

COMPETENCY & BEHAVIORAL BASED INTERVIEWING MODEL



Train-The-Trainer Facilitator Guide



Department of Human Resources
Strategic Learning Solutions
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Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing Model

Facilitator Guide

Time: 4-hour workshop
Audience: Agency Hiring Managers
Size: 10-20 participants
Location: Determined by Agency
Room set-up: Table Teams

Technical/Media Requirements:

- Laptop
- PowerPoint
- LCD
- Screen

Materials:

- Name Badges
- Participant Guides
- Dry Erase Markers
- Post-it-Notes
- Sharpies
- Pencils
- Flipcharts
- Easel

Activity Packet: Print a list of Competencies for relevant job classes and a complete list of competencies with behaviors from <http://www.tn.gov/dohr/> and make copies for participants.

Developed by:

**Strategic Learning Solutions, a Division of the
Department of Human Resources**



COMPETENCY & BEHAVIORAL BASED INTERVIEWING MODEL



Program Overview

During this workshop you will learn why using competency behavioral based questions is best practice. You will learn how to write and use such questions for interviewing applicants for job positions within your agency. In addition, you will learn how to make certain that such interview questions are legally acceptable to use during an interview. This is an experiential based training that allows participants to practice incorporating the concepts and receive feedback.

Activity

- As a hiring manager in your agency, what are your expectations for this workshop?
- What are some concerns you have about conducting an interview?

Introductions and Overview:

- Welcome – introduce yourself and welcome participants
- Roster – sign in
- One 15-minute break mid-way through workshop and location of rest rooms, snack bar, etc.

Program Overview:

During this workshop you will learn why using competency behavioral based questions is best practice. You will learn how to write and use such questions for interviewing applicants for job positions within your agency. In addition, you will learn how to make certain that such interview questions are legally acceptable to use during an interview. This is an experiential based training that allows participants to practice incorporating the concepts and receive feedback.

Activity

Ask participants to record in their workbook expectations they have for the workshop. Also ask them to record those expectations on sticky notes, one expectation per note, and place them on the wall. Go over each expectation, discussing those that will and will not be covered during the workshop so that participants have a clear understanding of the scope of the workshop.

As a hiring manager in your agency, what are your expectations for this workshop?

If an expectation cannot be met during the workshop, indicate at this point with a brief “why” the workshop does not have the content to support the expectation. The focus of this workshop is on the interview process ONLY, and not on topics ancillary to the interview itself. This will help keep the workshop focused and avoid being drawn into other topics.

Ask participants to consider the following question and record their response in the workbook. Then ask participants to share their responses with those at their table group, noting common concerns. Allow the table groups to share, and then have each table group report out the common concerns.

What concerns do you have about conducting an interview?

The interview process can be a challenging time for many. Deciding the best and most appropriate questions to ask job applicants to obtain enough accurate information to make a good hiring decision is not always easily accomplished. There may be concerns about asking a question that can be construed as discriminatory.

Inform participants that this workshop will help alleviate some of those concerns by providing a model explaining how to create and use acceptable interview questions based upon the necessary competencies for a job. By practicing the model during the workshop, they will gain proficiency in the use of the model.

Go over the Learning Objectives for the workshop. These objectives will provide participants a guide of the topics covered during the workshop.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to differentiate between traditional and behavioral based interview methods
- Learn the definition of Competencies and how to use them in the interview process
- Learn how to write and use Competency Behavioral Based Interview Questions
- Learn how to determine if an interview question is acceptable or unacceptable

The Main Objective of the Interview Process

Right Person  Right Job

Activity

- What are advantages of having the right person in the right job?
- What are disadvantages of having the wrong person in the wrong job?

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how to differentiate between traditional and behavioral based interview methods
2. Learn the definition of Competencies and how to use them in the interview process
3. Learn how to write and use Competency Behavioral Based Interview Questions
4. Learn how to determine if an interview question is acceptable or unacceptable

Activity

Ask participants the following question. Gather three or four responses from the group.

What is the main objective of the interview process?

Right Person → Right Job

The ultimate goal of the interview process is to find the right person for the right job using the best interview questions possible. Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great* mentions that it is critical not to just hire people, but to hire the right people, that is, to get the right people on the bus. One might add that it is important to get the right people on the right bus and in the right seat!

Ask participants to record in their workbook some advantages of having the right person in the right job, and disadvantages of having the wrong person in the wrong job. Ask participants to

share their responses with their table group and then allow table groups to share with the larger group.

What are the advantages of having the right person in the right job?

What are the disadvantages of having the wrong person in the wrong job?

But what does the “right” person look like? That is, what are the characteristics of a “best employee”? Ask participants to generate a list of behaviors or characteristics that a “best employee” would possess.

Think about your idea of a “best employee.” What behaviors or characteristics would that person demonstrate that would make them a best employee? Share your thoughts about what a best employee is like with your table group. On a flip chart, list those behaviors or characteristics. Be prepared to share them with the class.

Many of the behaviors or characteristics that are often listed typically are not captured on a written application one fills out for a job, but are sought after by hiring personnel. The interview process is a critical time to determine whether an applicant has those competencies sought after that make them the best employee.

Ask participants to look at the Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing Model Chart.

The chart provides an overview of the hiring process. The goal is to make certain that the person being hired contributes to the overall vision, mission and core values of the agency through their job performance. It is important to determine the appropriate competencies for that

Activity

Think about your idea of the “best employee.” What behaviors or characteristics would that person demonstrate that would make them a best employee? Share your thoughts about what a best employee is like with your table group. On a flip chart, list those behaviors or characteristics. Be prepared to share them with the class.

Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing Model



Vision/Mission/Core Values	Role Identification/Job Specification	Job Description/Salary Plan Determination of required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's)	Leadership Competencies matched to Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of mission critical leadership core competencies for each role • Define leadership core competencies and behaviors for role • Align competencies with business strategies of Department, Division or Unit • Develop Behavioral based questions for each mission critical competency 	Right person, Right job
			Recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Application • Resume 	
			Interviews Round 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vet the Resume/Application/Job Description against KSA's and core competencies /narrowing applicant pool • Create the interview schedule and identify round 1 candidates • Use Behavioral Based questions for Knowledge/Skills/Abilities (KSA's)/Leadership Core Competencies 	
			Interviews Round 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know capability gaps & bench strength with Department/ Division • Second round interviews use Leadership Core Competencies / Behavioral Based Questions • Select the right individual for the role based on capability and compattibility 	



job position before creating interview questions. This process is part of a job analysis conducted with the Department of Human Resources Classification and Compensation Division and provides a foundation for the interview event. In this workshop, the focus will be on taking those competencies and creating appropriate interview questions to determine if a job applicant has or can demonstrate those competencies. For questions about the job analysis process, please contact the Classification and Compensation Division of the Department of Human Resources (web site may be found at <http://www.tn.gov/dohr/>).

During the job analysis process, the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies (KSACs) for each job class will be determined by subject matter experts (SME). Specific questions may be asked on the application to determine if an applicant has the KSACs needed for the position. For example, consider a listed knowledge for a job class is Computers and Electronics, that is, the individual needs to have basic knowledge of computer programming languages. If a specific computer programming language is needed, such as JAVA Script, then the application may include a Supplemental question that asks if the applicant has that specific knowledge. Supplemental questions should be discussed with the agency's human resource personnel. These questions enable the hiring manager to "screen" for specific KSACs on the application.

During the interview itself, questions focused on the necessary competencies may be asked. The job analysis process will provide a ranked listing of the competencies for a job class, and from those competencies the hiring manager must decide which are most critical for the position to be filled. As always, the selection process should be

discussed with the agency's human resources personnel. To summarize, the process is as follows:

- Any applicant who meets the minimum qualifications (MQs) will be put on a list of eligible candidates for consideration by the agency. The eligible candidate list is randomized.
- Supplemental questions will be generated from the KSACs to assist in selecting appropriate candidates for interview. Candidates answer all supplemental questions and the responses are sent with the eligible candidate list as an Excel report for consideration by the agency. The supplemental questions are used to filter the eligible candidate list. Guidelines for Supplemental Questions:

1. Should come from the job-related KSACs for the class
2. Should be selected as a means of specifically targeting the individuals who are most qualified for the position prior to the interview
3. Can be "Yes/No" questions or limited choice questions
4. Examples: "This position works a 6:00 pm to 7:30 am night shift with an every other weekend rotation. Will you be able to work this schedule?" "Are you proficient in advanced applications of Microsoft Word, to include generating a conditional mail merge document, automating repetitive tasks with macros, developing templates and forms, and linking forms to external sources?" "Do you have experience working with an intellectual and developmental disability population?"

- Competencies and KSAs will be used to select and/or generate structured interview questions for use in the interview process.

An important concept to remember when deciding which of the competencies to focus on during the interview is how the position ties in with the agency's mission. Every position within an agency exists to help achieve that agency's overall mission – its very reason for existing. The interview process enables hiring managers to ask questions focused on competencies that if the individual possess, will enable that person to contribute to the mission of the agency.

As an example, the HR Analyst 2 class lists the following KSACs:

Competencies:

1. Ethics and Values
2. Integrity and Trust
3. Written Communications
4. Perseverance
5. Customer Focus
6. Informing
7. Problem Solving
8. Organizing
9. Organizational Agility
10. Dealing with Ambiguity
11. Standing Alone

Knowledge:

1. Intermediate knowledge of clerical processes and procedures related to office work
2. Intermediate knowledge of personnel and human resources policies, procedures, and best practices as applied to the public sector
3. Intermediate knowledge of office productivity software including but not limited to Microsoft Office Suite
4. Intermediate knowledge of law and government as it pertains to human resources work in the public sector
5. Basic knowledge of customer and personal service best practices
6. Basic knowledge of mathematics (arithmetic)

Skills:

1. Intermediate mathematics skills (arithmetic)
2. Intermediate reading comprehension
3. Intermediate speaking skills
4. Intermediate writing skills
5. Intermediate coordination skills
6. Intermediate instructing skills
7. Basic social perceptiveness skills
8. Basic judgment and decision making skills
9. Basic systems analysis skills
10. Basic quality control analysis skills
11. Basic time management skills
12. Active learning skills
13. Active listening skills
14. Service orientation skills

Abilities:

1. Intermediate mathematical reasoning ability
2. Intermediate oral comprehension ability
3. Intermediate oral expression ability
4. Intermediate written comprehension ability
5. Intermediate written expression ability
6. Intermediate time sharing ability
7. Category flexibility ability
8. Deductive reasoning ability
9. Inductive reasoning ability
10. Information ordering ability
11. Problem sensitivity ability
12. Speech clarity
13. Speech recognition

Note that the information provides a ranked listing of the competencies determined by a group of SMEs to be most important for that job class. The agency human resources personnel can assist the hiring manager in discussing which, if not all, of the competencies to use in developing behavioral based questions for the interview. As an example, for this particular position the competencies of Integrity and Trust, Written Communications, Customer Focus and Problem Solving are very critical for that individual in that position to help the agency achieve its mission. Behavioral based questions can then be developed to ascertain whether or not the individual applicant possesses those competencies. Go over the chosen competencies with your agency's HR personnel to make certain that the choices can be justified as necessary for the position.

