HIRE THE BEST!

SYSTEMIZE YOUR HIRING PROCESS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR RESULTS!
Hello Friends,

There is no question about it; the success of a financial advisor is dependent on the quality of the team that he or she has built.

After making a good hire, you often hear an Advisor declare, “That was the best thing I ever did to build my business.” And, on the flip side, a bad hire can cause pain for not only the Advisor and the other team members, but even worse, a bad hire can cause client issues that linger into the future and can be expensive to deal with! That’s exactly why we created this guide to help you as you make this very important decision.

Here are a few tips to improve your success:

1. **Create a repeatable system:** Creating consistency means that you take your focus off of guessing what to do next and onto the selection of the best candidate. In this guide you will find a systematic process that you can implement to hire your next employee.

2. **Don’t settle for someone not qualified:** Finding the right person can take some time. It's important to remember that the hiring process can be lengthy, but take your time to make sure you have the person who is the best fit for your position. Making a quick decision can seem like the right thing to do when you are trying to get someone in the door to get some work done, but it’s better to wait for the right person so that you have a team in place that you can trust to get the job done right! The amount of time it takes you to fill your position is largely variable based on your local job market and the type of position you are filling. For example, if you are looking for a designated tax professional to take over complicated tax work, this type of position could take a bit longer to fill than filling an entry level position for a receptionist. Again, take your time, follow the best practices in this guide and you will succeed in your hiring quest.

3. **Get professional advice when you need it:** You will likely find most of the answers to your questions in this guide and will find a systematic process that you can implement to hire your next employee, however you may have additional questions that need to be asked. In some instances, you may need to consult an attorney familiar with employment law. However, if you are looking for best practices we’re here to help! Our Practice Management Consultants can help you further define your process, refine job descriptions and answer questions that weren’t addressed in this guide. To set up an appointment to discuss your hiring needs, please send an e-mail to the address listed under the Related Topics: practicemanagement@hdvest.com.

Thanks for taking the time to improve your hiring systems. I am certain that with the help of this guide and the customized coaching of our Practice Management Team, you will be able to HIRE THE BEST!

Sincerely,

The Practice Management
How to use this guide:

This guide is meant to give you a step-by-step process to help you determine when it is time to hire a new employee and lead you through the process up through the new hire’s first day of work. Throughout, you will find tips on how to do everything you can to make a good hire. You will also find helpful worksheets and tools that you can adapt to your own needs to create your individual, customized system.

Throughout this guide you will see Best Practice Tips that will give you specific information to make your search more effective. Here is your first one to help you better use this guide.

**Best Practice Tip:**

Anytime you see the following icon, you know you can reference the Hire the Best Toolkit to see a sample that you can customize for your use.

Reference the Hire the Best Toolkit

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### Table of Contents

When is the right time to hire someone? ......................................................... 4
Conduct a Time Study. ................................................................. 4
Finding Candidates. .......................................................... 6
   Steps to finding candidates: ......................................................... 6
      Step 1: Create a job description ............................................... 7
      Step 2: Create Job Advertisement based on Job Description ........ 8
      Step 3: Talk to referral sources ................................................... 8
      Step 4: Determine methods of posting media .............................. 9
      Step 5: Contact posting media to determine pricing and details .... 9
      Step 6: Post job advertisement .................................................. 9
Steps for Screening Candidates: ...................................................... 10
   Step 1: Review resumés from interested candidates ..................... 10
   Step 2: Determine candidates with whom you would like to schedule phone interviews ... 11
   Step 3: Create candidate folders .................................................. 11
   Step 4: Schedule and Conduct phone interviews. .......................... 12
   Step 5: Determine candidates with whom you will schedule an In-Person Interview. ... 12
   Step 6: Send rejection letters to eliminated candidates ................... 12
Interviewing Candidates: ................................................................. .12

Steps for Interviewing Candidates .................................................. .12
Step 1: Identify questions to ask candidates ..................................... .12
Step 2: Prepare an Interview Guide .................................................. .21
Step 3: Schedule Interviews ............................................................. .23
Step 4: Conduct the interviews ......................................................... .23
Step 5: Select the best candidate for the position .............................. .27

Hiring Candidates ............................................................................. .28

Steps for Hiring Candidates ............................................................. .28
Step 1: Verify Employment and Conduct Reference Checks ................ .28
Step 2: Make the offer of Employment ............................................. .28
Step 3: Conduct Criminal Background Checks .................................. .29
Step 4: Contact Applicant to inform of status and confirm start date .. .29
Step 6: Meet with your new hire and complete the New Hire Checklist . .30
Step 7: Create a Job Folder ............................................................... .31
Step 8: Send a New Hire Announcement to Clients ......................... .31
Step 9: Set up a regular meeting to check in with your employee ....... .31
When is it the right time to hire someone?

Oftentimes, once you actually see the signs that you need to hire someone in your business, you’ve waited too long. That doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t hire someone to help now, it just means that you may have saved some heartache by getting ahead of the game. The following are signs you may be past the point of needing to hire someone:

• **You and your staff are reactive vs. proactive:** You may be adequately handling the current workload – but are you poised for growth? If you and your staff are merely responding to business as it comes in, could you be more successful if you were proactive with client needs? Does it feel like you are constantly putting out fires? Have you ever said something like, “We’re just trying to handle the business that is coming in” or, “We haven’t even scratched the surface of our potential?” Statements like these mean it might be time to hire someone.

• **Your employees are working overtime:** Occasional overtime is expected by most; however excessive overtime being used by staff could indicate either a need to hire additional staff to handle the workload or the need to examine the efficiency of those doing the work. Excessive overtime can lead to burnout and eventually turnover. Talk to staff about the reason for their working excessive overtime to get to the root of the issue.

• **Your staff is “overwhelmed”:** Get to the root of this issue by talking to your employees. Are they overwhelmed because they believe there is too much work to do? If so, and you determine that they are working efficiently, then hiring a new staff member is possibly an answer. However, many times being “overwhelmed” could point to another problem including having someone in a position that does not suit their talents and desires. For example, asking an employee who isn’t a “people person” to be in charge of all client contact could make them feel “overwhelmed” because it is not a good fit for the person. Alternatively, having a staff member who is “overwhelmed” could mean that you have someone who is perfectly suited for the job but they need training to be able to master their position.

**Conduct a Time Study**

Before diving into hiring a new person for your team, it is important to take a step back to evaluate your situation. Consider whether shifting of responsibilities among current employees, eliminating non-essential duties of current employees or improving efficiency of current staff might be a better option. Ask yourself the following questions as you determine whether hiring a new staff member is right for you.

1. **How much is it costing you not to hire someone?** As a financial advisor and business owner, it is imperative that you spend your time focused on the things that generate revenue for your practice. When running a wealth management business, this means time that you spend in front of clients talking to them about how you can help them with their needs. Time spent handling client service issues, answering the telephone, creating marketing letters and many other tasks can be an easy distraction from what really should be your primary focus: meeting with clients. Think about how much it is costing you to continue doing the work you could give to someone else. Perform a simple analysis to see the value of one hour of your time. Then as you identify tasks that you are doing that someone else could do, you will be able to evaluate whether you can find someone at a lower hourly rate to complete these tasks.

