



LESSON 1

CASE STUDY INTRODUCTION & ANALYSIS

Introduction: Putting It All Together

Throughout the initial Modules of this course, we have covered a wide range of topics, from the history of interviewing to the fundamentals of job analysis, sourcing, screening, and asking the right questions. Now, it's time to put it all together. The “Diana Jones” case study is a comprehensive, real-world scenario that will challenge you to apply the concepts and skills you have learned today in a practical context.

This case study is designed to be a collaborative learning experience. You will work in small groups to analyze the case, discuss the challenges, and develop a plan of action. This is your opportunity to learn from each other, to debate different approaches, and to come to a collective decision, just as you would in a real-life hiring situation.

The Case: The Search for a New Front Office Manager

The Situation:

You are the General Manager of a 200-room, mid-range, business-class hotel. Your long-time Front Office Manager, who was with the hotel for over 15 years, has just retired. The hotel has a solid reputation, but it is starting to feel a bit dated, and you are facing increasing competition from a new, trendy boutique hotel that just opened down the street. You know that this is a critical hire. The new Front Office Manager will not only need to be a strong operational leader, but they will also need to bring fresh ideas and a new energy to the front desk team.

The Job:

The Front Office Manager is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the front office operation, including the front desk, reservations, and guest services. They manage a team of 10 front desk agents and 2 guest service representatives. The key responsibilities of the role include:

- Ensuring a consistently high level of guest service.
- Managing the department's budget and controlling labor costs.
- Training, coaching, and developing the front office team.
- Resolving guest complaints and service recovery.
- Working with the sales and marketing team to drive revenue and occupancy.

The Candidates:

After a thorough sourcing and screening process, you have narrowed it down to two final candidates: Diana Jones and another candidate (we will call him John Smith for the purpose of this exercise). You have just completed the final round of interviews, and now you need to make a decision.

Diana Jones: The Internal Candidate

Diana is your current Assistant Front Office Manager. She has been with the hotel for five years, starting as a front desk agent and working her way up. She is a loyal and dedicated employee who is well-liked by the team. She knows the hotel's systems and procedures inside and out. In her interview, she expressed a strong desire for the role and talked about her commitment to the hotel and its success. However, you have some concerns. Diana is very traditional in her approach and has sometimes been resistant to change. When you asked her about her ideas for competing with the new boutique hotel, her answers were a bit vague. You also have some concerns about her ability to step up and lead a team of her former peers.

John Smith: The External Candidate

John is currently the Front Office Manager at a smaller, more modern hotel in a different city. He has a degree in hospitality management and has been in the industry for eight years. In his interview, he was full of fresh ideas for how to improve the guest experience, leverage technology, and compete with the new boutique hotel. He was energetic, articulate, and seemed to be a natural leader. However, he has no experience in your local market, and he has a history of changing jobs every two to three years. You are also concerned that his modern, fast-paced style might not be a good fit for your hotel's more traditional culture and long-tenured team.

Your Task: The Analysis

Working in your small groups, your task is to analyze this case and prepare to make a hiring decision. Use the concepts and frameworks we have discussed today to guide your analysis.

Here are some questions to consider:

- ① **Job Analysis:** What are the most critical skills and competencies for this role? Go beyond the job description and think about the specific challenges and opportunities the new manager will face.
- ② **Candidate Assessment:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate? Use the Hiring Factors Pyramid to assess them on all three levels (Appearance/Resume, Skills/Experience, and Behavioral Traits).
- ③ **Interviewing:** What additional questions would you have asked each candidate to get more information and address your concerns?
- ④ **Bias Awareness:** What unconscious biases might be at play in this decision (e.g., “similar to me” bias, halo/horn effect)?
- ⑤ **The Decision:** Who would you hire, and why? Be prepared to defend your decision with specific, evidence-based arguments.

