Behavioral Interviewing for Managers and Candidates
How to hire the best person for the job, and how to demonstrate you're the one!

CITY OF MADISON HUMAN RESOURCES

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By the end of this session….

- Define Behavioral Interviewing (BI)
- Know how to create/answer questions of this type
- Interview prep for manager and candidate
- The basic interview structure
- Common mistakes managers and applicants make
- Personal biases

But first…Interviewing Snafus!

- http://www.tubechop.com/watch/4107971

Definition and Purpose of BI

- Questions designed to get specific information on how a candidate handled or reacted to situations in the past

- Based on the premise that past behaviors is the best predictor of future behavior

- The key to successful behavioral interviewing questions are driven by the ability to identify essential competencies (ability or skill) needed to perform the job

Behavioral Interviewing
What are Core Competencies?

Identify the core competencies needed to succeed in the vacancy by looking at the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA's) in the position description and job posting.

Some examples:

- Technical Skills, Analytical Skills
- Organizational Skills, Managerial Skills
- Communication/Presentation Skills
- Interpersonal Relations, Problem Solving

Behavioral Interviewing Developing the Questions

- Once key competencies are identified, they should be translated into interview questions that will require candidates to respond by drawing on previous experiences.

  Example: Someone in this position must have good organizational skills, as this position demands the ability to multi-task and prioritize multiple projects while managing constant interruptions.

  - Sample Question: *"Are you comfortable managing multiple projects, with competing priorities and deadlines?"*

  - Sample BEHAVIORAL Question: *"Tell us about a time when you were responsible for managing multiple projects... How did you stay organized and prioritize work in order to meet deadlines?"*

"Engagement" as a Core Competency for all positions

☐ The City of Madison is dedicated to increasing engagement levels throughout all City departments and positions.

☐ Consider engagement building as a core competency for all positions

Sample question:

"Tell us about a time that had to actively engage employees around...

How did you do it?

Behavioral Interviewing
What is your Strategy?

- Starts with a clear understanding of the job and what an individual must HAVE, DO, and NEED TO KNOW, to perform the job successfully.

- Establish clear criteria/benchmarks to help evaluate and assess candidate responses with the previously established core competencies associated with the job.

Behavioral Interviewing

The "STAR" approach:

- ❑ Situation
- ❑ Tasks
- ❑ Actions
- ❑ Results

Interview panel members should be able to identify potentially successful candidates by getting candidates to identify specific "Situations" which required them to complete specific "Tasks." Panel members are then able to evaluate candidates based on the "Actions" they took, and the "Results" of those actions.

Behavioral Interviewing Developing the Questions

Mix/be prepared for – both behavioral interview questions *and* technical questions.

Example: Candidate needs experience with CADD software.

Sample Question: *"Please describe your experience with CADD software, including years you've been using the software."*

Sample BEHAVIORAL Question: *"Please describe your experience using CADD software, including years you've been using the software. Also, please tell us about a specific CADD related project that you found to be challenging... how did you overcome challenges? Project outcome?"*

Behavioral Interviewing
Preparing for the Questions–Candidate

□ Review the job posting and identify key skills needed to succeed in the position

□ Common competencies needed in many positions:
  ▪ Strong communication
  ▪ Interpersonal
  ▪ Organizational
  ▪ Employee engagement
  ▪ Multi-cultural awareness

□ Practice your responses related to identified competencies using the STAR approach, (identify the Situation in your past, explain the Task assigned to you, the Actions you took and explain the Result!)

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Available on the City website we have two helpful documents for Managers and for Applicants that give sample behavioral interview questions by competency and much more:

- Go to www.cityofmadison.com/hr:

  - A Manager's Guide to Interviews and Background Checks
  - Navigating the City of Madison Hiring Process

Time for an Exercise!

Yes or No:

Is this a behavioral question, why or why not?

- **What is your dream job?**
  - **No, this is a general question.**

- **In this position, you will be working independently. How would you develop relationships with your coworkers in such a setting?**
  - **No, this is a hypothetical question.**

- **Tell us about a time when you had multiple priorities and deadlines to meet and how you were able to complete those.**
  - **Yes, this focuses on past performance.**

Putting it into Practice

Yes or No:

Is this a behavioral question, why or why not?

