



LESSON 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

Introduction: The Gold Standard of Interviewing

Welcome to Day 2! Today, we are going to take a deep dive into the heart of modern, effective interviewing: the behavioral interview. As we discussed on Day 1, the single best predictor of future performance is past behavior. The behavioral interview is a structured and systematic approach designed to uncover a candidate's past behavior in specific, job-relevant situations. It is the gold standard of interviewing, and mastering this technique will fundamentally transform the quality of your hiring decisions.

The Core Principle: Past Behavior Predicts Future Performance

The traditional approach to interviewing often relies on hypothetical questions like, “How would you handle a difficult customer?” The problem with these questions is that they invite hypothetical, idealized answers. A candidate can tell you what they think you want to hear, but it gives you no real insight into what they would actually do.

The behavioral interview, on the other hand, is based on a simple but powerful premise: the most accurate way to predict how a person will behave in the future is to find out how they have behaved in the past. Instead of asking hypothetical questions, you will ask for specific, real-world examples from their past experience.

- **Traditional Question:** “Are you a team player?” (This invites a simple “yes” or “no” answer.)
- **Behavioral Question:** “Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult colleague to achieve a common goal.” (This requires the candidate to provide a specific, detailed example.)

The Three Key Differences of a Behavioral Interview

- ① **It is Structured and Systematic:** A behavioral interview is not a casual conversation. It is a structured process where you ask each candidate the same set of pre-determined, job-relevant questions. This ensures a fair and consistent evaluation.
- ② **It is Based on Past Behavior, Not Future Promises:** It focuses on what the candidate has actually done, not on what they say they would do.
- ③ **It Requires Specific, Detailed Examples:** It pushes candidates beyond vague generalities and requires them to provide specific, detailed stories that demonstrate their skills and competencies.

The Benefits of Behavioral Interviewing

- **Higher Predictive Accuracy:** As we learned on Day 1, behavioral interviews are significantly more accurate at predicting job success than traditional interviews (85% vs. 25%).
- **Reduced Bias:** By focusing on objective, behavioral evidence, this technique helps to reduce the impact of unconscious bias and “gut feeling.”
- **A More In-Depth Assessment:** It provides a much richer and more detailed picture of a candidate’s skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- **A Better Candidate Experience:** Candidates appreciate the opportunity to share their real-world experiences and to have a more in-depth and substantive conversation.

Activity: The Hypothetical vs. Behavioral Challenge

Working in a small group, take the following traditional, hypothetical interview questions and transform them into powerful, behavioral interview questions.

“Are you good at multitasking?”

“How do you handle stress?”

“Are you a creative problem-solver?”

“Do you have good attention to detail?”

Share your transformed questions with the larger group and discuss why the behavioral versions are more effective.