



HIRING INTELLIGENCE

A Selection Strategies Information Paper

Competency-based Interviewing & Selection - Our Methods and their Reliability

1. Research on Patterned Interviewing

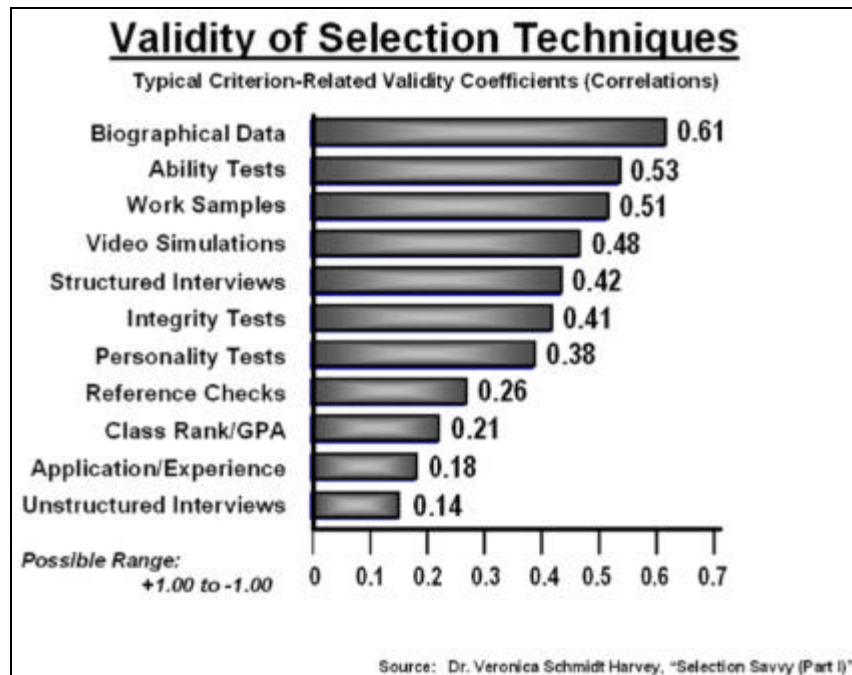
- Advantages of Structure: Social science research strongly and consistently supports the use of structured interviewing techniques, of asking interviewees the same questions, covering the same topics, and in the same general order. Structured interviews are generally referred to in the literature as "patterned" interviews.
- Excellent reviews of the literature include articles by Michael M. Harris in *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 1989 and by Arvey and Campion in *Personnel Psychology*, 35, 1982.
- The consistent finding is that the correlation between interview ratings and subsequent job performance is higher when the selection interview was more highly structured. Consistently covering the same performance topics helps interviewers to make more accurate observations. (Mayfield, Brown, & Hamstra, *Personnel Psychology*, 33, 1980.).
- Advantages of Behaviorally-Based Questions: Generally, people are better able to make judgments about a candidate's suitability for a position when they have thorough knowledge of job requirements. Given this, it is reasonable to assume that interview techniques which capitalize on performance-related questions are likely to further enhance this capability. "Situational" interviews or "critical" incident interviews improve the correlation between interview ratings and actual performance (Latham, Saari, Purcell, & Campion, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 49, 1980.).
- In the situational or critical incident technique, the interviewer identifies key job-related incidents and asks the interviewee what their response would be. The technique also stresses the importance of surfacing real-life examples from the interviewee to discover how they act in different situations.

2. On Selection Strategies' Rating Reliability Program:

- Interviews, by definition, involve "subjective" ratings by human observers, whose ratings are in turn affected by a complex combination of their own motivations and the circumstances of the interview. Structuring the interview helps to standardize, and therefore make more reliable interview ratings. But structure alone does not eliminate all variability.

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- Some of the studies cited earlier regard a .72 correlation between interview ratings and subsequent supervisor ratings as highly reliable, and therefore "successful". In fact, some studies regard a .46 or .30 correlation as sufficient enhancement of the decision-making process. This is primarily because most "unstructured" interviews (i.e., "traditional" job interviewing) tends to have an exceptionally low level of accuracy, reported by one researcher as no greater than .14 (Ofsanko, Industrial Psychologist, 20, 1983.).



