

Chapter 4

Behavioral Event Interview

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ABSTRACT

The behavioral interview is used to bring forth the understanding of the competencies of a person. The interviews and aptitude tests we conduct will tell us about the educational and expertise factors of the interviewee's life. To understand specific components of his/her talents there is a requirement for a much more guiding narrative technique which will help the interviewee recount the specific acts he/she has done with respect to the competency the interviewer is looking for. There are certain preparations required for this as well. This chapter outlines the procedure for conducting the BEI with the competency clusters given. It also attempts to explain competencies and the process of how it can be used.

INTRODUCTION

The interview is going on to select an accountant for a trading organization. They had previously conducted an aptitude test where this particular person had scored very high. The interview went like this-

Interviewer: *Tell me something about yourself*

Interviewee: *I have completed my B com with honours from XYZ university. I love to paint. I sing very well. Both my parents are teachers. I read a lot, in fact I read any decent book written in English.*

And this went on for about 30 minutes! 30 minutes of question answering session after which he was asked to wait outside.

The discussion among the stake holders went –

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Direct report was the head of accounts – he seems to know his numbers! And of course, accounts. And has of course scored well in that aptitude test. I am okay with him.

The AGM finance – If Manager Accounts say that then I believe we can go ahead. I too liked his way of explaining things.

The Human resources manager liked him. He had scored a perfect 10 in all the tests. Very “straightforward” and “mild mannered”. He seems like the “best bet” in the set of 10 people interviewed for the post. It is difficult to find ethical accountants. He “seems” like a good guy. He had cleared the 10th and 12th in high marks. Later, we will be shocked to learn that he was not able to cope with the needs of the organization and had to be terminated.

The issue is “explaining things” do not necessarily mean he can do “things” you expect from him. Aptitude tests never asked him to find out if he can work overnights during the month ends or calculate the percentage of CTC to be increased during the performance analysis or even if he has the patience to sit with a new employee and explain the salary structure to him. The HR manager never checked his plans for himself. Never checked what he has done in past to enable him to be here in future. His plans were equally unfamiliar.

In this they lost the chance to recruit the right person and lost the chance as well to find the right fit for this person, if at all possible.

When we calculate – it’s a huge waste of the man hour used up-to plan and conduct the recruitment process multiplied by the manpower used for it. What can be done to reduce this kind of loss and wastage? One of the methods being said as useful is the behavioral event interview (BEI).

INTRODUCTION TO THE BEI

In the book by Berg (1970), titled “Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery”, these instances like those given above have been represented, showing us that they were present during those earlier times. Berg has summarised incidents where the grades or even the education were proven to be never related to further performance or success in either job or life. Researchers have made it clear from time to time that these testing methods will foster meritocracy where the measure of merit would have no validity with any measures in real life performance (Taylor, Smith, & Ghiselin, 1963). Hence the above incident has not been totally unexpected.

The questioning the wisdom in using the school/college grades as the determinants to suitability for jobs and generally in predicting success in life began in 1973 with David McClelland’s (McClelland, 1973) suggestions. McClelland argued that the

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