A list of the competencies used in the job analysis process may be found at the following link: (List of Competencies – KSACs)
http://www.tn.gov/dohr/class_comp/toolkit.shtml

Note: During the workshop, go to the link and cover a few of the examples. If you do not have internet access during the workshop, download the list of competencies and embed into the power point and go over a few examples.

Background Information on Competencies

- 1. Determine what competencies from the job classification list are needed for high performance in a particular job;**
- 2. Create and ask interview questions that will help determine whether a job applicant has the competencies for high performance for a particular job;**
- 3. Strive to hire job applicants who have those competencies needed for high performance in that job.**

Background Information on Competencies

Share with participants the background about the use of competencies for the interview process.

David McClelland, who taught at Harvard University, wrote an article for the journal *American Psychologist* in 1973 (the article may be found at <http://www.lichaoxing.com/wp-content/ap7301001.pdf>). In the article, he brought together his research in the area of using intelligence for determining how well one would perform in a job. He believed that using criteria such as intelligence, what schools one graduated from, etc., did not determine how well a person would perform in a job. Rather, he stated, the focus should be on competencies - clusters of life outcomes determined by comparing the high performers to the average performers in a particular job. McClelland stated that the focus for employers should be on finding job candidates that have the competencies they are looking for, not just knowledge and skills. Knowledge and skills are more easily taught, whereas competencies are far more difficult to teach an individual. Others have developed his theory and applied it to the interview process. The basic points to consider for the purpose of this workshop are:

1. Determine what competencies from the job classification list are needed for high performance in a particular job;
2. Create and ask interview questions that will help determine whether a job applicant has the competencies for high performance for a particular job;
3. Strive to hire job applicants who have those competencies needed for high performance in that job.

Definitions

An organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, which if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible.

Knowledge

Skills

Abilities

The manipulation of data, things, or people through manual, mental or verbal means. Skills are measurable through testing, can be observed, and are quantifiable.

Competencies are observable and measurable characteristics of a person that include using knowledge and demonstrating skills, behaviors and abilities that contribute to improved performance.

Competencies

The capacity to perform a physical or mental activity at the present time. Typically abilities are apparent through functions completed on the job. Abilities and skills are often interchanged. The main difference is that ability is the capacity to perform.

Definitions

Share with participants the Iceberg Model of Competencies to define the terms Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Competencies. These definitions are the same as those used in the job analysis process in determining the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Competencies.

Knowledge = an organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, which if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible.

Skills = the manipulation of data, things, or people through manual, mental or verbal means. Skills are measurable through testing, can be observed, and are quantifiable.

Abilities = the capacity to perform a physical or mental activity at the present time. Typically abilities are apparent through functions completed on the job. Abilities and skills are often interchanged. The main difference is that ability is the capacity to perform.

Competencies = are observable and measurable characteristics of a person that include using knowledge and demonstrating skills, behaviors and abilities that contribute to improved performance.

Knowledge is what one has stored in the brain accumulated from experience, training, education, etc., and is readily accessible at any given time. Being able to apply that knowledge to perform a physical or mental task is a skill. When knowledge and skill connect, one has the ability to perform. When the knowledge and skill do not connect, the ability to perform is lacking. For example, if one has the knowledge of the information contained in the Tennessee Driver's Handbook, but cannot successfully apply that knowledge to the actual operation of a motor vehicle, one would not say that individual has the ability to drive

Competencies examples

- **Developing Others**
- **Self Awareness**
- **Change Management**
- **Decision Making**
- **Accountability**
- **Strategic Planning**

a car at a high performance level. In such situations, there is a disconnect between the knowledge and the skill.

However, if the individual can apply the knowledge so as to perform the task at a high performance level (skill), then one would say he/she has the ability to perform the task.

Competencies are more encompassing, in that they include the ability to use knowledge and demonstrate skills, and also behaviors that would lead to high performance. Competencies are the greater mass underneath the iceberg that provides the foundation for high performance that includes behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities.

Share examples of competencies with participants.

Competencies examples:

- Developing Others
- Self Awareness
- Change Management
- Decision Making
- Accountability
- Strategic Planning

Determining Competencies

- **The competency is an observable and measurable combination of knowledge and skills.**
- **The knowledge and skills must distinguish between superior performers (or exemplary performance) and other performers.**

"...a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflects a major portion of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured with well-accepted standards, and that can be improved with training and development (Parry, 1996, p50)."

Determining Competencies

Two important factors in defining competency are:

