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TROJAN TODAY

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 10 OCTOBER 2016

A NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS OF TROJAN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC.

The Art of Interviewing

by Rebecca Boartfield and Tim Twigg

No management function is more important than hiring the right people. Without the right people, everything else declines—production, customer relations, profits, happiness. Nothing brings on stress (and drama) quite like having an employee that does not fit.

Did you know the number one reason for turnover is lack of fit, coupled with misunderstandings? You know the reasons: the employee's not a team player, not motivated, can't multi-task, doesn't pay attention to detail, isn't good with customers, isn't accountable for his/her actions, etc. The list goes on and on.

Turnover is costly, emotionally and financially. Studies indicate that, at a minimum, the cost is equivalent to the annual salary of the person who is being replaced, but it can be as much as two to three times that amount depending on the position, the applicant pool, the job market, etc. Wouldn't it be great to reduce that cost and get the right person onboard the first time?

When a bad hire happens, most people wonder how it happened. The person "aced" the interview along with other steps in the recruiting process, so why did s/he turn out to be a nightmare? How does the person end up being nowhere near the person who was presented in the recruiting process, particularly the interview? And more importantly, how do you prevent it?

A lot of reasons account for bad hires, but one primary reason is poor interviewing techniques. When is the last time you actually prepared for an interview? Don't we normally just "wing it"? We've got a handful of questions we love to ask, and we don't take time to go much beyond that. We then use our "gut instinct" and figure it will be right.

If this is working for you, that's great. If not, you might want to consider fine-tuning your interviewing techniques, specifically the type and kind of questions you ask. This can help get you closer to seeing the "real person" during interviews.

One major interviewing pitfall is not allowing the applicant to talk very much. If you think your role is to "sell" the interviewee on you and your practice, you are wrong. The interviewee should do about 80% of the talking. Interviewers sometimes get uncomfortable with silence or an applicant who is struggling to answer a question. When this happens, the interviewer will sometimes take over and explain, describe, or provide his/her own opinions to promote more conversation. This can have the effect of leading the applicant into knowing what to say or simply agreeing with the interviewer, which does not serve the purpose of getting to know the applicant. You've just confirmed your own thoughts and/or feelings, not the interviewee's.

Another pitfall is asking too many yes/no questions. Ideally, keep the questions as open-ended as possible to keep the interviewee talking. You want to collect as much data on this person as possible. The best way to do that is through carefully crafted interview questions that go beyond simple yes/no responses.

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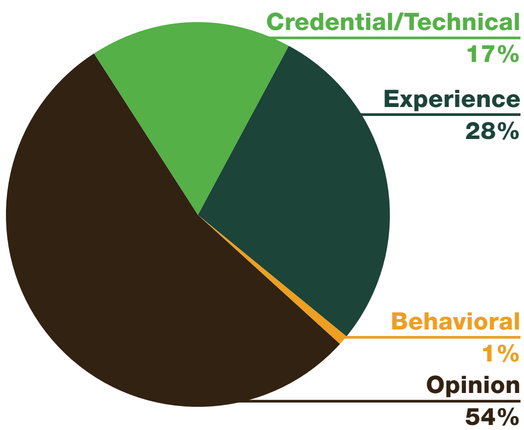
The art of interviewing means knowing what legally cannot be asked in order to prevent potential liability. Generally speaking, if a question is not related to important or essential job duties, skills, or work behaviors and attributes, it should not be asked. Under multiple federal and state regulations, it is unlawful to discriminate against applicants based on protected characteristics unrelated to a job. Raising a topic or asking a question pertaining to any of these protected characteristics could be perceived as discriminatory, particularly if the applicant believes s/he was denied employment as a result. Ensure all questions are job-related, and eliminate any that serve no purpose in determining someone's ability to perform the job duties.

Interview questions typically land in one of five categories:

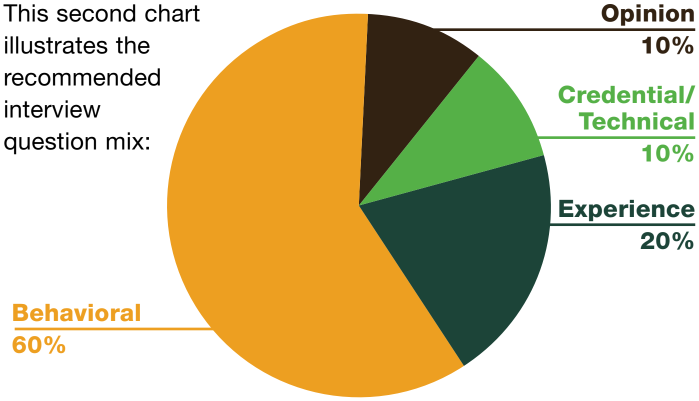
1. **Credential =** Education, certification, licensure
2. **Technical =** Knowledge necessary for the job (e.g. computer software)
3. **Experience**
4. **Opinion =** Self-evaluation; yields the candidate's opinion about a given situation
5. **Behavioral =** Work-related, behavioral responses from the candidate's past.