   **How to do the calculation:** Take your current Rolling Gross Commissions and multiply it by your payout percentage to determine how much you make a year on your wealth management business. Estimate the number of hours you typically devote to wealth management each week and multiply this by the number of weeks you work yearly to determine how many hours a year you devote to your wealth management business. Divide the amount you make yearly on your wealth management business by the number of hours you devote to wealth management to determine your hourly rate. This is the amount that it is costing you to perform any duty. Can you find someone for a lower hourly rate to complete these tasks?
Examples

**Example #1:** Advisor with $24,000 rolling gross commission spends about 10 hours per week devoted to wealth management and works about 50 weeks yearly.

\[
\begin{align*}
$24,000 \text{ at 60\%} &= $14,400 \\
(10 \text{ hrs. weekly } \times 50 \text{ weeks} &= 500 \text{ Hours}) \\
$14,400 / 500 &= \text{Hourly rate of } $28.80
\end{align*}
\]

**Example #2:** Advisor with $149,000 rolling gross commissions spends about 30 hours per week devoted to wealth management and works about 48 weeks yearly.

\[
\begin{align*}
$149,000 \text{ at 85\%} &= $126,650 \\
(30 \text{ hrs. weekly } \times 48 \text{ weeks} &= 1,440 \text{ Hours}) \\
$126,650 / 1,440 &= \text{Hourly rate of } $87.95
\end{align*}
\]

**Example #3:** Advisor with $650,000 rolling gross commissions spends about 35 hours per week devoted to wealth management and works about 40 weeks yearly.

\[
\begin{align*}
$650,000 \text{ at 89\%} &= $578,500 \\
(35 \text{ hrs. weekly } \times 40 \text{ weeks} &= 1,400 \text{ Hours}) \\
$578,500 / 1,400 &= \text{Hourly rate of } $413.21
\end{align*}
\]

2. **What tasks could you delegate or eliminate to spend your time more effectively?** Keep a log for two full weeks of your activities and identify those items that you are doing that could be delegated to someone with a lower hourly rate. You may also find that some things that are on your to-do list have outlived their function and can be eliminated completely without compromising your level of client satisfaction. Once you have completed your two weeks of tracking, compile a list of those activities that you will be able to delegate and you are on your way to creating a job description. Take steps immediately to stop doing those things that you found had no purpose and could be eliminated.

**Date: Thursday, February 14th**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Must Do</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Eliminate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:15</td>
<td>Make Coffee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 – 8:35</td>
<td>Read and respond to E-mail</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35 – 8:55</td>
<td>Review notes for client meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:55 – 9:00</td>
<td>Check fantasy football standings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:55</td>
<td>Meet with the Watts family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:55 – 10:05</td>
<td>Call HD Vest about paperwork needed to set up Watts Family account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05 – 10:15</td>
<td>Call client to discuss trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 10:45</td>
<td>Meet with Susan Fields</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:00</td>
<td>Work on marketing letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the end of two weeks, create a list of items to be delegated and determine if those should be delegated to current staff or new hire and approximately how many hours weekly the task will take:

**To be delegated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Pete</th>
<th>Dawn</th>
<th>New Hire</th>
<th>Hours weekly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Coffee</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and respond to E-mail</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, create marketing letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Practice Tip:**

Before moving forward with this hire, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Could this need for additional help be temporary?** There are times when a staffing need can be created that will not be long-term. Let’s use the example of going paperless. The result of going paperless is a more efficiently run office but the process to get there can be quite time consuming. However, once you get all of your historical files scanned the ongoing process of scanning client documents won’t require a lot of additional work. For an office that has decided to go paperless, hiring temporary employees to scan client documents initially could be a good solution rather than hiring a regular employee that may or may not have enough work once the scanning project is over.

- **Do you anticipate future changes that would affect this new hire?** Considering your goals over the next 12-24 months; do you see any additional opportunities that might arise for the new employee? Are there changes to your business that you plan on making such as adding a new line of business or discontinuing a service you are currently offering? As you develop the job description it will be important to keep these factors in mind.

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**Finding Candidates**

**STEPS TO FINDING CANDIDATES:**

1. Create a job description.
2. Create a job advertisement based on the job description.
3. Talk to referral sources.
4. Determine methods of posting media.
5. Contact posting media to determine pricing and details.
6. Post the job advertisement.
Step 1: Create a job description

A properly constructed, well thought out job description is key to getting the right person for your team. You must clearly identify what your new hire will be doing and what skills are needed to increase your chance of attracting and hiring the right person for the job. See the Hire the Best Toolkit for a job description common to HD Vest Advisor offices: Sample Job Description.

1. **Identify the title of the job:** Stick to commonly used terms for the function to ensure that the candidates who apply are those that have skills like those you are looking for. You will get a whole different pool of applicants for “Director of Marketing” and “Sales Assistant.” You can always use a different title when introducing this person to clients if you prefer.

2. **Identify the primary objective of the new hire:** What is the primary reason this person’s job exists? For example: “To perform all administrative and marketing functions for the financial advisor.”

3. **Identify all tasks that the job will entail:** You can use the “To Be Delegated” worksheet to get a start. Arrange them in order of most frequent to least frequent tasks.

4. **Identify the experience, knowledge, training, education, behaviors and skills** a person would need to do this job. Focus on what is really needed for the job.

5. **Identify any systems or software experience needed.**

6. **Combine each of these to create the job description. In the following format:**

---

**Job Title:** Financial Sales Assistant

**Objective:** This position performs moderately complex administrative and client services tasks for business owner.

**Key Tasks/Duties:**

Duties include, but are not limited to the following: Greeting visitors; screening and/or selectively referring callers; supporting clients by providing services in account management and technical support; creating marketing pieces and coordinating compliance approval as well as implementing marketing plans; maintaining client databases and compiling information to prepare reports using appropriate software; and performing special projects as requested.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

- High School Diploma
- 2 years related experience (administrative, customer service, marketing) or equivalent education
- Microsoft Office
- Morningstar Advisor Workstation

**Competencies:**

- Communication
- Customer Centric
- Initiative
- Work Quality
- Relationship Building
- Learning & Understanding the Business

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Step 2: Create Job Advertisement based on Job Description

A job ad should be short enough for the reader to quickly read it and determine the essential job functions and requirements. Don’t oversell the job, but do make it appealing to the reader. Include the following: job title, company name, essential job tasks that will be performed, education, experience, training requirements, description of company, and instructions on how to apply.

Financial Sales Assistant
ABC Wealth Management

ABC Wealth Management, a leader in the growing market for investment and financial planning services, has the following position available: Financial Sales Assistant. This position performs moderately complex administrative and client services tasks for business owner. Duties include, but are not limited to the following: greeting clients, screening and or referring callers, supporting clients by providing services in account management, creating marketing pieces and coordinating compliance approval as well as implementing marketing plans, maintaining client databases and compiling information to prepare reports using appropriate software, performing special projects as requested.

