Agencies, 62
 Evaluating
 Resumes, 71
 Evaluating Resumes
 Reference Checks, 73

—F—

Fit
 Finding, 13
 Forecasting Needs, 20

—G—

Greeting, 110
 Group Interviews, 131

—H—

High Potential Programs, 50

Index

Hiring Manager

Role, 18

Hiring Practices

Consequences, 7

Hiring Strategies

Planning, 18

Human Resource Planning, 19

Human Resources

Role, 18

—I—

Identifying At-risk Employees, 51

Illegal Questions

Avoiding, 98

Internship Programs, 62

Interviewing

Approaches, 105

Consequences, 7

Interviews

Closing, 130

Conducting, 114

Group, 131

Guidelines, 105

Methods, 85

Performance-based, 89

Setting Up, 83

Structured, 87

Taking Notes, 122

Types, 85

Introductions

Planning, 107

Invisible Costs, 7

—J—

Job Analysis, 31

Methods, 33

Job Descriptions

Adjusting, 38

Elements, 36

Identifying Resources, 39

Meeting Strategic Needs, 38

Writing, 35

Job Fairs, 62

Job Offers

Extending, 133

Guidelines, 133

Job Placement Ads

Contents, 56

Writing, 56

Job-related Behaviors

Structured Questions, 94

—L—

Long-term Consequences, 11

—N—

Needs

Forecasting, 20

New Hires

Reasons for Leaving, 14

Nonverbal Cues

Other, 126

Nonverbal Messages

Reading, 125

Notifying

Applicants, 136

—O—

Offers

Terms of Employment, 134

Open-ended Questions, 91

—P—

Performance Appraisal/Evaluation

Development Plans, 50

Performance-based Interviews, 89

Benefits, 89

Creating, 121

Shortcomings, 90

Planning

Hiring Strategies, 18

Introductions, 107

Position Needs

Defining, 20

—Q—

Questions

Closed-ended, 92

Developing, 91

Open-ended, 91

—R—

Rating

Responses, 123

Reading

Nonverbal Messages, 125

Recruiting Agencies, 62

Recruiting Resources, 61

Campuses, 61

Competitors, 63

Employment Agencies, 62

Internship Programs, 62

Job Fairs, 62

Red Flags

- Evaluating Resumes, 72
- Reference Checks, 73
- Reference/Education Verification
 - Questions, 74
- Replacement Costs
 - Calculating, 11
 - General, 11
- Responses
 - Rating, 123
- Resumes
 - Evaluating, 71
 - Red Flags, 72
- Revising
 - Structuring Statement, 108
- Right Fit, 13

—S—

- Screening Applicants
 - Importance, 69
- Screening Interviews
 - Questions, 78
- Screening Interviews, 76
- Selecting
 - Applicants, 132
- Shortcomings
 - Structured Interviews, 88
- Skills Inventories, 50
- Specifications
 - Meeting Strategic Needs, 38
 - Adjusting, 38
 - Elements, 36
 - Writing, 35
- Strategic Planning, 19
- Structured Interviews, 87

- Benefits, 87
- Shortcomings, 88
- Structured Questions, 94
 - Deriving, 94
- Structuring Statement
 - Company Structure, Size, and Complexity, 29
 - Economic Conditions, 28
 - Managerial Style, 29
 - Organizational Factors, 29
 - Overall Structuring Statement, 30
 - Political Environment, 28
- Structuring Statement
 - Physical Location, 28
- Structuring Statement
 - Revising, 108
- Structuring Statements, 27, 76
 - Developing, 27
- Succession Planning, 49

—T—

- Taking Notes, 122

—V—

- Verbal Cues, 129
- Visible Costs, 7

—W—

- Writing
 - Job Placement Ads, 56

[illegible]