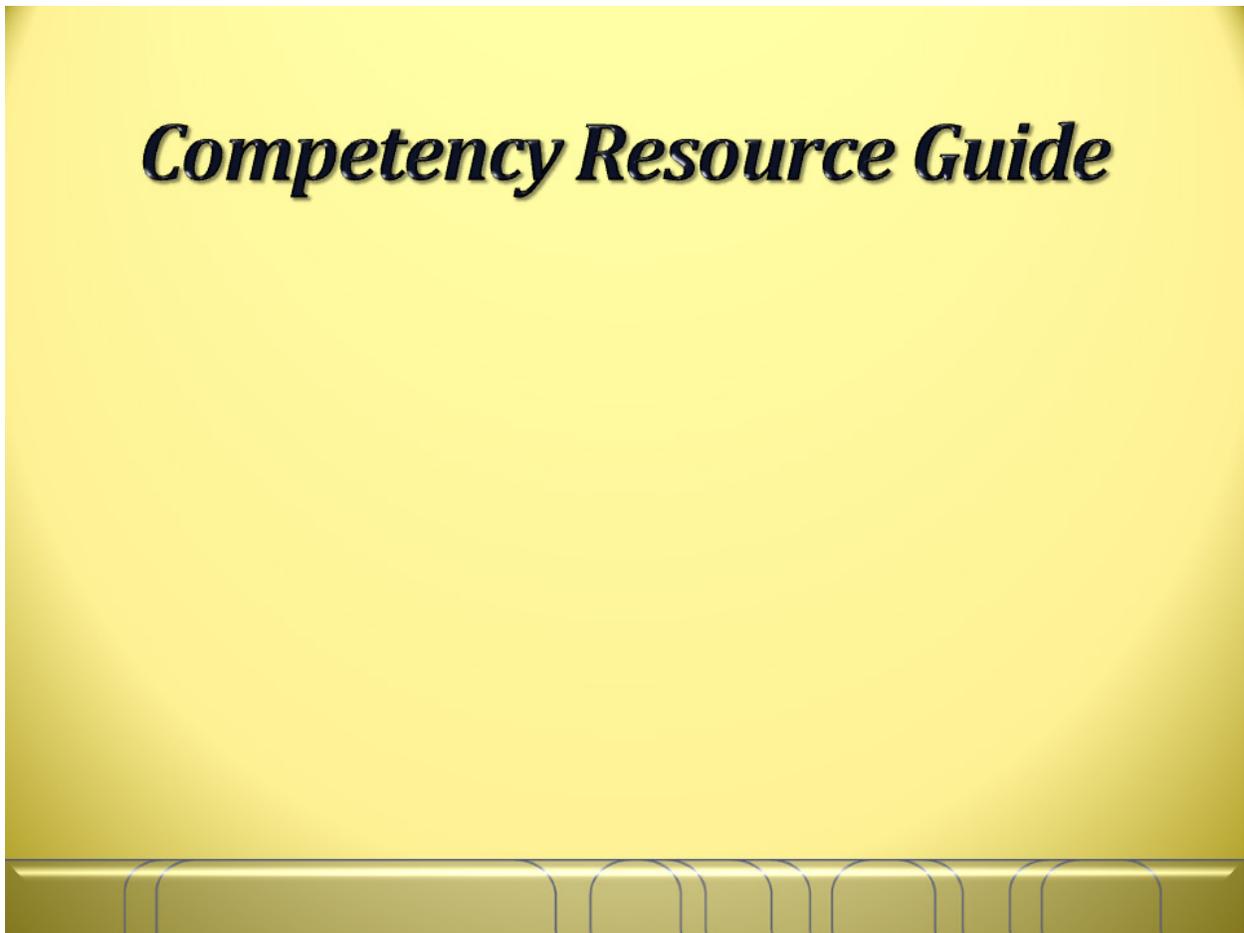
1. The competency is an observable and measurable combination of knowledge and skills.
2. The knowledge and skills must distinguish between superior performer (or exemplary performance) and other performers.

An important step in creating competency based interview questions is determining the most appropriate competencies for the particular job position. The Department of Human Resources' Classification and Compensation Division has designated competencies for all job classes. These competencies should become part of the interview process in order to determine if the job applicant can demonstrate them. The Department of Human Resources' Strategic Learning Solutions Division will assist agencies in determining what competencies are needed for particular job positions. For assistance, contact Antonio Meeks at Antonio.Q.Meeks@tn.gov.

“...a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflects a major portion of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured with well-accepted standards, and that can be improved with training and development (Parry, 1996, p. 50).“

On the next two pages a list of competencies is provided. They are arranged in groups of like competencies, and “clustered” into sub-groups. The competencies listed are taken from the Leadership Architect Research and Interpretation Guide, Lominger International: A Korn/Ferry Company, 1992-2009 (used with permission).

Note: The larger groupings are statistically supported groups of related sub-groups. The sub-groups are broad themes of skills, behaviors, and abilities – statistically supported groups of related competencies.



Competency Resource Guide

Strategic Competencies	
<i>Sub-group 1 – Understanding the Business</i>	
• Business Acumen	• Technical Learning
• Functional/Technical Skills	
<i>Sub-group 2 – Making Complex Decisions</i>	
• Decision Quality	• Learning on the Fly
• Intellectual Horsepower	• Problem Solving
<i>Sub-group 3 – Creating the New and Different</i>	
• Dealing with Ambiguity	• Perspective
• Creativity	• Strategic Agility
• Innovation Management	
Operating Competencies	
<i>Sub-group 1 – Keeping on Point</i>	
• Timely Decision Making	• Priority Setting
<i>Sub-group 2 – Getting Organized</i>	
• Organizing	• Time Management
• Planning	
<i>Sub-group 3 – Getting Work Done through Others</i>	
• Delegation	• Informing
• Developing Direct Reports and Others	• Managing and Measuring Work
• Directing Others	
<i>Sub-group 4 – Managing Work Processes</i>	
• Process Management	• Total Work Systems
• Managing Through Systems	
Courage Competencies	
<i>Sub-group 1 – Dealing with Trouble</i>	
• Command Skills	• Managerial Courage
• Conflict Management	• Standing Alone
• Confronting Direct Reports	
<i>Sub-group 2 – Making Tough People Calls</i>	
• Hiring and Staffing	• Sizing Up People