- ☐ **What is your experience in using CADD software?**
- **Yes, this question focuses on actual experience.**
- ☐ **Describe a situation when a Manager should not involve their staff in a decision.**
- **No, this is a hypothetical question.**
- ☐ **What are your three top strengths? Why?**
- **No, this is a general question although you could ask the candidate to elaborate on how they have used their strengths in the past to get a job done.**

Before the Interview
Review that Application/Resume

Candidates:

Be thorough on your application and resume and be prepared to answer questions about past employment history. Review the knowledge skills and abilities section of the job posting.

Managers:

- Use follow-up questions consistently
- Review applications/resumes and don't be afraid to ask specific questions regarding:
  - Lapses in employment?
  - Questionable reasons for leaving?
  - Resignations in lieu of termination?

Interviewing Vets

☐ Military serving applicants: Please explain your role in a clear way and explain your individual contribution to the project

☐ If a veteran is using military jargon or acronyms that are unfamiliar, it is OK to ask clarifying questions.

☐ "We vs. I" Don't hesitate to ask applicants of their specific roles on teams or projects. Veterans tend to talk from a team orientation so you may have to dig deeper to get at a person's specific role on a project.

Avoiding Danger

The dangers involved in asking candidates inappropriate questions can usually be avoided by applying these two tests:

1. *Is this information necessary to assess the candidate's competence for the performance of this particular job?*

2. *Does this question tend to have a disproportionate effect in screening out members related to race, gender, age, veterans status, or people with disabilities?*

Before the Interview
Special note on Documentation

- Watch what you record!

- Watch what you don't record!

- Keep records of interviews for 3 years.

Interviewing
The Basic Principles

"If you fail to plan, plan to fail"

Key components of an effective Interview Process:

- Providing a thorough and friendly introduction;

- Asking behavioral interview questions;

- Being prepared to respond to candidate questions;

- Closing the interview in a courteous way.