Experience/Required Skills:

- High School Diploma
- 2 years related experience in an administrative/customer service role required; financial services experience a plus
- Proficient in Microsoft Office & Morningstar software applications

To apply visit our website at www.abcwmco.com or contact Dawn Willis at (555) 555-5555.

Best Practice Tip:

Need more help creating a job description or job ad? We can help! Contact our Practice Management Team to help you design a job description and ad that meets your needs.

Just email: practicemanagement@hdvest.com.

Step 3: Talk to referral sources

Current employees, community contacts, friends, family and clients can be your best source for your next star employee. Be specific as you talk to people so that they can refer the right people to you. The more people you talk to about exactly what you are looking for, the more likely you will find your new employee from a referral source. Don’t forget to follow up any referrals with a thank you note to the person who referred the candidate.
Step 4: Determine methods of posting media:
local newspapers, online job board sites (Monster, CareerBuilder, LinkedIn etc.)

Hands down, the best method of finding a qualified candidate remains referrals from friends, family, employees and clients. Unless you live in a small town, and sometimes even if you do, you will probably be disappointed in the results you received from posting in a local newspaper. Online job board sites can be equally as disappointing but in some markets can be more promising sources for candidates. Without trying a method yourself, it is difficult to predict your personal results. If the price is reasonable, it is worth the investment to give it a try. These sources may not produce a ton of qualified applicants, but it only takes one to be the right person.

Step 5: Contact posting media to determine pricing and details

Here are some questions that might be helpful in making your decision:

- What is the posting price?
- How long will the ad run?
- What days will the ad run?
- How much space/words will you be given?
- What is the process for posting and making changes if needed?

Step 6: Post job advertisement

Make the decision about your posting based on your budget and which method you believe will be most effective for your position.

Still No Candidates?

Most of the time the steps taken above will produce several qualified candidates from which you can choose. But, if this search has not yielded worthy candidates for you, turn to additional sources for recruiting candidates:

- Internet Resume Database searches (i.e. Monster, CareerBuilder, LinkedIn, Craigslist)

Instead of waiting for candidates to answer your advertisement, you can search the database for people in your area that fit your qualifications and criteria. With the increase in technology over the years, LinkedIn is a great source for attracting professional candidates!

- College/University/Trade School recruiting

Most schools have an outplacement office that is available to help graduates find positions. Contact a school near you to find out how they may be able to help.

- Staffing Agencies (non-exempt jobs - temporary to regular)

Located in most every town no matter how big or small, a staffing agency can provide at least temporary relief for you and many times have temp-to-hire programs so you can try out the employee before making a commitment.

- Other Professional Organizations, Churches, Outplacement firms, etc.
Screening Candidates prior to interviews

STEPS FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES:
1. Review resumes from interested candidates.
2. Determine candidates with which you would like to schedule phone interviews.
3. Create candidate folders.
4. Schedule and conduct phone interviews.
5. Determine candidates with whom you will schedule an in-person interview.
6. Send rejection letters/emails to eliminated candidates.

Step 1: Review resume from interested candidates

This form can help you organize your thoughts about a candidate’s qualifications for your open position.

1. Using the Resume Screening Checklist, check the box next to each of the requirements:
   □ Proper grammar and correct spelling – these factors indicate the care with which the applicant took to check for accuracy.
   □ Professional tone and information – it is likely that this person will be interacting with your clients. If their resume isn’t professional, one would have to wonder if their communications with your clients would be either.
   □ Past experience consistent with job requirements – it is impossible to tell if you have the right person for the job from their resume, but you can get a good sense for whether or not they have worked in jobs similar to the one that you are filling.
   □ Increasing responsibility over time/consistent career growth – this can indicate whether they have been trusted to take on new responsibilities due to good job performance. Generally, this shows you that the person is interested in their career development.
   □ Education, licensing, experience fits qualifications required – if you have specific requirements for the position, reviewing the resume could help you eliminate candidates who are under-qualified.

2. Circle any resume “red flags”:
   □ Gaps in employment – these do not always point to a problem, there are many valid reasons for gaps in employment. However, this is something you will want to ask the candidate about to understand why there are gaps.
   □ Frequent job changes – in some industries, frequent job changes are normal and can be an advantage. However, you should ask the candidate about this so that you can feel comfortable that you won’t invest time and money into training this person and then they become bored of your job in a couple of months.
Experience that seemingly makes the candidate overqualified – if the candidate has recently stepped down as Branch Manager for a large brokerage house and now wants to be your sales assistant, you should spend time really talking to that person about what it is they want out of their career. It is possible that a person that had such a position in a prior job would be unhappy in a position with less responsibility and power. However, you may find some gems in people who are looking for a career change. Regardless of the reason, it is worth discussing with your candidate.

Vague job descriptions – candidates with a strong job history will generally list specific accomplishments to back up their work experience.

Non-action words like “studied…” – It will be important to distinguish whether the candidate has those skills or has simply read a book to learn more about the skill.

Strong emphasis on education when not a recent graduate – After being in the work world for a few years, candidates should emphasize their accomplishments from their career rather than focus on school accomplishments.

Over-selling tone of resume – if it sounds too good to be true, there is a chance that it is!

Dates of employment not specific – a candidate who lists the year 2003-2004 on their resume could have worked 2 years or 2 days. It is generally better to see it listed with month and year (May 2003-December 2004).

3. Finally, write any questions that you have for the candidate based on the review of their resume.

Best Practice Tip:

Using tools such as the Resume Screening Checklist with all candidates helps you be consistent in your hiring process and allows you to make a better “apples-to-apples” comparison of candidates with similar skill sets to determine the best fit for your position!

Step 2: Determine candidates with whom you would like to schedule phone interviews

It’s always good to get a second opinion on matters such as these. Involve your staff, your family, friends or even your fellow HD Vest Advisors to give you their opinions.

Step 3: Create candidate folders

For each of the candidates that you conduct phone interviews with, create a folder and include the following: Application, the candidates resume, and Resume Screening Checklist. You will file additional documents in the candidate’s file as you go through the selection process.
Step 4: Schedule and conduct phone interviews

Your primary objective for doing a phone interview is to determine who you want to interview in-person. In-person interviews are a big time commitment and you will only want to invest time in those you would seriously consider. You can use the Phone Interview Checklist to make your job easier. Once the phone interview is complete, file the Phone Interview Checklist in candidate’s file.

Step 5: Determine candidates with whom you will schedule an in-person interview

Only choose candidates that you believe are realistic for the position. Those applicants that clearly do not meet the requirements should be notified that they are not being considered for the position as indicated in step six.

Step 6: Send rejection letters to eliminated candidates

Notifying candidates who are clearly not qualified for the position early in the process will reduce phone calls and frustration later. We’ve included a sample Rejection Letter for candidates who are not being interviewed in the Hire the Best Toolkit to help you.

Interviewing Candidates:

STEPS FOR INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

1. Identify questions to ask the candidate.
2. Create an interview guide and agenda.
3. Schedule interviews.
4. Conduct interviews.
5. Select the best candidate for the position.

Prepare for the In-Person Interviews

Step 1: Identify questions to ask candidates.