Energy and Drive Competencies

Sub-group – Focusing on the Bottom Line

- Action Oriented
- Drive for Results
- Perseverance

Organizational Positioning Competencies

Sub-group 1 – Being Organizationally Savvy

- Organizational Agility
- Political Savvy

Sub-group 2 – Communicating Effectively

- Presentation Skills
- Written Communications

Sub-group 3 – Managing Up

- Career Ambition
- Comfort Around Higher Management

Personal and Interpersonal Competencies

Sub-group 1 – Relating Competencies

- Approachability
- Interpersonal Savvy

Sub-group 2 – Caring About Others

- Caring About Direct Reports
- Compassion

Sub-group 3 – Managing Diverse Relationships

- Boss Relationships
- Fairness to Direct Reports
- Customer Focus
- Peer Relationships
- Managing Diversity
- Understanding Others

Sub-group 4 – Inspiring Others

- Motivating Others
- Building Effective Teams
- Negotiating
- Managing Vision and Purpose

Sub-group 5 – Acting with Honor and Character

- Ethics and Values
- Integrity and Trust

Sub-group 6 – Being Open and Receptive

- Composure
- Patience
- Humor
- Personal Disclosure
- Listening

Sub-group 7 – Demonstrating Personal Flexibility

- Dealing with Paradox
- Self-Development
- Personal Learning
- Self-Knowledge

Sub-group 8 – Balancing Work/Life

- Work/Life Balance

Activity

In your table group, using the Activity Packet, decide the three competencies for your assigned job class that are most critical for the position to be filled. List the job and the competencies on flip chart and post on the wall. Be prepared to share with the larger group your rationale for choosing the competencies.

Activity

Ask participants to work in table groups. Give each group an Activity packet that includes a job class, competencies and the list of competencies with corresponding behaviors. Ask participants to decide as a group which three of the competencies are most critical for the position they are to fill (in reality the list does not need to be limited to three, but do so for the purpose of this activity). List the job and the competencies on a flip chart and post on the wall. Ask groups to be prepared to share with the larger group the rationale they used for choosing the competencies.

In your table group, use the Activity packet that includes a job class, competencies and the list of competencies with corresponding behaviors. Decide which of the competencies are going to be most critical for the position you are to fill. List the job position and the competencies on a flip chart and post on the wall. Be prepared to discuss the rationale your group used for choosing the competencies.

Job	Competencies
	1.
	2.
	3.

Activity

In table groups, take the job you used for the previous activity and list three behaviors for each competency that would indicate high performance by an employee in that job, using the list in the Activity Packet. Record your behaviors on flip chart and post next to your previous list. Be prepared to share your list with the larger group.

Activity

In table groups, ask participants to use the job from the previous activity for which they listed three competencies and choose three behaviors for each competency (from the list in the Activity packet) listed for that job that would indicate high performance by an employee in the job. Have groups record these on flip charts and post next to the flip chart from the previous activity. Allow table groups to share their results with the larger group, and allow the larger group to provide feedback.

In table groups, take the job you used for the previous activity and list three behaviors for each competency (from the list in the Activity packet) that would indicate high performance by an employee in that job. Record your behaviors on flip chart and post next to your previous list. Be prepared to share your list with the larger group.

Job: _____

Competency	Competency	Competency
Behaviors	Behaviors	Behaviors
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Traditional vs. Behavioral Based Interview Questions

- **Traditional**
- **Behavioral Based**
 - Expectancy
 - Consistency

Traditional vs. Behavioral Based Interview Questions

Once the competencies for a particular job are determined, questions are to be developed that will help determine whether or not the applicant can demonstrate the competencies needed for high performance in a job.

There are basically two types of interview questions: Traditional and Behavioral Based. ***Traditional*** interview questions typically ask a series of straightforward questions that are often closed ended (they don't solicit discussion but rather brief answers). Traditional interview questions are limited in scope and are not a good predictor of future behavior. The point is not that traditional interview questions are "wrong" to use in an interview, but they are limited in soliciting the characteristics sought after in a best employee.

Some examples of Traditional interview questions are:

- Are you a team player?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Are you a college graduate?
- Can you use Excel?

Behavioral Based interview questions are designed to discover how the potential employee acted in specific, previous employment related situations that are relevant to the job. When such questions are used in an interview, it affords the applicant the opportunity to describe behaviors he/she demonstrated in a particular work experience. For example, if the desired competency being sought is whether or not the applicant is a team player, a traditional question would be "Are you a team player?" An applicant could simply reply "yes, I love working with others." However, this answer doesn't really tell if the applicant can demonstrate that competency. If the question were asked

Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing Model

Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing is the process of engaging applicants in an interview process by identifying key leadership competencies required for success in the job, and developing behavioral specific questions to target and assess employee performance in previous jobs.

as a team in order to be successful,” the applicant must then discuss the behaviors demonstrated. This approach gives a better indication as to whether or not the applicant truly possesses the ability to be a team player.

There are two types of Behavioral Based interview questions: Expectancy and Consistency. **Expectancy** Behavioral Based interview questions ask how would a person behave in a hypothetical scenario. For example: “How would you handle a customer who disagrees with the need to obtain a license to operate a business?” The question requires the interviewee to think how they would act in a situation.

The **Consistency** Behavioral Based interview question is based upon the concept that how one behaved in the past is a good indicator of how one will behave in the future in particular situations. That is, past performance predicts future performance. For example: “Tell about a time you had to deal with a customer who disagreed with a particular policy your agency has. How did you handle that situation?”

Such questions require the interviewee to discuss how he/she behaved in certain situations so that you can discover the behavior they exhibited in that past situation. The answer gives you insight into how they are most likely going to behave in future, similar situations.

When competencies and Behavioral Based interview questions are combined, then the **Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing Model** is created. Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing is the process of engaging applicants in an interview process by identifying key leadership competencies required for

success in the job, and developing behavioral specific questions to target and assess employee performance in previous jobs.

