

## *Overview of Behavioural Interviewing*

The main reason interviews are conducted is to select the best person for the job. By using *behavioural interviewing* as a tool to evaluate a candidate's past performance, we should be able to predict as accurately as possible whether the candidate can and will do the job successfully.

Many of us do not have a clear understanding of what a *behavioural interview* is and this lack of understanding causes us concern. It sounds complicated but in actual fact a *behavioural interview* is quite simple. Questions are formed based on the premise of:

**Past behaviour predicts future performance. Answers should be based on the principle of "the best predictor of future performance is past performance in similar circumstances".**

The *behaviour interviewing* system reaches beyond whether a person can do the job in order to determine whether a person will do a good job. If the question is answered correctly, the interview team should be able to visualize the way you handled a situation.

People are all different: they all have different capabilities and aptitudes. Even people with similar abilities have different preferences and behaviour patterns.

Many of us do not expect to be asked to talk so descriptively about our personal accomplishments and ourselves and we are, therefore, unprepared. In some areas, we have become so accustomed to being a team player and attributing successes to the team, that we have difficulty specifying the instances of "I did this". Thinking of experiences takes time and energy. The successful candidate in a *behavioural interview* will be the one who has reviewed, prepared and rehearsed.

Take time while preparing for your interview to review all the artifacts and evidence you collected while developing your portfolio. This information is based on your experiences and could form the basis for some of your interview responses. Remember to consider the OCDSB selection criteria while you are reviewing your experiences. Many of your well-constructed behavioural responses will cover more than one criterion. Therefore, as you become more experienced and practiced, you will select examples which cross over criteria.

Even if you are applying for the same position you are currently in, you should prepare for the interview in the same manner as you would if this position were a new position/experience.



## *Key Elements of a Behavioural Interview*

Behavioural responses to questions are characterized by specificity, events, names, numbers, dates, locations, times and responses.

*Behavioural interviews* summarizes what the interviewer sees and hears and is much more objective. This type of interview avoids subjectivity, gut reaction and regurgitation of memorized facts and jargon. (The latter are important, but will not be a sole predictor of job performance).

[Simplified example]

Q.1. What is your #1 human relations strength?

A.1 I am good with people

Q.2. Give me a specific example of angry parents you have had to deal with.

In April of last year, a parent confronted me in the school office because her daughter had lost a mitten and she claimed that her daughter came home with a cold hand. She was very angry and vocal....I calmed her down....showed empathy...and offered to look in our "lost and found box"...and there it was. I explained the process for "lost and found" and the parent apologized for her outburst and thanked me for my help.

The behavioural example as above must have sufficient detail to allow the interviewer, upon probing, to determine the reality of the response.

Key: Don't fabricate or embellish the answer.

Past behaviour is used to evaluate the presence of criteria which will predict future behaviour.

Example:

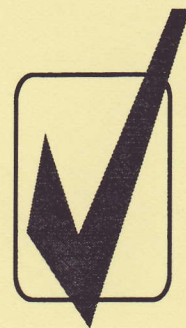
I am a team player.

In October, I was asked to participate on our school committee for The United Way....I helped to co-ordinate.....by.....and everyone had lots of fun. This was a great experience for me as well as it provided me with .... and we made \$ for United Way.

I am a good leader.

As the Office School Administrator, I delegate responsibilities to the office staff. For example, .....We have a short stand-up meeting every Monday morning to review the week's tasks and I also ask for their comments and feedback.....I make sure to thank the office staff for their help and support and to recognize their individual achievements. Employee morale appears to be high and the school is running smoothly.





## *Tips as you prepare for the Interview*

### Tips

- Keep your responses tight and well rehearsed.
- Be clear on the questions, if you are not sure, clarify and take time to reflect...use silent pauses.
- Use current examples in your responses.
- Be specific.
- Be honest. The follow-up questions will validate your honesty.
- Be reflective.
- Turn regular questions into behaviour responses.
- Keep your closing tight and well rehearsed.
- Refer to the job posting for required skills and abilities.
- Provide examples from your experiences to validate these skills and abilities.

## BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW PREPARATION (Information Gathering)

- Review the six OCDSB Selection Criteria [Organizational & Management Skills, Communication, Interpersonal Skills, Knowledge & Practice, Professional Growth and Contribution to System/Department/School] and the indicators noted for each category.
- Develop a list of examples to use in a Behavioural Interview.
- A Sample template is displayed below. Feel free to develop your own method, however you should ensure the following information is included:
  - 17 Date
  - 18 Event/Example
  - 19 Detailed description of the event which reflects evidence of the indicators
  - 20 Criteria (Skill)/Indicator(s)

[illegible]