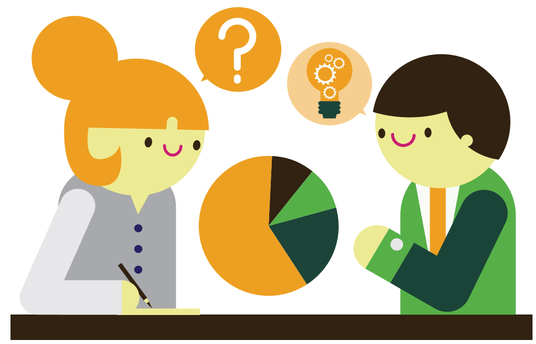
This first chart illustrates the percentage of use for most interviews:



Notice the high percentage of opinion questions in the typical interview. What could be wrong with putting so much emphasis on those types of questions? Simply this: the person being interviewed would give an opinion that s/he believes you would find more favorable even though that's not the "real person". Without the right questions, acing an interview can be easy for an experienced interviewee who knows the right responses.

This second chart illustrates the recommended interview question mix:





Note the emphasis here on behavioral-based questions. Different from opinion questions, although frequently confused with them, behavioral-based questions focus on **past** behavior from real work-related experiences to determine an applicant's **future** behavior. Because the underlying proven premise is: *past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.* This information allows for greater understanding of the "real person" behind the interview and whether or not that person will be the right fit.

Behavioral-based questions typically begin with the words which focus on present or past situations, such as *describe, explain, tell me,* or *how did you,* rather than words which focus on the future and are opinion-based, such as *would you, could you, should you, or will you.*

Behavioral-based questions require preparation on the part of the interviewer before they can be effectively implemented. The interviewer must identify a situation, or situations, relevant to the position to be filled that are key job competencies and behaviors which, if not handled well, would result in job performance dissatisfaction. **For example:** high stress, angry patients, multi-tasking, fast-paced, and detail-oriented.

From these job competencies or behaviors, questions are then formed to gather this information from the applicant's past. Here is an example of a behavioral-based question:

- People aren't always busy at work. Describe the slowest time at your last job:
  — What action did you take?
  — What was the result?
  — And when I check your references, with whom can I verify that with?

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In this case, the behavior or job competency desired is being able to fill slow time at work and to keep busy with relevant duties and responsibilities. During the interview, the applicant must recount a previous specific time in which it was slow and then state his/her response to the slow time and the result of his/her behavior.

Be mindful of the applicant stating an opinion rather than a real situation. You'll often know this has happened because s/he might say something like, "**If** it were slow at work…" Key word: **if.** This is not a factual account of a real situation; it's a hypothesis and an opinion. Re-direct the applicant to respond with a real situation to answer the question.

An important component to these questions is how an applicant acted in response to the situations. Some aspects to consider are:

- Was the action well thought out?
- Does the person hold him/herself accountable or responsible for anything?
- Was the action immature?
- How closely does the action match your desired response in a similar situation?
- Did the action create improvement or not?
- Does the applicant relate his/her action to the result, whether good or bad?
- Is s/he blaming others?

Allow the applicant time to recount the situation from his/her past. There may be some awkward silences, and you may have to push a little. Not being able to answer the question at all is a red flag. Whatever you do, don't over-explain the question and lead the person to a proper response.

Conclusion

Can you do more than you may be doing currently to interview candidates better? Yes. Improving your interviewing skills, and specifically incorporating a high percentage of behavioral-based questions, is essential to that process. Interviewing in this manner is not as easy as "winging it" with your favorite opinion-based questions, but it will prove to be worthwhile. Nothing feels better than getting the right person on the team. Everybody wins — you, your practice, and the applicant.

__Tim Twigg__ is the President and __Rebecca Boartfield__ is an HR Compliance Consultant for Bent Ericksen & Associates. For more than thirty years, the company has been a leading authority in human resources and personnel issues, helping dentists successfully deal with the ever-changing and complex labor laws. To receive a complimentary copy of the company's quarterly newsletter or to learn more, contact them at __(800) 679-2760__ or at __www.benteriksen.com__.