Examples of Competency and Behavioral Based Interview questions (each example illustrates the competency, a definition of the competency and example questions):

Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing is the process of engaging applicants in an interview process by identifying key leadership competencies required for success in the job, and developing behavioral specific questions to target and assess employee performance in previous jobs.

***Sample Resource Guide:
Competencies with Behavioral Based
Interview Questions***

Sample Resource Guide: Competencies with Behavioral Based Interview Questions

Share with participants the **Examples of Behavioral Based Interview Questions**. Inform participants that this is a representative list of possible questions, not an exhaustive list.

Examples of Behavioral Based Interview Questions Guide

Problem Solving

- Think back to the most recent complex decision that you had to make or problem that you had to solve. Describe in detail the process you used to make the decision or solve the problem. What sources of information did you use? How much time did you have, and how much time did you take? What was the result?
- Part of coming up with a good decision or solution is gathering and analyzing information. Please share a recent decision you made or a problem you solved that required a high level of skill in this area. How did you determine what information you needed? Where or to whom did you go to get the information? Why did you select those specific sources?
- Please provide some examples of times when others asked you for your input when they were making a decision or solving a problem. What input did you provide? What were the results?

Creativity

- Think back to a time when you were brainstorming with others—a time in which you were a particularly creative and valued contributor to the brainstorming session. What was the group brainstorming? How did you contribute? In what ways were you particularly creative? What was the result of the brainstorming?
- Please describe a job (or a period of time in your career) in which you exhibited a pattern of generating new and unique ideas. Describe the situations, the ideas you generated, and what happened as a result.
- Think back to a time when you were faced with a problem or challenge that required “outside the box” thinking to come up with a solution. What was the situation? Describe the thought process you went through to come up with the solution or approach. What was the solution and why do you consider it “outside the box?”

Timely Decision Making

- Share an example of when you had to make one or more timely decisions, but information on which to base your decision was difficult to obtain. How did you determine how much information was enough? What decisions did you make and what were the results?
- Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision or think on your feet. What was the situation and why was speed so important? What was your decision? How effective was your decision and what was the result?

Organizing

- Think back to a situation or project where you had to acquire people and other resources to accomplish a goal. What resources did you need, and how did you get them? What was the result?
- Describe a period of time when you had to juggle multiple, complex activities or projects simultaneously. How did you stay organized and continually move the projects forward? What challenges did you face, and how did you handle them? What were your results?
- Please describe your current system for maintaining files and records. Who are the users of the information you maintain? Please share some feedback you've received from others who have accessed your files.

Activity

In table groups, take the job your group used to create competencies and behaviors in the previous activities. As a group, create three Competency and Behavioral Based interview questions for each competency that will assist in discovering whether an applicant has demonstrated those competencies in previous job situations or not. Record your questions on flip chart and post on the wall next to your previous lists. Be prepared to share your results with the rest of the class.

Activity

In table groups, have participants revisit the job used in the previous activities for which they listed competencies and behaviors. Ask table groups to create three Competency and Behavioral Based interview questions for each competency that would assist in determining whether or not the applicant has demonstrated those behaviors in a past experience. Have the table groups list the questions on flip chart and post on the wall alongside the other lists they have created. Ask each group to share their list with the larger group and allow the larger group to provide feedback.

In table groups, take the job your group used to create competencies and behaviors in the previous activities. As a group, create three Competency and Behavioral Based interview questions for each competency that will assist in discovering whether an applicant has demonstrated those competencies in previous job situations or not. Record your questions on flip chart and post on the wall next to your previous lists. Be prepared to share your results with the rest of the class.

Competency	Interview Questions
	1.
	2.
	3.
Competency	Interview Questions
	1.
	2.
	3.
Competency	Interview Questions
	1.
	2.
	3.

Acceptable vs. Unacceptable Competency and Behavioral Based Interview Questions

Acceptable:

The question is acceptable in the sense that it focuses upon job requirements.

Unacceptable:

The question is unacceptable in the sense that by asking this question you may open yourself and the organization to legal problems/concerns. The assumption is that if you ask the question you are going to use the information in the hiring decision.

Activity

Acceptable/Unacceptable Interview Quiz

Acceptable vs. Unacceptable Competency and Behavioral Based Interview Questions

Once Competency and Behavioral Based interview questions have been created, it is necessary to make certain that they are acceptable. It is important to be aware of certain categories of questions that may have legal ramifications.

Share the definition of the terms with participants:

Acceptable: The question is acceptable in the sense that it focuses upon job requirements.

Unacceptable: The question is unacceptable in the sense that by asking this question you may open yourself and the organization to legal problems/concerns. The assumption is that if you ask the question you are going to use the information in the hiring decision.

Activity

Ask participants to take the Acceptable/Unacceptable Interview Question Quiz.

Acceptable/Unacceptable Interview Questions

Determine if the question is acceptable or unacceptable to ask during an interview by placing an “a” or “u” in the space next to the question.

1. Are you a U.S. citizen? _____
2. Are you able to work with our required schedule? _____
3. What is your native language? _____
4. Do you belong to a club or social organization? _____
5. What are your long-term career goals? _____
6. What religion do you practice? _____
7. How old are you? _____
8. How long have you lived here? _____
9. Are you available to work overtime on occasion? _____
10. Is this your maiden name? _____
11. Who is your closest relative to contact in case of an emergency?

