Infopeople Webcast Series:
Strengthening the Library Workforce:
Finding, Keeping, and Developing Great Employees

Interviewing Techniques for Libraries
An Infopeople Webcast

January 30, 2006
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.

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Agenda
- Interviewing Fundamentals
- Perils of Poor Interviewing
- Three Types of Interviews
- Basic Interviewing Skills
- Do’s and Don’ts
Today’s Webcast

- Presenter Live on Chat
- Pre-recorded presentation: 50 minutes
- Q&A via Chat anytime throughout presentation
- Type questions in the Chat box in lower left corner of the webcast window – hit “Enter” to send

Webcast Archives: http://infopeople.org/training/webcasts/archived.php

When to Use Chat

- Get help with technical difficulties
  - send message to “HorizonHelp”
- Ask presenter questions
  - send message to “ALL”
- Chat with other participants
  - “select name from dropdown list”

Interviewing Fundamentals

“Interviewing is a selection procedure designed to predict future job performance on the basis of an applicant’s responses to oral inquiries.”
**Perils of Poor Interviewing**

- Bad job fit and eventual firing
- Compounding turnover
- Loss of productivity
- Lowering morale
- Costs to recruit again
- Costs to train

**Select Wisely**

- Matching process
- Develop pool of interviewees
- Outcome is best fit to:
  - Organizational values
  - Job objectives
  - Job specifications
  - Competencies
  - Library culture
  - Proven record of performance

**Preparation**

1. Conduct job and organization analyses to identify knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs)
2. Evaluate and clarify job duties
3. Develop job specific questions
4. Develop range of answers
5. Select interview process 1:1, panel, sequential
Exercise: CCPL  gailg@carr.org

Exercise to develop a job description, interview questions, and interview score sheet
1. Large group activity—develop job description by asking what are the essential functions
2. Small groups to develop 3 good interview questions based on the essential functions
3. Large group to pull together questions and do a score sheet, weighting answers to each question based on their relative importance to the job

Three Useful Types of Interviews

- Structured
- Performance-based
- Behavioral

Structured Interview... Ask about

1. Job Interest
2. Current Work Status
3. Work Experience
4. Educational Background
5. Self Assessment
Best Uses of Structured Interview

- Time to interview is limited
- Position is structured
- Large candidate pool

Performance Based Interview (Adler)

Accomplishments

Distinguishes
- Ideal candidates v. ideal employees
- Strong presentation skills v. actual work performance

“The Best Question” for Performance Based Interviews

Describe a major project or accomplishment in depth
- When
- Where
- Why
- How
- Who
Performance-Based Interviews:

- Peel the onion: scope and impact
- Look for team & individual accomplishments
- Assesses potential and job fit
- Compares what the person has accomplished with your library’s needs

Best Uses of Performance-Based Interviews

- Skills of interview team strong to tease out actual accomplishments
- Library seeks talented employees, not talented interviewees

More INFO: Lou Adler, Hire with your Head (2002)

Behavioral Interview

- Critical behaviors contribute to job success
- Candidate asked to describe specific situations in past jobs that demonstrate these key behaviors
- You assess the success of those key behaviors and how they match to the job
Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you set a goal and were able to meet/achieve/exceed it.

Best Uses of Behavioral Interview

- When looking for specific behaviors tied to library KSAs
- When have time and resources to develop good behavioral questions based on job and organizational analysis

Examples of Behavioral Interviews:

Basic Performance Competencies:
1. Provide Excellent Service
2. Demonstrate Ethical Behavior
3. Build & Maintain Effective Relationships
4. Model Self Management
5. Utilize Technology

Solano County Public Library
Excellent Service:
Here are Sample Questions

1. How do you know if your customers are satisfied? Please give a specific example.
2. Please describe a situation when you didn’t have enough time to completely satisfy a particular customer. How did you handle the situation?
3. How have you handled a difficult customer interaction? [dissatisfied/irate customer]
4. What do you think your customers would say about your work?

Look for person’s ability to:

- Meet needs
- Address concerns
- React with respect
- Listen
- Let vent
- Identify
- Solve the problem
- Follow-up

For more questions:
Bonnie Katz, Assistant Director of Library Services
(bkatz@snap.lib.ca.us).

Excellent customer service

1. What means in YOUR library?
2. Gather and compile info
3. How measure?
4. Rate 1-5 and why
5. Recommendation for hire or not hire, and why
Adaptable/Flexible:
Here Are Sample Questions

1. How have you adjusted to changes over which you had no control? Please give a specific example.
2. Describe an occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
3. What have you done to meet the challenge of working with a person from a different background or culture? (What happened? What did you do? What was the result?)

Look for person’s ability to

- Cooperate and negotiate
- Handle range of tasks
- Respond to changes in direction and priorities
- Accept new challenges, responsibilities, assignments & ideas

Basic Interviewing Skills

**DO**

- Prepare!!
- Rapport
- Listen carefully
- Nonverbals
- Take notes
- Summarize and preview next steps
- Get back to candidates
Red Flags

- Insufficient education and/or experience
- Gaps in employment history
- Frequent job changes ... but in consideration of today’s realities 😊
- Jobs with less responsibility and authority
- Blanks on application
- References – none, just personal, old

Sample questions that may be asked:

- Do you have relatives employed at the library?
- Do you have the legal right to be employed in the USA?
- Are you over 18?
- Can you perform the essential job-related functions?
- What is your academic, vocational or professional education?
- Have you been convicted of a felony?
- Can you provide us with job references?

Ask

GO!

- Are you able to work off-hours?
- Are you able to report to our branches?
- Are you legally authorized to work in the US?
- Are you a high school graduate?
- Are you over age 18?

Can’t Ask

STOP!

- Do you have any children?
- Do you drive a car?
- What country are you from?
- What year did you graduate high school?
- How old are you?
Questions You Cannot Ask:
- Number of children
- Marital status
- Race
- Nationality
- Religious affiliation
- Date of birth/age
- Date of high school graduation
- Past medical problems
- Pregnant or planning to be pregnant
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic association of surname
- Do you have a disability? Nature of disability
- Number or kinds of arrests
- Veteran status
- For more info: www.dol.gov and www.eeoc.gov

Interviewing Do’s and Don’ts:

**DO**
- Evaluate the job and the setting to understand all the knowledge, skills and abilities needed
- Assess the behaviors that promote success in that job
- Use this information to frame your interview process and questions
- Use a systematic approach to evaluating each interviewee with the same standards

**Interviewing Don’ts!!**
- Stereotyping
- Inconsistency in questioning
- Snap judgment
- Negative emphasis
- Halo/horn effect
- Nonverbal bias
- Contrast effect
- Telegraphing answers
- Playing DA or psychologist
Some Tips....

1. Hire for talent, skill & fit
2. Describe the job honestly
3. Hire as a team
4. Listen in the first interview; talk in the second
5. Focus the interview on KSAs & competencies
6. Avoid hiring from a field of one
7. Review performance expectations
8. And keep your mind open....

THANK YOU!

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