Ask the Consultant

Q: I understand there is a law in California that allows us to charge our UCR fee for procedures not covered by insurance. In other words, if the insurance plan covers crowns but not buildups, we charge the UCR fee for the buildup and the insurance fee for the crown. The patient must pay their portion for the crown and our UCR fee for the buildup. What are the restrictions and limitations on this law? How can I find out more about the law and how it is applied?

A: According to the California Dental Association (CDA), you can charge UCR for services not covered by the plan, such as teeth whitening. However, it does not apply to services normally covered. For more detail about the law, how it is applied, and any restictions/limitations, go to www.cda.org, then to CDA Compass, then to Dental Benefit Plans, and type in UCR.

Responses provided by __Kathleen Johnson__, President of Kathleen Johnson Consulting.

GOOD WORK!!!

Patterson Dental and the American Association of Dental Office Management have teamed up to support Oral Health America's (OHA) programmatic work for children. Through "A Future to Smile About," Patterson Dental and AADOM will each donate $50 to OHA's Smiles Across America® program for every AADOM annual membership purchased by dental practices, using the promo code "OHA16" through January 31, 2017.

***FMI:* _afuturetosmileabout.com_**

Write for TROJAN TODAY

Share your dental and front office experience with others! Articles should be no more than 750 words. Include a short bio and recent photo.

SUBMIT TO: nikkim@trojanonline.com

Trojan encourages a wide variety of contributors and subjects to its newsletter.

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FUN! Fact

Did you know dentists are credited for inventing chewing gum & cotton candy?

Although numerous individuals throughout history had been involved in the development of chewing gum, **Dr. William F. Semple,** a dentist from Ohio, obtained the first patent for what he called “improved bubble gum” in 1869. Dr. Semple planned to make **bubble gum** out of rubber, adding “scouring properties” such as powdered licorice root, chalk, and charcoal. He believed the gum would exercise the jaw and clean teeth at the same time. Despite having received the patent, Dr. Semple never manufactured his gum.

The spun-sugar confection and the device that made the first **cotton candy** were co-invented in 1897 by **Dr. William Morrison,** once president of the Tennessee Dental Association. The device heated sugar in a spinning bowl that had tiny holes in it. The resulting treat, called Fairy Floss, was introduced at the St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904.

What Clients Say

“We have put our trust and confidence in Trojan Professional Services for many years. Their service takes the guesswork out of dental treatment planning and helps to create a trusting financial connection between patients and staff. Let’s face it: No one likes surprises when they come in the form of unplanned financial burdens.

Since we began using Dentifi, our patients’ benefits are verified 10-14 days in advance. This has allowed us the advance notice to be sure to update necessary information regarding patient benefits prior to submitting claims. Correctness and prompt claim processing and payment have been the result!”

— Penny Harvick

Quote-Worthy

“It’s very important in a restaurant to really do the right hiring because there’s no restaurant with one cook and one chef and nobody else in the kitchen. Generally, you have five, ten, fifteen people with you. So it’s really important to train them right, but first you have to hire the right people.”

— Wolfgang Puck

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Service Savvy

Late Entrant Penalties vs. Group Waiting Periods

A late entrant is a person who did not enroll on the plan on the date they first became eligible for benefits under their employer's plan. Instead, they enrolled at a later date and penalties may be placed on their benefits. A group wait applies to all employees even if they enrolled on the plan on the first eligible date.

Trojan plans always contain group benefits not individual benefits. For this reason, only the group waiting periods are listed on Trojan plans. Trojan does not list late entrant penalties because these are specific to the individual patient. Late entrant penalties usually include waiting periods as well as other restrictions. For example, for the first year only preventive might be covered; the second year might include the addition of basic and major coverage. Or perhaps only the first $100 of treatment is covered for the first year.

Trojan plans will list group waiting periods. For example, basic might have a six-month wait and major a one-year wait. We will specify that you verify the waiting period existence and length for your individual patient, before you begin treatment.

Seminars

October 14, 2016
Sacramento, CA

Front Office Rocks - Laura Hatch

https://frontofficerocks.com/event/berkeley-ca-front-office-training

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October 21, 2016
Costa Mesa, CA

Navigating the Dental Transition Minefield - Kathleen Johnson, Pat Wood, and Art Wiederman

www.trojanonline.com/pdfs/Transition20161021Flyer.pdf

January 6, 2017
Portland, OR

January 13, 2017
Los Alamitos, CA

Jumpstart: Hygiene Department Success by the Numbers - Debbie Seidel-Bittke

www.Dentalliveevents.com

TROJAN Closing

November 24-25, 2016
Thanksgiving Holiday

Find us on

We provide support services to dental practices: improving case acceptance, production, and collections.

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