The Interview Structure

Step 1: The Opening

Step 2: Information Gathering

Step 3: Information Giving

Step 4: Conclusion
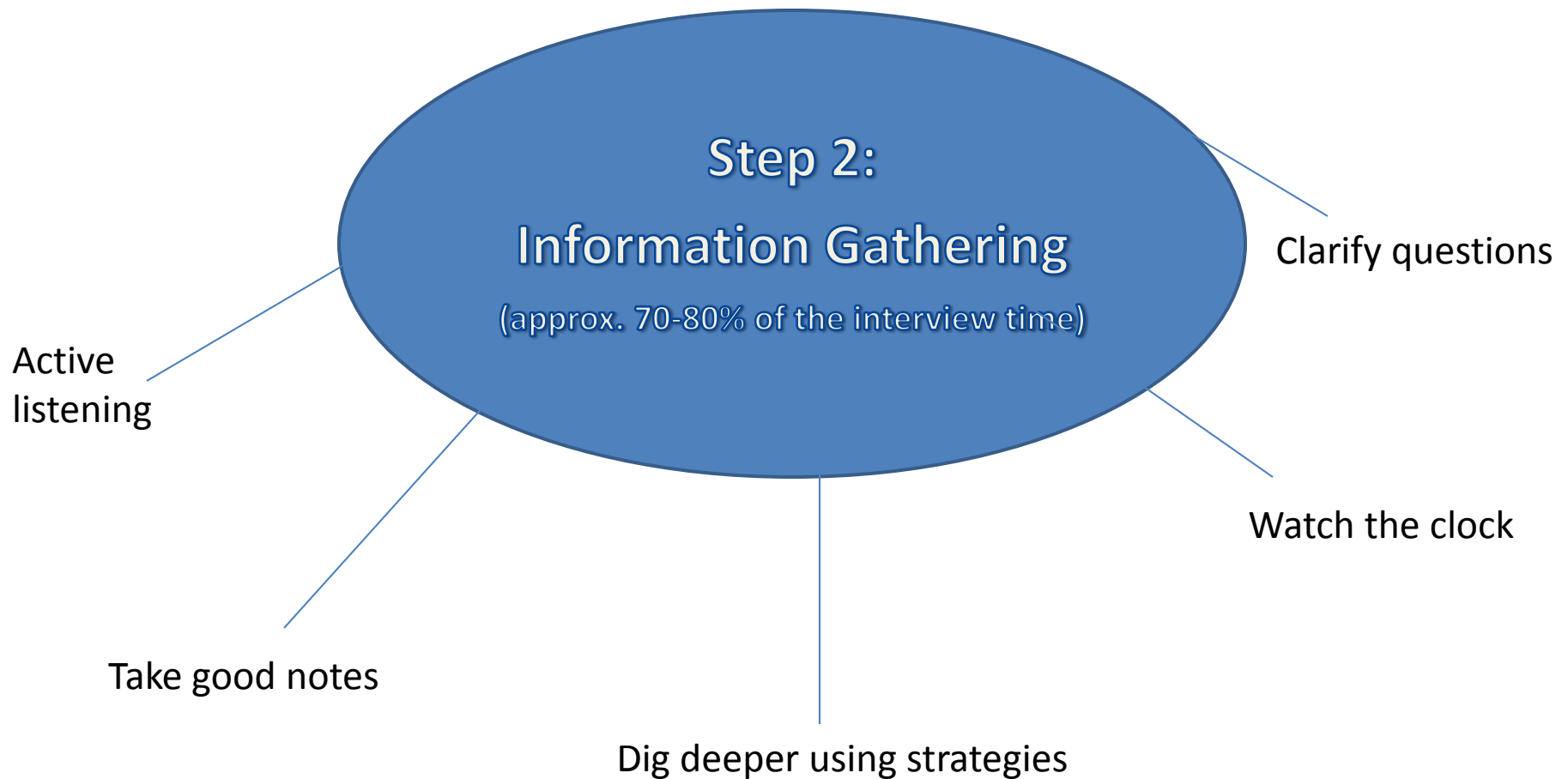
Interview Structure

Step 1:

The Opening

(approx. 5% of total interview time)
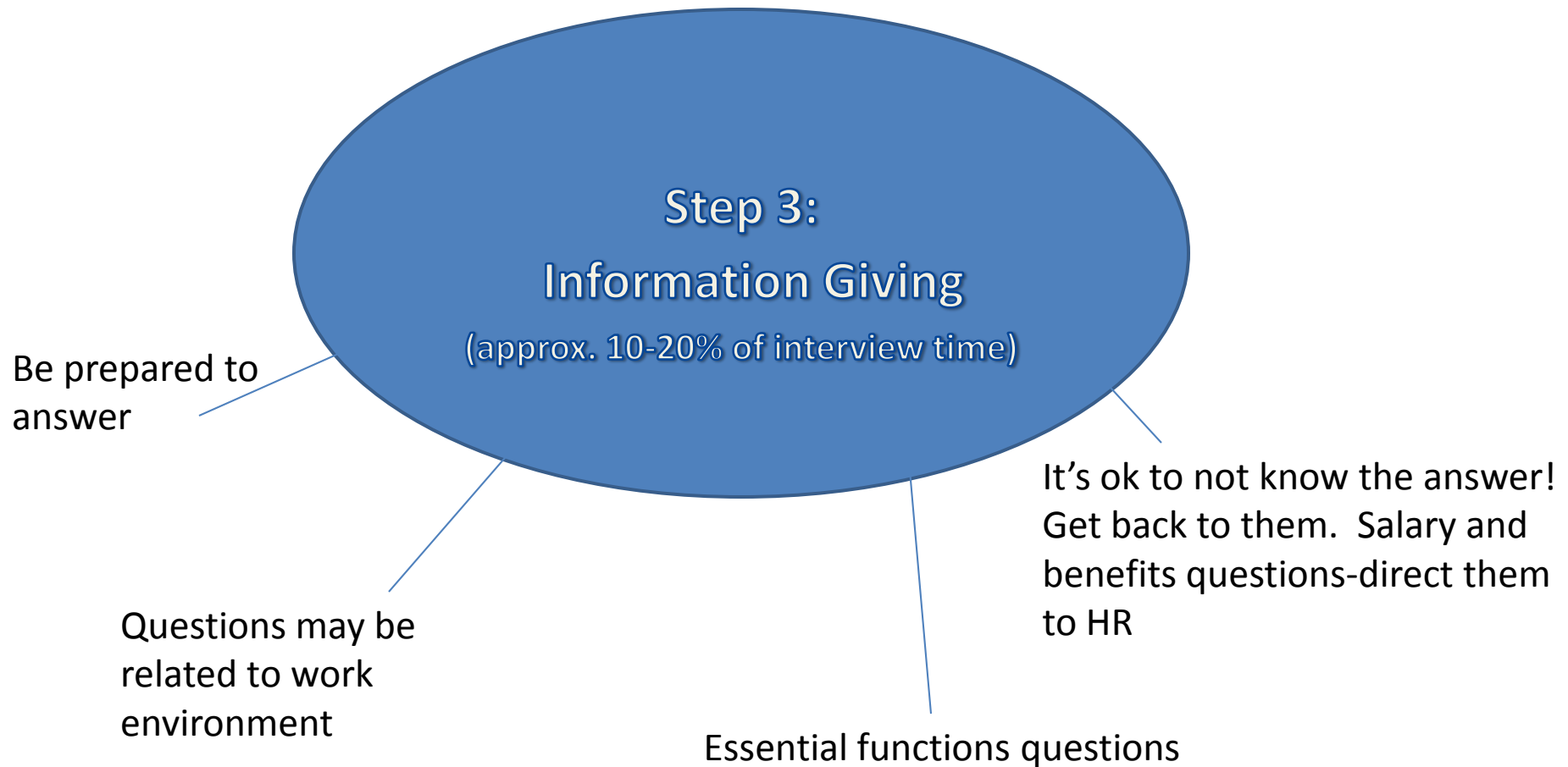
Allow candidates to review interview questions prior?