As you are selecting questions it is imperative that you remember: Just like when working with a wealth management client, the questions you ask are the most important secret to your hiring success! Before we can delve into the identifying questions, it’s important that you gain a better understanding of effective interview techniques.
Two Common Types of Interview Styles

The types of interview questions you ask are key to your ability to distinguish a candidate who is a good fit from one who is a potential hiring disaster. There are many different interviewing models; the most commonly used are Traditional and Behavioral. Successful selection decisions result from using the right criteria. Unlike traditional interviewing techniques, which focus on interrogation, the behavioral model is based on the underlying theory that past behavior predicts future performance, which has proven to be the more effective model.

Avoid Ineffective Traditional Interviewing Questions!

Polished interviewers are able to ace “traditional” interview questions with ease by giving you the answer they think you would want to hear. For example, think about one of the most common interview questions in the history of man, “What are your weaknesses?” Just about everyone who is posed with this question will find a way to answer it where the weakness appears not to be a weakness at all: “I’m a perfectionist” or “I care too much about the results that I get personally involved.”

Types of ineffective traditional questions

- **Leading Questions:** In a leading question, you have pretty much answered the question for the candidate by the way you phrased it. A negative answer would obviously be an ender. Examples of leading questions are: “Working on your own doesn’t bother you does it?” or “The work is fast paced; are you okay with that?”

- **Situational/theoretical:** These questions ask the candidate to speculate on how they might perform a certain task or how they might react to a certain situation. For example: “How do you handle really angry clients?” or “How would you prioritize your day if...”

- **Off the wall questions:** Other questions that typically lead nowhere are questions like “What are 10 things you can do with a pencil besides write & erase?” Is this the kind of situation your staff is usually faced with? If so, great, ask it. Otherwise, this is not the type of question that is really going to help you identify the best person for your position.

Relying on questions that are leading, situational/theoretical and off the wall will not lead to information about whether the candidate will be successful in the job. Questions such as these lead you to make decisions based on your gut feelings instead of logically evaluating whether the candidate is right for the job. Don’t misunderstand…Gut feelings are important; in fact, even the most competent person isn’t the right person if you can’t work well together. However, gut feelings can lead you to make decisions more on who you like instead of who can do the job. Many Advisors have hired someone for their office because they thought they were nice and a good fit, only to find out later that the candidate didn’t live up to expectations. You also want your interview questions and the reason you determine that the candidate is not a good fit to be job related, which will help them be legally defensible in court.
Use Effective Behavioral Interviewing Questions

There is a way to ask questions in an interview that will limit the influence of the gut and improve the likelihood that you identify whether the candidate has the skills for the job. Unlike investments, it is safe to say that past performance is the best predictor of future performance when it comes to finding an employee.

By using Behavioral Interviewing, you ask questions that require the candidate to describe situations in which they have actually demonstrated a desired behavior. This is a much better indicator than asking someone to speculate on how they would handle situations.

For example, let’s say that you want to find out how a person reacts when faced with an upset client. The traditional way to ask this question is: “How would you handle an upset client?” A candidate who answers this question is merely speculating on future behavior. If they are any good at interviewing, they have listened to your cues throughout the interview and will watch your reactions to make sure they are answering to your satisfaction. However, asked a different way, you get a glimpse into what skills the candidate has in dealing with people who are less than happy. To ask this question in a behavioral interview you would say something like, “Describe a situation in your last job when an angry client called in, what did you say?” You are asking for a specific instance, not a generalization and this is going to give you a better picture of how that person might react when faced with the same situation when working for you.

Below are some differences between Traditional interview questions and Behavioral interview questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions often not job-related; ineffective</td>
<td>Job-related focus; Higher probability of hiring the best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates can tell the interviewer what he or she wants to hear.</td>
<td>Reduces candidate's ability to “fudge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's hard to know if a candidate will react the way they said they would.</td>
<td>Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial “gut feel” given too much weight in hiring decisions</td>
<td>Uses logic and evidence (suitability), rather than intuition (likeability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational fit usually isn’t a consideration.</td>
<td>Results in higher motivation and satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some other examples to help you understand the difference between Traditional interview questions and Behavioral interview questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Example Questions</th>
<th>Behavioral Example Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What would you do if you had more work than you felt you could complete?</td>
<td>We’ve all had times when we faced demanding goals or a heavy work load. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. What did you do? What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you handle situations where you promise more than you can deliver?</td>
<td>Describe a situation when you overcommitted yourself or your company. What did you do? What was the result?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Question Selection— Now that you have a firm idea of what types of questions are best, the next thing you must do to determine the questions you will ask is to identify the behaviors of an individual who would be successful in this job. These are referred to as competencies.

To help you determine which competencies are important for your open position, think about the last person you managed or observed who was successful in this position and ask yourself these questions.

- What made this person successful?
- What behaviors did they exhibit that made them successful?
- What motivated this person?
- What are the most challenging aspects of this position?
- What would make an unsuccessful candidate?
- Why have people left this position previously?

After considering the questions above, on the list of sample competencies that follows, circle those that you believe are important in the position for which you are hiring. For a definition of each listed competency, see the Competency Definitions in the Hire the Guide Toolkit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Competencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention to Detail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Trust and Integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client Centric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventiveness</td>
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<td>Judgment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning and Understanding the Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you’ve circled the competencies that match the positions, choose the top six. These will be the basis for your interview questions. Each competency question you ask should be designed to determine if the person has successfully demonstrated those behaviors in the past.

**Top Competencies for [Position]**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 

At this point, you are ready to identify (or select from the resources HD Vest provides in the following pages) the questions that can be used to gauge a candidate’s fit for the position.

