

# **SPEAK!** **ACTIONS**

**Behavior-based Interviewing**

with **Paul C. Green Ph.D.**

**LEADER'S GUIDE**  
**PREVIEW**

produced by **MLI**

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EVALUATION ONLY

## Introduction

Interviewing is a critical part of the hiring process and yet many managers treat it lightly. They get comfortable with the candidate, ask a few questions about work experience or how they would handle certain job situations, and then they move onto the next person. They have a first impression – good or bad – and make their decision. But, what if there were a way to predict job performance? Is there a way to predict how the candidate will perform on the job? There is. It is called behavior-based interviewing.

## About this Workshop

What is behavior-based interviewing? It involves asking job-related, past-event questions to help a job candidate give examples of times when he used his skills at work. First, the interviewer reads a past-event question in a natural tone to ensure that the candidate knows to give an example of a real action that he took in a work situation. Then, the interviewer takes descriptive notes on the answers and uses them after the interview to rate the candidate's skills for the job.

Research shows that the behavior-based approach is effective, and defensible. It also helps the interviewer get valuable information about the candidate's job skills -- not just promotional comments based on what the candidate *thinks* you want to hear.

According to Dr. Paul Green, **past actions are the best predictors of future performance**. When you ask a candidate a question about a specific past action, you get information about what the candidate actually did in a past situation. Then, you can use that information to predict what the candidate will do on the job. This is a common sense approach based on the idea that people tend to follow the same patterns of behavior. Working habits and past actions are the practical foundation for predicting job performance.

The good news is that any manager, regardless of business or experience, can learn how to ask past-event questions and gain behavioral predictors of job performance. **Actions Speak** is a fast-paced, entertaining program that shows how to ask questions about specific times when skills were used at work to make predictions about future job performance.

## Learning Objectives

After your managers complete this workshop, they will be able to:

- Define behavior-based interviewing as a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.
- Explain the benefits of using a behavior-based interviewing strategy.
- Formulate behavior-based interview questions.
- Gain behavioral predictors by asking past-event questions and following up with behavioral probes.
- Ask reverse questions to minimize snap judgments and bias.
- Ask follow-up probes for more information when a candidate's non-verbal behaviors signal strong feelings about an answer.
- Improve defensibility and minimize legal risks by asking job-related questions during a structured interview.

## About Paul C. Green, PhD



Paul Green is an Industrial Organizational Psychologist with more than 40 years of experience in interview training, consulting, and job search coaching. His interviewing techniques are used by interviewers worldwide and his behavior-based interviewing process is the foundation for this program.

In the early 1980's Paul developed the *Behavioral Interviewing Seminar*®, and was a pioneer in the development of the technique. He also trained hundreds of thousands of people on interviewing techniques through his seminars, webinars, and training videos. He is the primary contributor to eight training videos, including a best seller, as described by *Fortune Magazine*. In addition, he has published four books, including *The Behavioral Interviewing Seminar Participant Manual*, *Get Hired!*, *Building Robust Competencies*, and *Get Talent!*

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*Past actions are the best predictors of future performance.*

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# GETTING STARTED

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## How to Use This Guide

While Media Partner's *Actions Speak DVD* is the foundation of this program, this *Leader's Guide* will help you facilitate discussion about behavior-based interviewing and guide your learners through the skill-building process.

Following this training, managers will be able to formulate interview questions designed to gather behavioral predictors and conduct a behavior-based interview.

## Your Role

Whether you are a manager or a trainer, your role is to make this workshop lively and informative. Ask questions. Encourage dialogue, thinking, and skill-building. Keep the class energized as you guide their learning about how to conduct a behavior-based interview.

## Tips for Conducting a Successful Meeting

Before we get into the specifics of the program, let's go through a few basic training tips:

**Start on time and end on time.**

Show your respect for class participants by starting and ending on time.

**Take breaks at odd intervals.**

Tell your class to return in seven minutes, or start your break at 11:33 and tell participants to return in exactly 10 minutes. Participants are more apt to return promptly because of the specifics of your request.

**Assign group leaders the responsibility for rounding people up at the end of a break.**

This request will help you involve participants in being timely.

**Raise the energy level and increase participation in the class by involving participants.**

Learning is more effective when participants are engaged. As the leader, it's your responsibility to elicit participation by asking questions and helping participants apply ideas to their situation.