12. If you get pregnant, will you continue to work, and will you come back after maternity leave? _____
13. Have you ever been disciplined for your behavior at work? _____
14. Do you smoke or drink? _____
15. How tall are you? _____
16. How many sick days did you take last year? _____
17. Are you able to start work at 8:00 a.m.? _____
18. Have you ever been arrested? _____
19. Do you have any disabilities? _____
20. Are you a member of the National Guard or Reserves? _____

[Information and questions taken from, HRWorld at www.hrworld.com]

Answer Guide and Areas to Consider

After participants have completed the quiz, go over the answers using the following Answer Guide.

Answer Guide

1. **Unacceptable.** If you are attempting to determine if the applicant is legally able to work in the U.S., it is better to ask, “Are you authorized to work in the U.S.?”
2. **Acceptable.** Don’t ask about which religious holidays the applicant observes in order to determine if scheduling is an issue.
3. **Unacceptable.** An applicant may be sensitive to common assumptions about his/her language. If you wish to determine the applicant’s level of fluency in a language, it is better to ask, “What languages do you read, speak or write fluently?”
4. **Unacceptable.** This question is too revealing of the applicant’s political and religious affiliations and doesn’t relate to the job. Make sure the wording focuses on the job functions, “Are you a member of a professional or trade group that is relevant to our industry?”
5. **Acceptable.** Be careful not to ask questions that indicate you are trying to find out how much longer the applicant may plan to work before he/she retires.
6. **Unacceptable.** If you wish to find out about weekend work schedules, ask directly, “What days are you available to work?”

7. **Unacceptable.** You may ask if a candidate is legally old enough to work. “Are you over the age of 18?” is acceptable. There may be certain job classes that do have a legitimate age limitation, such as police officers, military, etc.
8. **Unacceptable.** If the job requires familiarity with the local culture, then ask about the applicant’s current situation, “What is your current address and phone number? Do you have an alternative location where you can be reached?”
9. **Acceptable.** In attempting to determine the applicant’s ability to travel or work overtime, avoid questions about family obligations or situations, such as “Do you plan to have children?”
10. **Unacceptable.** A woman’s marital status does not have to be shared with a potential employer. If such information is necessary for reference purposes, it is better to ask, “Have you worked or earned a degree under another name?”
11. **Unacceptable.** This question touches upon the applicant’s personal life. Better to ask, “In case of emergency, whom should we notify?”
12. **Unacceptable.** Of course you want an applicant that if hired plans to stick around with your organization for a lengthy time. But questions relating to a woman’s pregnancy plans are off-limits. Better to ask, “What are your long-term career goals?”

13. **Acceptable.** However, be cautious of asking such questions as, “How do you feel about inter-office dating?” because it may appear to make assumptions about an applicant’s marital status, or be seen as a “come-on.”
14. **Unacceptable.** Even though you may want to know if an applicant has a drinking problem or will miss work due to taking smoke breaks, or for insurance related concerns, it is better to ask, “In the past, have you been disciplined for violating company policies forbidding the use of alcohol or tobacco products?”
15. **Unacceptable.** This question is too personal. If the job requires an individual to do something that involves height, directly ask, “Are you able to reach items on a shelf that’s five feet tall?”
16. **Unacceptable.** This question gets too close to potential disability related issues.
17. **Acceptable.** Being able to start work on time is important, but avoid asking questions about an applicant’s location, such as, “How far is your commute?”
18. **Unacceptable.** Ask only about crimes that HR determines relate directly to the essential job responsibilities, “Have you ever been convicted of “x” (fraud, theft, etc.)?”

19. **Unacceptable.** NEVER ask a question that touches upon a person's visible disability, or a "hidden" disability (mental disability, learning disability, diabetes, etc.). Focus on the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. "Are you able to perform "x" for this job?"

20. **Unacceptable.** It is unacceptable to discriminate against an applicant or employee, based on assumptions of upcoming military commitments.

Information and questions from, HRWorld at www.hrworld.com

Often discriminatory issues arise in the interview process when the questions touch upon the protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion/creed, gender, age, pregnancy, disability, and veteran's status. If an interview question appears to be based upon any of the protected classes, don't use it. The best piece of advice is always let human resources (or the legal department within the agency) review the questions before using them in an interview.

Make certain you confer with either human resources or the ADA coordinator within your agency concerning how to best accommodate an applicant who has a disability.

A list of potential areas to avoid or be cautious of when creating interview questions is provided. Go over the list with participants. Keep in mind that questions asked on the application have been vetted by the state's legal personnel, and some questions are acceptable to ask after a job offer has been made. Our focus in this workshop is what is acceptable/unacceptable to ask during the interview only.

Carefully consider questions that may be unacceptable, particularly in the following areas.

- Name (don't ask if a woman is Miss, Ms. or Mrs.)
- Age (40 and above is a protected class)
- Birthplace/National Origin
- Race/Color
- Gender
- Religion/Creed
- Citizenship (require proof of citizenship after a hiring decision has been made; don't ask if parents and/or spouse is native born or naturalized)
- Marital status/Parental status (for insurance and tax purposes, ask such questions after hiring)
- Relatives (ask for name, relationship and contact information of person to be notified in case of emergency only after hiring)
- Military Service (don't ask for type of discharge and require military discharge certificate only after hiring)
- Education (don't ask about the specific nationality, racial or religious affiliation of schools attended)
- Criminal Record (don't inquire about arrests)
- Organizations (don't inquire into organizational affiliations)
- Photographs (don't ask for photograph or take a picture during the interview; a photograph may be requested after hiring)
- Work Schedules (don't ask about willingness to work any particular religious holiday)
- Physical Data (may ask applicant to prove ability to perform essential job duties; don't ask for non specified job-related physical data)
- Disability
- Other Qualifications (don't ask about any non job-related inquiry that may present information permitting unlawful discrimination)

Activity

In table groups, using the Activity Packet, choose a different job class than the one your group used in the previous activities. List three competencies for that job. List two behaviors for each competency. Create two behavioral based interview questions for each competency. Determine if each question is expectancy or consistency behavioral based.

