

## Next Generation Recruiting: *Competency-based Behavioral Interviewing*

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## Agenda

- Trends and implications
- From competencies to selection criteria
- Competency-based behavioral interviewing
- Developing competency-based questions and interview protocols
- Benefits for OCI and lateral hiring
- Getting "buy-in"
- Implementation and best practices

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## Trends/Implications

- Decrease in associate hiring
- A focus on "on-track" talent and retention
- Recruitment of laterals to fill gaps
- Need for new models for talent development
- Need for new metrics to measure attorney performance
- Majority of firms moving to or considering competency models

Maraden, et. al. "Training and Education: Leaders in the Making"  
March 24, 2010, Legalnews

NALP Foundation/PDC study, June 2009

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## Limited Hiring Demands Strategic Recruiting

Linking competencies to behavioral interviewing ensures that . . .

- The firm selects the right candidates
- Info gathered is informative as well as illustrative
- Those hired have greatest potential for success
- The firm has best chance to maximize ROI



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## Competency-based Approach

Understand what drives success in your firm

- Behaviors
- Traits
- Skills
- Approaches
- Distill into behavioral performance factors

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## From Performance Factor to Hiring Criteria

### Work Ethic

Meet or exceed utilization goals; reach out for new assignments as others are completed; put forth the level of effort necessary to produce an optimal product and satisfy the demands of supervising attorney.

Demonstrate a willingness to do what is necessary to satisfy the client and the demands of the matter; take the initiative to keep busy and manage goals for billable hours; commit the time needed to produce the best result for the client.

Act as a role model for juniors and team members by putting forth the highest level of effort on every matter; manage your caseload efficiently; assist more junior associates in understanding productivity expectations and managing workloads.

### Work Ethic

*Has work experience; shows evidence of putting superior effort into academic work; exhibits initiative in level of involvement in school and other activities; has juggled multiple tasks effectively; pursued a more difficult course schedule.*

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## Competency-based Behavioral Interviewing

### CBBI



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## The Case for CBBI

- Structured process – not a “*Friend Tryout*”
  - Provides greater objectivity
    - Does the candidate have what it takes to be successful in this position/in this firm?
    - What is the level of the candidate’s competency?
    - How has this candidate behaved in the past?
  - The firm gets evidence of the individual’s ability to draw from his/her competencies related to the position

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## Why Effective?

- Validity
  - Research shows that CBBI is three to five times more likely to predict potential success\*
- Based on the premise that past performance is the best predictor of future success
- Develops rapport
- Questions are based on real situations
  - Focus on actual current and past behaviors
  - Candidate’s responses are honest and more authentic

\*Victoria Hoemeyer, High-Impact Interview Questions

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## Preparing to Interview



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## Behavioral Questions

Objective: understand how candidates *behaved* in a certain situation

- Challenge them to:
  - Compare things
  - Break something down into parts (ex: thought process)
  - Show how one action led to the next
  - Apply logic to a decision-making process
  - Identify central issues

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## OCI Question Comparison

- | Typical   | CBBI   |
|---|--|
| • Analytical Ability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ "Would you say you have good analytical skills, and why?"</li></ul> | • Analytical Ability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ "What factors did you consider when you were deciding if law school was the right choice?"</li></ul>           |
| • Work Ethic <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ "What can you tell me about your work ethic?"</li></ul>                      | • Work Ethic <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ "How effective was your plan to prepare for end-of-year exams last spring and what would you do differently?"</li></ul> |

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## Lateral Question Comparison

### Typical

- "Tell us about your practice."
- "Did you cross-sell with other partners?"

### Behavioral

- "What steps did you follow to build your practice?"
- "Give us an example of a successful cross-selling experience you had."

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## A CBBI Interview Plan

- Set priority competencies to uncover
  - Based on resume review, what you value most
    - Example: analytical thinking, work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit
- Plan 3 to 5 questions directed to those competencies
- Pursue a mix of traditional and behavioral questions

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## Using a Competency-based Evaluation Approach



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## ST-A-R Response



- Situation or Task
  - Scenario
- Action
  - Role of the interviewee and behaviors employed in the situation
- Results
  - What was the end result and the benefit of the interviewee's actions/behaviors

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### What Factors Drove Your Decision to Attend Law School?

<p><b>Typical Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>"I was a political science major and it seemed like a logical progression. I liked my pre-law class."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Better Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "I researched a number of different careers and learned a lot about the law. It was clear that writing, critical thinking, and analysis were skills lawyers use every day and my college experience has shown me that these are particular strengths of mine. To learn more, I did some informational interviews with lawyers who practiced in a firm and in-house. What I learned confirmed my decision to pursue law."</li> </ul>
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## Sample Evaluation Form

**Ownership**  
Describe the extent to which you observed evidence of a willingness and ability to take ownership of projects and his/her career path. Specific behaviors/experiences to note:

	Yes	No	Not Known
• Evidence of work experience	---	---	---
• Experience leading projects	---	---	---
• Can describe initiating and following through on a project	---	---	---
• Overcame obstacles to succeed	---	---	---
• Enthusiastic/engaged when discussing roles he/she played	---	---	---
• Shows evidence of motivation to succeed (ambition, drive, goals)	---	---	---

Comments:

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## Strategic Benefits of CBBI



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### Benefits for Entry-level Hiring

- Decreases error rate
- Gives interviewers clarity on what to look for
- Offers an intellectually stimulating interview experience
- Aligns selection criteria with performance expectations

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### Benefits for Lateral & Partner Hiring

- Risks of hiring laterally:
  - Don't have the experience
  - Have the experience, but don't have the skills
  - Have the experience and skills, but lack success factors to pull them together
- Benefits:
  - Can probe for experience and "see" examples of skill execution

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## Getting Firm “Buy-In”

- Benefits
  - 70% chance of identifying an excellent candidate vs. 53% chance with traditional model\*
  - Firm-wide approach to selection aligned with firm goals
  - Higher level of objectivity & relevance
  - Systematic and non-discriminatory
  - Creates authenticity in the process
  - Easy learning curve
  - Relatively low start up costs

\*Ame Creglow, "Using Structured Interviews for Selecting and Developing Employees, KENEXA.com

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## Potential Obstacles/Pushback

- Students won't like behavioral questions
- Interviewers have to invest more intellectual capital
- Interviewers can't get used to not talking as much
- Partners believe they *"know talent when they see it"*

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## Implementing Your Process



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## Implementation Best Practices

- Set priorities each year so not stale
- OCI – hold pre-season briefings, one page “cheat sheet” of questions/plan model
- Lateral – hold annual refreshers on interviewing protocol

**Gather candidate feedback from all**

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## Implementation Best Practices

- Results to track in OCI
  - Summer and permanent offer acceptance
  - Summer program performance
  - Retention/performance/promotion rates
- Results to track in lateral hiring
  - Offer acceptance
  - Retention/performance/promotion rates
  - Revenue generation vs. prediction for partners

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