Following are sample questions for each of the competencies previously defined. Before moving on, select two-three behavioral interviewing questions for the top six competencies from the list below, or consult with our Practice Management Team to create your own by sending an e-mail to the address listed under the Related Topics. practicemanagement@hdvest.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</th>
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</table>
| **Attention to Detail:** Accomplishing tasks by being mindful of all aspects of the job by following established procedures, ensuring errors are avoided and correcting problems. | ☐ Tell me about a process or procedure you had to follow that was highly detailed. What was the process? How did you make sure you didn’t miss any steps of the process?  
☐ Give me an example of when you noticed a potential error before it was made. How did you notice the problem? What did you do?  
☐ Describe a project you completed that had many parts to it. How did you keep track of all the small details without forgetting some items?  
☐ Walk me through the steps you take to proof your own work in an effort to identify errors or omissions. Give me a specific example of when you have done this.  
☐ Create your own question: ________________________________ |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Building Trust & Integrity:**  
*Interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one’s intentions by demonstrating ethics and integrity.* | ☐ Tell me about a time you earned someone’s trust. How did you accomplish this?  
☐ Sometimes strict organizational policies make it very difficult to get our work done. Can you think of a time when you had to bend a rule to get your work done more efficiently?  
☐ Tell me about a situation where you were asked to do something you didn’t think was right. What did you do?  
☐ Not everyone we work with is ethical at all times. Describe a situation where you observed someone doing something that you thought was unethical. What did you do?  
☐ Create your own question: ____________________________________________ |
| **Client Centric:**  
*Making clients and their needs a primary focus of one’s actions; developing and sustaining productive client relationships by exceeding their expectations every time.* | ☐ Tell me about a time when you found a new way to increase client satisfaction. What was your idea? What was the outcome?  
☐ Give me an example of when you exceeded a client’s expectations in terms of the quality of services delivered.  
☐ Tell me about a time when you asked for feedback from a client. How did you ask for the feedback? What did you say or do once you received the feedback?  
☐ Describe a time when you went above and beyond to solve a problem for a client. Walk me through the steps you took.  
☐ To better serve clients, we sometimes promise more than we can deliver. Tell me about a time when you overcommitted yourself or your organization. What happened?  
☐ Create your own question: ____________________________________________ |
| **Communication:**  
*Exchanging information by effectively organizing the message being delivered, maintaining the listeners’ attention, adjusting the message to the audience, using accepted grammar and sentence structure and effectively listening to others and responding appropriately with non-verbal messages.* | ☐ This is an observable competency. You will not ask behavioral questions to determine someone’s effectiveness. Instead you will evaluate communication skills based on what you observe in the interview. Use the definition to the left to remind yourself what you will be looking for throughout the screening process. |
| **Critical Thinking:**  
*Identifying and analyzing issues, problems or opportunities in order to make effective decisions.* | ☐ Give me an example of when you gathered information from several sources to better understand a problem.  
☐ Describe a time when you analyzed market trends. Walk me through the steps you took. How did you use this information?  
☐ Tell me about a time when you reviewed reports or other documents to identify problems. What were you looking for specifically?  
☐ Give me an example of when after extensive analysis you were able to identify the root cause of a challenging problem. How did you identify what the cause truly was?  
☐ Walk me through the steps you take to determine the cost of a job, project or major task. Give me a specific example of when you have done this.  
☐ Create your own question: ____________________________________________ |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Flexibility:** Demonstrating adaptability in approach when working with all types of people; maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment. | • Tell me about a situation in your job when you had to abruptly change what you were doing. What did you do? How did it affect you?  
• Give me an example of when you were flexible and adapted your normal approach in order to work effectively with someone who had a different style than yours.  
• Describe a time when you were able to complete a task or project even though you were constantly interrupted. How did you handle the disruptions but still accomplish your goal?  
• Often times our priorities change without much notice. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. What did you do?  
• Give me an example that demonstrates your ability to maintain effectiveness when dealing with people who have a very different culture or background from your own.  
• Create your own question: ____________________________ |
| **Initiative:** Taking action to achieve results or accomplish goals beyond what is required; being proactive. | • Tell me about a situation when you took ownership of an issue that wasn’t your responsibility.  
• Describe a time when you took action to correct a problem without being asked to do so. What was the problem? What did you do? What was the outcome?  
• Give me an example of when you identified a way to make your job easier or more productive.  
• Walk me through the steps you have taken to improve your skills. What have you done and why?  
• Tell me about a time when you volunteered to work on a project or serve on a committee that was beyond the normal limits of your job.  
• Create your own question: ____________________________ |
| **Inventiveness:** Coming up with new and unique ideas; connecting previously unrelated concepts. | • Tell me about a time when you generated an idea on how technology could be leveraged to impact results.  
• Give me an example of when you developed a unique way to generate business.  
• Describe a situation where you developed a creative improvement to a product or service.  
• Give me an example of when you used an analogy to make a point.  
• Tell me about the most creative idea you have come up with in your professional career.  
• Create your own question: ____________________________ |
| **Learning & Understanding the Business:** Takes the necessary steps to learn the processes and systems to get things done; stays informed of what is going on in the organization to help make decisions. | • Tell me about a time when you spoke to others in order to learn more about how your organization operates. How did you apply this knowledge and what was the result?  
• Describe a situation when you applied your knowledge of processes and systems in order to get something done.  
• Walk me through the steps you took to learn about your organization’s products and services. Give me an example of how you used this information in your job.  
• Give me an example of when you stayed informed on what was going on in your organization and because of your knowledge you were able to help make a decision.  
• Create your own question: ____________________________ |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY COMPETENCIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judgment:</strong></td>
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</table>
| *Using effective approaches for choosing a course of action and then taking action based on the available facts and probable outcomes.* | - Tell me about a time when you had to consider multiple factors before making a decision. Walk me through the steps you took to make the decision.  
- Give me an example of when you had to make a quick decision. How did you decide what to do? What was the outcome?  
- Tell me about a time when you made a tough decision that was not well received. What did you do?  
- Describe a time when it took an extended amount of time to make a decision. What did you take into consideration when making this decision? Why did it take so long to reach a conclusion? What was the final outcome?  
- Create your own question: ___________________________ |
| **Persistence:** |                     |
| *The drive to figure things out; staying with an action plan until the goal is achieved or is no longer possible.* | - Give me an example of when you faced many obstacles and frustrations while trying to accomplish a goal. What were the obstacles? What did you do?  
- Tell me about a time when you presented an idea to your manager more than once. What was your idea and why were you passionate about it? How did you present the idea each time and what factors did you consider when speaking with your manager? What was the final outcome?  
- Describe a situation where you had a difficult time figuring out a solution to a problem. What steps did you take in your efforts to solve the problem?  
- Tell me about a time when you faced rejection and were disappointed. What did you do?  
- Give me an example of when you stuck with something longer than you thought you would or could. What exactly did you have to do? What was the outcome and why did you stick with it?  
- Create your own question: ___________________________ |
| **Positive Nature:** |                     |
| *Maintaining a high level of energy and a positive outlook while dealing with stressful situations and difficult people.* | - Tell me about a time when you maintained a professional demeanor and stayed positive even though you were dealing with a stressful situation.  
- Give me an example of when you received critical feedback. How did you respond?  
- Describe a situation when you had to work frequent overtime or extra hours. What happened to your productivity and effectiveness?  
- Tell me about the most difficult change you encountered at work. How did you handle this change?  
- We’ve all had times when we have faced demanding productivity goals or a heavy workload. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. What did you do?  
- Create your own question: ___________________________ ___________________________ |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY COMPETENCIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Building:</strong></td>
<td>• Working with others usually involves some give and take. Describe a time when you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working effectively and</td>
<td>worked out an agreement with a peer or team member. What did you do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>cooperatively with others;</td>
<td>• Describe a situation when you developed a good working relationship with someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening, understanding,</td>
<td>in order to create a network for the client. How did you maintain this relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responding and building</td>
<td>• Give me an example of when you diffused a tense situation. How did you accomplish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive working relationships.</td>
<td>this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with others usually</td>
<td>• Tell me about a time when it was extremely important for you to voice your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involves some give and take.</td>
<td>opinion with diplomacy and tact. What was the situation? What factors did you</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe a situation when you</td>
<td>consider when voicing your opinion? What exactly did you say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developed a good working</td>
<td>• Describe to me the manager who you had the best relationship. What made that</td>
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<tr>
<td>relationship with someone in order</td>
<td>relationship work well and what was your role in making it successful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>to create a network for the client.</td>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Give me an example of when you</td>
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<tr>
<td>diffused a tense situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tell me about a time when it was</td>
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<td>extremely important for you to voice</td>
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<td>your opinion with diplomacy and tact.</td>
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<td>that relationship work well and what</td>
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<tr>
<td>was your role in making it successful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork:</strong></td>
<td>• Being a member of a team can sometimes be challenging. Tell me about a team goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating as an effective</td>
<td>you had and walk me through the role you played in helping the team accomplish their</td>
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<tr>
<td>member of a team to move the group</td>
<td>objective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>forward toward accomplishing goals;</td>
<td>• Tell me about a time when you were responsible for completing a team project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>appropriately involves other people</td>
<td>Explain how you determined who would be responsible for each task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the team, shares important</td>
<td>• Give me an example of when you helped one of your teammates solve a problem or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and is personally</td>
<td>complete a task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>committed to the team.</td>
<td>• Describe a situation where you decided you needed to share something with your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being a member of a team can</td>
<td>team. What was it that you shared and why did you feel it was necessary to do so?</td>
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<tr>
<td>sometimes be challenging. Tell me</td>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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<tr>
<td>about a team goal you had and walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>me through the role you played in</td>
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<tr>
<td>helping the team accomplish their</td>
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<td>objective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tell me about a time when you were</td>
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<td>responsible for completing a team</td>
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<td>project. Explain how you determined</td>
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<td>who would be responsible for each</td>
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<td>task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Give me an example of when you</td>
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<td>helped one of your teammates solve</td>
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<td>a problem or complete a task.</td>
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<td>decided you needed to share something</td>
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<td>with your team. What was it that you</td>
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<td>shared and why did you feel it was</td>
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<tr>
<td>necessary to do so?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work Quality:</strong></td>
<td>• In your past positions, how did you define doing a good job? Did you do a good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting high standards of</td>
<td>job? How did you know?</td>
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<tr>
<td>performance; can be counted on to</td>
<td>• Walk me through the steps you take to set goals for yourself. Give me a specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>drive for outstanding results.</td>
<td>example of when you have done this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In your past positions, how did</td>
<td>• Describe a time when you were not satisfied with your performance? What action(s),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you define doing a good job? Did you</td>
<td>if any, did you take to improve performance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>do a good job? How did you know?</td>
<td>• What have you done to encourage peers to take responsibility for improving their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walk me through the steps you take</td>
<td>work standards? Can you give me a specific example of when you have done this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to set goals for yourself. Give me a</td>
<td>• We've all had situations where we missed a deadline. Tell me about a time this</td>
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<tr>
<td>specific example of when you have</td>
<td>happened to you. Why was the deadline missed? What did you do about it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>done this.</td>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe a time when you were not</td>
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<tr>
<td>satisfied with your performance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What action(s), if any, did you take</td>
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<tr>
<td>to improve performance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What have you done to encourage</td>
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<tr>
<td>peers to take responsibility for</td>
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<td>improving their work standards? Can</td>
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<tr>
<td>you give me a specific example of</td>
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<td>when you have done this?</td>
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<td>• We've all had situations where we</td>
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<td>the deadline missed? What did you do</td>
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<tr>
<td>about it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create your own question:</td>
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Step 2: Create an Interview Guide using Behavioral interviewing questions for the position.