Typical Validity Assessment, Dr. V.S. Harvey, 1995.

3. Rationale for a Qualitative Interview

- **Uncovering Complex Information and Motivational Information:** The open-ended nature of the patterned interview still leaves room for variability, both in terms of the kinds of responses that are prompted, and in the way these responses are analyzed and interpreted.
- Inevitably, this means a loss of some reliability. However, the gains are very significant, especially when the goals of the interview are considered. In particular, open-ended interviewing allows for greater probing to understand why an individual is giving certain responses. It allows the individual to pace themselves and use their own terms for describing their attitudes and behaviors. The person gets a chance to explain themselves in their own terms rather than being explained according to results on a pencil and paper or computer-scored test.
- **Multiple Uses of Information:** The interview produces a wealth of information that can be used for short-term and long-term objectives. It provides valuable information that helps management not only in making a hiring decision, but also in the successful management of the candidate once hired.

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- Appropriate Use of the Instrument: The Hiring Intelligence™ In-Depth Interviews and selection process are essentially analytical tools. They help us reflect consistently and in performance-relevant ways about the information the candidate provides. The In-Depth Interview is not intended to be a "silver bullet," or to replace managerial judgment. Instead, it is a tool that assists and supports managerial judgment. Human behavior is seldom black or white. Desirable behavior may change from situation to situation or may be seen as more manageable in one situation than another. The In-Depth Interview provides the kind of complex, situation-based information that helps the attentive, well-trained manager to make an informed judgment call.

4. Interview Instrument and Process

- The research instrument used is the Hiring Intelligence™ In-Depth Interview ("IDI"). The interviews are conducted by telephone with the subject in a relaxed, private location. Each interview lasts approximately 2 - 2 ½ hours.
- The IDI consists of a number of behavior description questions supplemented with focused follow-up questions (i.e., "drill downs").
- This data gathering technique captures in-depth, case specific information that enables Selection Strategies to explore a candidate's prior success.
- The result is a Behavioral Profile that illustrates, in a composite view and on a 1-10 scale, the degree to which each study participant exercises each of 16 Behavioral Traits.
- The interviews are conducted by interviewers trained in the definition and identification of the Behavioral Traits by Judith Sears, founder of the Strategic Staffing Group, a Selection Strategies partner company. Ms. Sears developed the interview in conjunction with Selection Strategies.
- Emphasis is placed on probing for detailed examples to gain perspective on how the subject is driven, thinks, acts and interacts in different situations.
- Attitudinal probes are asked throughout the interview, both to confirm the information gathered in the examples and to broaden the base of information collected.
- The interviews are tape-recorded, transcribed and sent to Selection Strategies for analysis.
- Accompanying the interview are the interviewer's written impressions of the participant. The interviewer rates the participant's communication and interpersonal skills, and notes any behavior or actions that may not be discerned from reading the interview transcript (e.g., participant's mood/attitude toward the interview process, questions that were particularly difficult for the participant to answer, etc.).
- Our analysts are also trained and certified, and bring over 8 years experience in assessing these behavioral interviews.
- To be a Certified Coder, the analyst must achieve a 90% or better consistency rating based on analyzing and scoring at least 6 consecutive interviews. All analysts complete the same training regimen to ensure inter-coder reliability and consistency.
- The Selection Strategies Analyst reads the verbatim interview transcript and scores the behavioral information surfaced throughout, either in questions designed to surface a specific behavior or in questions looking for different behaviors. A specific point and scoring system is followed, and is totaled after the entire interview has been reviewed. The participant is given individual scores in each of 16-18 measured Behavioral Traits.

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The scores illustrate the extent or frequency to which the individual exercises a given behavior.

- The scoring range of 1-10 per trait describes a spectrum from little used to excessive or dominant. Although no such label is truly appropriate, an "ideal range" lies between 6 & 8. This reflects behaviors that are consistently practiced, but are not so excessive as to pose significant drawbacks from their strength or from group cohesiveness and performance.