Activity

Skill Practice in Competency and Behavioral Based Interviewing

In table groups, using the Activity Packet, choose a different job class than the one your group used in the previous activities. List three competencies required of an employee to be a high performer in that job. List two behaviors for each competency. Create two behavioral based interview questions per competency that will enable you to determine if a job applicant has experience in demonstrating those competencies in a previous job. Determine if the question is expectancy behavioral based or consistency behavioral based. The chart below may be used to document your results.

Job Title: _____

Competency with description	Two behaviors for the competency	Two behavioral based questions	Expectancy or consistency
Competency 1:	Behavior 1: Behavior 2:	Question 1: Question 2:	
Competency 2:	Behavior 1: Behavior 2:	Question 1: Question 2:	
Competency 3:	Behavior 1: Behavior 2:	Question 1: Question 2:	

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

Facilitation Guidelines

Being a facilitator means ensuring that all important points are brought out, that everyone has a chance to contribute and participate, and that everything is going well for the participants. It also means that you don't have to be the one doing all of the talking—as a matter of fact, the more you create opportunities for the participants to do the talking, the more they'll make your points for you, and the more engaged they'll be. What follow are a few tips to help you make all of that happen.

1. **Ask questions to gain participation:** Ask open-ended questions that invite response, especially what and how questions. (Asking why is too confrontational for some participants.) Close-ended questions—those that invite only a yes or no response—tend to stifle participation. Use closed-ended questions only when you want to control or end the discussion and move on.
2. **Limit lectures:** Never lecture for more than 20 minutes! During a lecture, listeners can't engage as much with the content, so they become passive rather than active and they don't learn as much. Stop and provide a way for them to interact with the content, with you, or with each other.
3. **Control discussions:** No matter how much participation you encourage, you're still in charge and you can choose to move on when it's appropriate by saying something like, "OK, one more comment and then we have to get on to another topic." If the discussion has become repetitive, you must take control and move on.
4. **Remain neutral:** If members of the group get into a debate about a particular point, clarify and summarize both sides. Unless the debate concerns a factual matter with a clear "right" answer, don't express your own opinion. Doing so prompts the participants who hold the opposite opinion to feel put down.
5. **Provide structure:** For your planned activities, participants will want to know exactly what they're to do and how they're to do it. Make sure your instructions for an activity are clear, and keep them visible (posted on a flipchart will do) at all times during the activity. Move around during an

activity to make sure participants understand, and clear up confusion when they need it. Provide time warnings when their time is almost up so they can finish discussion and not feel interrupted.

6. **Mix up groupings:** Each time you form groups of participants for activities, mix them up so they're not with the same people each time. Also form groups of different sizes at different times. The more controversial, challenging, or uncomfortable the material, the smaller the group should be. Participants who are reserved will open up more in smaller groups.
7. **Debrief thoroughly:** Plan key questions that you'll ask at the end of an activity or exercise to ensure that the participants get all of the important points you want them to have. Don't wing a debriefing!
8. **Plan personalization:** Naturally you want to personalize your training with your own "war stories," examples, and interesting facts, but these should be planned and prepared during the time that you are studying the program and getting ready for facilitation. In other words, don't wing it (see next item).
9. **Don't wing it:** This is very tempting, especially for facilitators who are naturally good speakers in front of groups. However, skipping your preparation and just speaking off the cuff carries some very big risks: you might go on tangents that take too much time, you might lead yourself into a discussion that is not appropriate for the group or the subject matter, and, you might steal your own thunder for a later subject.
10. **Adjust in real time:** You'll want to adjust according to the needs of the group, and spend more time where you sense it's needed most. Here are some ways to do that:
 - Allow "productive tangents"—but be prepared to adjust after-ward if you have taken time away from something else.
 - Be prepared to scale down an activity if time runs short; for example, if you have run out of time to do an exercise, lead a discussion on the main points that would have emerged from the exercise.

- Control unproductive tangents when someone brings up a question or issue that is not relevant at the time. Either post it on an Issues Chart or Parking Lot or suggest that the two of you talk at a break, or when the workshop is over.
 - Note for yourself ahead of time which activity or content you will cut if you absolutely must.
11. **Affirm:** Find something to reinforce and affirm in every comment—no matter how off the wall it is! When you treat people with respect, they will feel comfortable participating.
 12. **Watch and respond to body language:** Say, “Joe, you look puzzled. Is something not making sense?”
 13. **Don’t be afraid of silence:** Sometimes silence means that people are simply thinking and need a little time. When you ask a question, mentally count to 10 (slowly!) before re-asking or redirecting the question.
 14. **Use humor:** Make humorous remarks to break tension or make a point—but never make fun of a participant or make inappropriate jokes.
 15. **Prepare to facilitate:** Obviously, an interactive and participative course will require some preparation on your part as a facilitator. The following are some suggestions for preparation:
 - Preview any videotapes that will be used, and make your own notes regarding how you will facilitate the film. Note the activities and content that you will emphasize; decide where you will make adjustments or cuts if necessary.
 - Gather or arrange for all the supplies, materials, and equipment you will need:
 - your own facilitator materials
 - copy of the participants’ materials for yourself
 - copy of participants’ materials for each participant
 - booklets, markers, pens, sticky-notes, props, etc
 - VCR, monitor, and videotape
 - laptop computer
 - LCD projector

- flipchart(s) with easel(s)
- white-board(s) and dry-erase markers
- course evaluation forms

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