An Interview Guide is a structured document to help you gather and record key information consistently in interviews. This guide consists of questions you will ask candidates that are specifically designed to determine if the person is a good fit for the position.

With properly planned questions, an Interview Guide allows you to focus on the candidate’s answers instead of trying to think about what question to ask next. Additionally, it will also ensure that you are asking the same questions of each candidate which is of utmost importance in comparing candidates.

You can structure your Interview Guide however works best for you, we have included a sample in the Hire the Best Toolkit to give you an idea of what one might look like. For a template in word of this interview guide, or to learn more about how to use it, contact our Practice Management Team and request it via e-mail at practicemanagement@hdvest.com.

Best Practice Tip:

If the candidate is going to be interviewing more than once, an Interview Guide is created for each interview. However, you can ask similar questions that refer to the same behaviors in one or more interviews if desired. For example, if being Client Centric is one the most important behaviors for your open position, you may want more than one interviewer to ask questions to determine the candidate’s abilities in this competency.

Interview Guides typically contain:

- Agenda for the interview.
- Question(s) to gain more knowledge about the candidate’s job history.
- Question(s) tied to key competencies needed for the position.
- Question(s) to gauge job fit.
- Question(s) to determine the candidate’s understanding and interest in the position.
Interview agenda

Remember, the candidate is not the only person trying to make a positive impression during an interview. You have to help people see that working for your company is something that they are interested in, too. To give the candidate the impression that you run a professional organization, you will want to create an agenda for the interview. This will also be helpful so that you don’t get off track and spend too little or too much time with one candidate. By creating an Interview Guide, you will establish an agenda and interview outline.

An interview should have a natural flow. Below is an example of an interview agenda/outline:

a. **Greet the candidate** – Engage in small talk to help him/her get comfortable. Let the person know that you will be taking notes throughout the interview to help you remember his/her responses.

b. **Explain the interview process** – Let the candidate know that you are going to briefly explain the job position and a little bit about the organization first. Then you will ask questions about the candidate’s prior experience and then you will ask a series of questions that you will be asking each person who interviews. Then at the end you will be taking any questions they may have.

c. **Briefly describe the position and organization** – You have probably explained this with the candidate on the phone interview, however it is important to give a brief description to make sure that they have an understanding of the requirements of the job before the interview.

d. **Transition to the background questions** – “We’re scheduled for 45 minutes today so I’d like to start by finding out more about your background and then will move to more specific questions that I will be asking every applicant. At the end of the interview, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.”

e. **Briefly review prior jobs and experiences** – Ask questions about prior positions: What they liked most about their job(s), what they liked least, why they left or are planning to leave. Pay attention to the types of things that motivate the candidate to determine their job fit.

f. **Transition to behavioral questions** – Explain to the candidate that you will be moving on to questions in which you are looking for specific situations they have encountered. Let them know that you are looking for real-life examples. “Let’s move to talking about some specific situations you’ve experienced in your career.”

g. **Using your Interview Guide, conduct an in-depth, probing interview** – Solicit specific detailed responses and probe when necessary. 📋

h. **Motivational fit appraisal and notes** – Throughout the interview, listen for likes and dislikes and compare those to what facets are available in the position to determine whether or not this candidate will be a good job fit. (See Step 4: Conduct the Interviews for more information about motivational fit.)

i. **Answer questions** – Let the candidate know that you have asked all of the questions you have and now if they have any questions that they would like to ask they may do so at this time.

j. **Explain next steps and close** – Thank them for their questions and let them know your next steps to identify your new employee. Once you have completed this, thank them for coming in to meet with you.

k. **Evaluate and assign ratings** – After the candidate has left, review the answers and assign competency ratings before moving onto something else. Waiting too long after the interview may cause you to forget some of the answers from the interview. (see Step 4: Conduct the Interviews for more information about evaluating and assigning ratings)
Step 3: Schedule Interviews.