Talk about the department/position/ organization briefly

Be friendly! Give proper panel introductions

Interview Structure

Step 2:

Information Gathering

(approx. 70-80% of the interview time)

Clarify questions

Active listening

Watch the clock

Take good notes

Dig deeper using strategies

Interview Structure

Step 3:

Information Giving

(approx. 10-20% of interview time)

Be prepared to answer

Questions may be related to work environment

Essential functions questions

It's ok to not know the answer! Get back to them. Salary and benefits questions-direct them to HR

Interview Structure

Step 4:

Conclusion

(approx. 5% of the interview time)

Keep enthusiasm going

Next steps? Explain those.

Any needed materials from candidate?

Common Mistakes Applicants make during the Interview

- Poor preparation
  - Knowledge of competencies
  - Rehearsing interviews
- Failure to listen
  - Jumping to conclusions
- Failure to answer all of the components of the question
- Clock mismanagement

Common Mistakes Managers make during the Interview

- Failure to Listen
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Asking "leading" Questions
- Lack of Defined Standards
- Making Early Decisions
- Irrelevant Information
- Personal Biases

Personal Biases of the Interviewer

Most of us like to believe that we're unbiased, but if we're truly being honest with ourselves, we'll have to admit to certain prejudices and biases that may have the potential to influence and affect our judgment.

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Common Personal Biases

Halo Error: The tendency to let a global or overall impression or a single strong characteristic of the candidate influence all judgments or observations about him or her.

Assumed Relationship Between Characteristics: The tendency to assume that candidates with characteristic "A," must also have characteristic "B."

Leniency/Severity: The tendency to be a "hard" or "easy" interviewer. This results in consistently giving ratings that are higher or lower than warranted to ALL candidates.

Central Tendency: The tendency to avoid extreme evaluations and to give average or middle-of-the-scale evaluations to all candidates.

Attractiveness Bias: This is the tendency to give more favorable evaluations to candidates who are physically more attractive.

Common Personal Biases Cont.

Contrast Effect: The tendency to let the quality of other candidate(s) influence the judgments about a present candidate under evaluation. This can be problematic when previous candidates are very good or very poor.

First/Last Effect: The tendency to be overly influenced by information about a candidate that occurred very early or very late in the interview.

"Similar to Me" Error: The tendency that interviewers may give more favorable evaluations to candidates who are, in some way, similar to themselves.

Overemphasis on Unfavorable Information: This is the tendency to place too much weight on unfavorable information when arriving to a final decision.

Putting it into Place

- What did we learn and why does it matter?

- What will you practice?

- Questions?

- Need additional assistance?
  - Contact Human Resources
  - 608-266-4615

Questions?

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