



LESSON 1

ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED INTERVIEWING: UNCOVERING A PATTERN OF SUCCESS

Introduction: Beyond Responsibilities

A resume can tell you what a candidate was responsible for, but it doesn't tell you what they actually accomplished. Achievement-oriented interviewing is a specialized technique designed to shift the focus from a candidate's duties to their results. It is based on the premise that the best predictor of future achievement is a consistent pattern of past achievement. This approach is particularly effective for sales, leadership, and other roles where results are paramount.

The Core Principle: A History of Accomplishment

The goal of achievement-oriented interviewing is to uncover a candidate's track record of success. You want to see a consistent pattern of setting and exceeding goals, of taking initiative, and of making a tangible impact in their previous roles.

How to Conduct an Achievement-Oriented Interview

Step 1: Start with the Resume

Go through the candidate's resume, one job at a time, and for each position, ask the following question:

- "What were your three most significant accomplishments in this role?"

Step 2: Probe for the Details

For each accomplishment, use the SOAR method to dig deeper and to understand the full story behind the achievement.

- **Situation:** “What was the situation at the company when you started in that role?”
- **Obstacle:** “What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome to achieve that result?”
- **Action:** “What specific steps did you take to make that happen?”
- **Result:** “How did you measure the success of that achievement? What was the impact on the business?”

Step 3: Look for a Consistent Pattern

As you go through the candidate’s work history, you are looking for a consistent pattern of achievement. Do they have a history of exceeding expectations? Do they take initiative to solve problems and create new opportunities? Or are they simply someone who shows up and does the bare minimum?

Examples of Achievement-Oriented Questions

- “Tell me about a time when you exceeded your goals. How did you do it?”
- “Describe an accomplishment that you are particularly proud of. What was it, and why was it so significant?”
- “Walk me through a time when you took initiative to solve a problem that others had overlooked.”
- “Tell me about a time when you made a significant contribution to the success of your team or your company.”

Activity: The Accomplishment Inventory

Take a few minutes to reflect on your own career. For your current role and your previous role, identify your top three most significant accomplishments. For one of those accomplishments, write out a full SOAR story.

This exercise will not only help you to understand the achievement-oriented approach from the candidate’s perspective, but it will also be a valuable tool for your own career development.