Call each candidate with whom you would like to learn more about to set a time that is convenient for both. Remember, some of the best applicants may already be employed, so it is important to be flexible to arrange interviews during times that may be more discreet such as after-hours, at lunch time or on weekends.

Who should be a part of the interviews?

If possible, have a couple of interviews with the candidates whom you are seriously considering. Have your business partner interview the candidates, others within the office or even your spouse if he/she is closely involved in the business. Sometimes candidates are more open with certain personalities and you may find interesting information comes out in one interview that may be missed when someone else is interviewing the candidate. An important point to remember before allowing anyone else to interview the candidate is that they should be well versed on the interview process and what questions to ask and what questions to avoid.

Step 4: Conduct the interviews.

Now you should have decided who you are interviewing, what questions to ask during the interview and at this point it is time to identify some techniques to make sure you get the information you need during the interview. Following are some tips on how you can get the most out of your time with the candidate.

Have the candidate complete an application

As the candidate arrives for the interview, ask them to fill out an Application. If you don’t already have one, you can customize the sample we have included in the Hire the Best Toolkit. Please note that this sample gathers basic information about the candidate in addition to gaining permission to perform a background check.

Gather Behavioral Examples during an interview

Behavioral interviewing involves asking about specific situations that occurred, what action the person took, and what the result was. By asking applicants to describe situations in which they have actually demonstrated the desired behavior, you can better determine if they are competent in the key job qualifications. Try to get a “STAR” each time you ask the candidate a question:

Situation/Task Action Result

Best Practice Tip:

Still have questions about preparing for an interview? Contact our Practice Management Team at practicemanagement@hdvest.com to set up a time to discuss your particular situation!
ST = Situation or Task – Don’t allow the candidate to generalize by saying, “I usually...” or “I would...” Ask them to think about a specific task, interaction with client or instance in which they were in the situation you described. This may be hard for the candidate at first, but keep asking for specifics; otherwise you are getting a generalized answer that will not tell you about past performance. Document the situation and/or task in your notes so that you can remember the answer when you need to rate the candidate or compare notes with other interviewers.

A = Action – What was the action that the candidate took? Listen for the word “we” or “they” when candidates are answering this question as it may indicate that they are telling you about something someone else did, not directly influenced by the candidate. You may need to specifically drill-down if you aren’t getting enough information about the action they took with questions like, “What exactly did you say?” “What specifically was your role in this team effort?”

R = Result – What was the outcome of the situation? If I took an action to try to calm an angry client, which would have only resulted in the client becoming even more irate, it might not have been the best approach. Be careful when asking about the result that you don’t lead the candidate to a positive Result answer by saying something like: “Did your manager think you did a good job?” The answer to this is always yes; instead ask “Tell me what happened next?” or “What was the result of the action you took?”

Following is an example of how you might organize your notes in your Interview Guide to capture your examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Behaviors</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client Centric</strong></td>
<td>Tell me about a time when you found a new way to increase client satisfaction. What was your idea? What did you do? What was the result?</td>
<td>Situation/Task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listen for motivator clues to determine if it is a good fit.

If someone has the necessary skills to perform the duties of a job, there is one more factor to consider: motivation to do the job. Everyone is different; some people get a lot of personal satisfaction by completing detail oriented work consistently and accurately but have no interest in making phone calls to clients to set up appointments; while others have no interest in performing detailed work and primarily want client contact.

The truth is most people if they have the skills needed, can perform any job for a period of time. However, at some point if the motivation is not there, their battery will run out and they will be unsatisfied with the work they are performing. That’s why it is so important to make sure that you hire someone that is motivated by the activities that they will take part in on a daily basis in their position.

While initially you won’t probably ask specific questions in your interviews to determine motivators, listen for clues as you conduct the interviews of what motivates the person interviewing. For example, if you learn that someone is very motivated by the opportunity to travel and have an unlimited earning potential through commissions then a position as an assistant who will work exclusively in the office with no sales opportunities might not be a good fit. Or, alternatively, someone who wants the security of a base salary and isn’t interested in direct people contact is not probably a good fit for a position as a financial advisor.

After a few interviews, this becomes second nature to listen for the clues to what motivates an individual. Following is a very short list of motivators you might be listening for in your interviews.
This list is not all-inclusive, take a moment to identify any motivators from this list that will be key in the position for which you are hiring and add other motivators to the list that you think may be key to this job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Motivators</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center of attention</td>
<td>Challenging work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission earnings</td>
<td>Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job complexity</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast-paced work</td>
<td>Position/Status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Include a competency rating scale and be consistent.**

After a few interviews, it can be difficult to remember how well a candidate answered a particular question. By reviewing your data immediately after the interview, the comparison of candidates becomes much easier and more valid.

1. First, review your notes and look for complete STARS. Consider whether the examples should be categorized under the competency in which they were asked or if they fit better under a different behavior.

2. Evaluate your STARS. Think about whether the behavior is positive or ineffective for your open position. Then, think about the impact of the example. For example, making a decision about what art to hang in the office does not have as big of an impact as noticing an error that saved the company thousands of dollars.

3. Finally, rate each competency and determine if the candidate is hirable.

4. Following is a recommended rating system:
   
   5 = Significantly above expectations  
   4 = Above expectations  
   3 = Meets expectations  
   2 = Below expectations  
   1 = Significantly below expectations  
   N/A = No opportunity to rate
Questions to avoid

At all times during the interview process, you should be careful to only ask questions that are pertinent to finding the proper candidate for your job. Asking some questions, whether on a job application or an interview, can get you in hot water if they are discriminatory in nature. Questions asked during the interview should not pertain directly or indirectly to a person’s:

- Race.
- Color.
- Religion.
- National origin.
- Age.
- Marital status.
- Ancestry.
- Perceived or evident physical or mental disability.
- Medical condition.
- Pregnancy.
- Veteran status.
- Gender identity.
- Sexual orientation.
- Or any other status protected by federal, state or local laws.

There may be other areas that are either inappropriate or could be discriminatory. All questions asked should be job related. If you are unsure whether or not a question is acceptable, either don’t ask the question or consult with your attorney prior to asking the question.

Best Practice Tip:

The candidate is not the only person interviewing!

You are selling your business as much as the candidate is selling him/herself. It’s important to remember that there is a high likelihood that the best candidates for your job are already employed, and a good chance that they are happy at the company they work. So, it’s important not to forget that these interviews are as much a chance for you to sell the candidate on why they should work for you as it is for them to convince you that they are the right person for the job.

Although you don’t want to consciously over-sell the values of working for your company and the job, you want to make the best first impression. Prepare your office staff for the arrival of the interviews so that the candidates are warmly greeted (just like they would greet a client). Nothing can turn someone off more than arriving for an interview to a surprised staff member who is leery about why someone new is interviewing with you. Alert other employees that you shouldn’t be interrupted during the interview, tidy up the area you are interviewing in and put your best foot forward. This is an important decision; focusing on the candidate in front of you is of utmost importance.
Step 5: Select the best candidate for the position.

Meet with all interviewers to select top candidates.

Once interviews are completed, schedule a meeting with everyone who interviewed the candidates to compare the data you collected. This is an important process in which the candidates are evaluated using completed Interview Guide comments and scores.

This step will accomplish the following:

- Lead to increased accuracy – avoids the “I liked him or her” bias.
- Require consideration of all aspects of the interview before making a hiring decision.
- Keep interviewers motivated to do a thorough job because they know they have to back up their evaluation with behaviors.

The candidates with the highest scores are selected for final consideration such as reference/background checking or possibly even a final interview.

Make a hiring decision.

Once you’ve completed all interviews and have met with all interviewers to select the top candidates, it is time to make a decision! You may want to create a candidate comparison grid to assign an overall score for each top candidate and make a hiring decision. Following is an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Top Candidate 1</th>
<th>Top Candidate 2</th>
<th>Top Candidate 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Fit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Centric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Quality/Ethic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning &amp; Understanding the Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Rating</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this situation, if all behaviors were equally weighted, it appears to be a tie between Candidate 1 and Candidate 2. To make your decision, think about what behaviors are most critical to the job and look at those scores for each person. Analyze which behaviors would be more difficult to train and review those scores. For example, you can typically teach someone about the business fairly easily; however, it is very difficult to teach someone to take initiative. Finally, be honest with yourself about job fit. Many interviewers consider job fit to be the most important requirement. If you are having trouble deciding between two candidates who appear to be equally qualified, hiring the person who is the best fit is likely a good tie-breaker.
Hiring Candidates

STEPS FOR HIRING CANDIDATES

1. Verify employment and conduct reference checks.
2. Make the offer of employment.
3. Conduct criminal background checks.
4. Once background check is complete, contact applicant to inform of status and start date.
5. Notify eliminated candidates that the position is filled.
6. Meet with new hire on first day of employment and complete the new hire checklist.
7. Create job folder to house all applications and notes from the hiring process.
8. Send an announcement to clients to notify them of your new team member.
9. Set up regular meetings to check in with your employee regularly to see if they have questions, need training or support to do their job effectively.

Step 1: Verify employment and conduct reference checks.

You can do this yourself, or you can find a company that will conduct the employment and reference checks for you. If you choose to outsource this step to a vendor, follow their process. They will provide you with the appropriate waivers for the applicant.

You may decide to verify employment and complete reference checks on your own. If so, your application should give you permission to complete this task. If the application you are using does not give you permission to check references, consult your attorney. Once you have the candidate’s permission in writing, contact the applicant’s previous employers and complete the reference check by using the Reference Check Procedure form.

Step 2: Make the offer of employment.

1. Call the applicant to verbally offer the position. Ensure that you state the offer is “contingent on an acceptable background check”. Set a tentative start date (dependent upon successful completion of background check). In the event that the candidate should decline the offer, it is always best to have a #2 and #3 candidate just in case and you aren’t starting the interview process over.

2. Create an offer letter using the Offer Letter Template.

3. Mail the original offer letter to the applicant or ask the applicant to come to your office to sign the offer letter and complete appropriate background check authorization forms. Please note: you must obtain the applicant’s permission in writing to check their criminal background.
Step 3: Conduct criminal background checks.

We recommend conducting background/reference checks after the candidate accepts your offer. This will eliminate costs associated with completing background checks on applicants that you do not hire.

1. Determine which background check vendor you want to use. There are many different to choose from on the internet.

2. Follow the background check vendor’s process for conducting background checks. There should be a waiver that the applicant signs giving you permission to complete a background check. The background check vendor can help you determine the eligibility criteria.

Step 4: Once background check is complete, contact applicant to inform of status and confirm start date.

1. When you confirm the start date, remind your new hire to bring proper identification to work on his/her first day to complete the IRS Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification). If they will need any other information to complete other forms, remind them of that as well.

2. Announce to your staff that you have a new hire joining your organization and communicate the new hire’s start date.

Order any equipment and office supplies and then set up the new hire’s work area. Your investment in a new hire should equal significant long-term gains. You will want to ensure

3. Your employee feels welcome and that you are ready for him/her to begin working for your firm.

4. Order a fingerprint kit (if applicable). If your new hire will need access to HDVLink or is going to be handling checks and applications, you must submit fingerprints to the HD Vest home office. You may order a fingerprint kit from HD Vest’s Online Catalog, Item # HS12-711-3.

Step 5: Notify eliminated candidates that the position is filled.

See the Sample Rejection letter in the Hire the Best Toolkit.
Step 6: Meet with your new hire on their first day and complete the New Hire Checklist.

Start the working relationship off right by being prepared to spend some time with your new hire to complete important paperwork, introduce him or her to your phone system and technology and give the person a good sense of the culture of your firm.

- Introduce the new hire to the rest of your team.
- Complete any necessary paperwork. By law, you will need to complete an I9 to verify the person is eligible to work in the United States and a W-4 for tax withholding information. You will need to decide what other forms may be useful to you, such as, a form listing the new hire’s emergency contacts. Consult with your attorney for advice on other forms that may be required by law.
- Complete fingerprint kit and return to HD Vest (if applicable).
- Create a personnel file for the new hire and file the new hire’s original application and other paperwork.
- Provide the new hire information on their benefits and how to enroll, if applicable.
- Review pay dates and explain how they will be paid on their first paycheck.
- Review your vacation/sick policy and how to schedule time off.
- Provide a tour of the work facilities (lunchroom, restroom, copy machine, etc.) and nearby resources (bank, restaurants, parking, etc.).
- Review your phone/voice mail system.
- Provide key contacts list.
- Discuss emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Review your company policies and provide them a written copy for future reference. You should have an employee handbook containing all company policies and an acknowledgement form certifying that your employees understand the policies and agree to comply with them. Contact your attorney for advice.
- Review the job duties and explain your expectations regarding their performance.
- Explain the firm’s mission, vision and history and provide additional training as needed.
Step 7: Create a Job Folder.

Job folders must be created to maintain any paper records that document all candidates whom you considered for your open position for a period of 3 years. You should combine your candidate files and store them in your Job Folder. You should file the new hire’s application in their personnel file as earlier indicated in step 6. However, any notes you took during the process including the interview guide should be filed in the job folder with the rest of the candidates’ information. The folders should include, but not be limited to:

- Paper resumes
- Applications (except for your new hire)
- Written Interview Notes
- Evaluation Forms
- Test Scores
- Job Description
- Copies of job advertisements
- Emails or other written inquiries from job seekers

Note: See your local, state and the U.S. Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov) for more specific record retention requirements.

Step 8: Send an announcement to clients to notify them of your new team member.

It's very important to let your client know who has joined your team, sending an announcement, whether that is in e-mail or mail will remind clients that there is an entire firm full of people ready to serve them.

Step 9: Set up a regular meeting to check in with your employee regularly to see if they have questions, need training or support to do their job effectively.

Your responsibility doesn’t end on the date of hire. Just like the first years of a child’s life, the first year of a new hire’s career with your firm is critical to their future success and happiness. Set up weekly meetings to discuss their responsibilities and what training and development needs arise and you will set yourself up for a long-term, successful relationship. This is a step often missed by financial advisors and is critical to getting your new hire integrated into your practice.