If the energy level starts to dip, get your participants involved. Ask questions and reward answers. Or, give participants a break and have them return to a fast-paced Q & A contest. Give prizes for Q&A summary games or reward small groups for returning from break on time. Be creative!

## Training Time Estimates

<i>Training Topic</i>	<i>Estimated Time (minutes)</i>
Welcome	5
Icebreaker	10
Learning Objectives	5
Activity: Interviewing Stories -- Optional	15
Behavior-Based Interviewing	20
Benefits of Effective Interviewing – Optional	15
Actions Speak! DVD	25
Actions Speak! Discussion Questions	15
Activity: Writing Behavior-based Questions	20
BREAK	15
Activity: Determining What Questions to Ask	20
Activity: Asking Behavioral Probes	20
Activity: Asking Reverse Questions	20
Activity: Modeling an Interview	40
Wrap-up Quiz Bowl	20
Conclusion	5

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**TOTAL Training Time****Approx. 4 to 4.5 hours**

Note: Training times will vary based on number of participants. Although the ideal approach to training this topic includes all of the activities outlined here, we have identified two activities as optional if you face time constraints. In addition, we have included an alternate approach to some activity debriefs.

## Preparing for Your Meeting

Preparation is the key to conducting a successful workshop. Get familiar with the DVD. Get comfortable with this *Leader's Guide*. Read through the structured interview example in the Resources section of this Leader's Guide. Think about your audience. Plan how you will deal with a learner's potential resistance to the ideas presented or their dissatisfaction about attending a training class instead of working.

### ***Pre-Meeting Checklist***

- Watch the DVD.
- Read this Leader's Guide.
- Reserve meeting space and DVD player (and laptop, if applicable).
- Gather whiteboard or flip chart, tape, and markers.
- Print Participant Guides.
- Gather candy, gum, and trinkets to reward participation and add a dimension of fun to the meeting.
- Prepare flip charts or set up laptop to present slides.
- Print and send Meeting Announcements, or send an email announcement.



## **Flip Charts**

Note: Prepare these flip charts ahead of time to reinforce and supplement your training. If you prefer to use slides, a PowerPoint presentation of these visual aids is included with this workshop.

1. Paul C. Green, Ph. D
  - expert on behavior-based interviewing
  - Conducted over 5,000 interviews
  - Trained several hundred thousand on interviewing
  - Award winning video contributor
  - Published Author
2. Of
3. Question your impressions
4. Behavior-based Interviewing
  - Job-related
  - Structured interview
5. -- Past-event questions
  - Draws from past actions
  - To predict future performance
6. Benefits
  - Fewer costs
  - Higher performance
  - Lower risk of legal issues
7. Benefits
  - Increased retention
  - Higher productivity
  - Positive impact to bottom line
8. Gain A Behavioral Predictor
9. -- Read question
  - Respect Silence
  - Take Notes
10. Silence

11. Ask Behavioral Probes

- non-verbal signals
- lack of information

12. Ask Reverse Questions

13. Stay Job-Related

- Keeps it Defensible

# CONDUCTING YOUR MEETING

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## Welcome

**WELCOME** managers to workshop. Thank them for coming.

## About the Workshop

### EXPLAIN:

- The workshop will run approximately 4 hours (depending on your number of participants).
- Housekeeping details.
  - Cell phones on silent
  - Restroom locations
  - Refreshments and Breaks
- The foundation of the workshop is Actions Speak, a 25-minute DVD that is fast-paced and engaging.

## About Dr. Paul C. Green, PhD

**SAY** something like:

*Dr. Green is an Industrial Organizational Psychologist and expert on behavior-based interviewing. This program, based on a book written by Dr. Green, describes why past actions are the best predictor of future job performance.*

**POST** visual aid No. 1: "Dr. Paul Green." **EXPLAIN:**

- Is an Industrial Organizational Psychologist and expert on behavior-based interviewing
- Conducted over 5,000 selection interviews
- Has more than 40 years experience in interview training, consulting, and speaking
- Trained several hundred thousand people on interviewing
- Coaches job candidates on how to prepare to take an interview

- Publishes his research and writing on the selection interview
- Award-winning video contributor



## Icebreaker: What We See

**TELL** managers that before you get started, you'd like to conduct a quick icebreaker. **EXPLAIN** that:

- You will distribute a piece of paper face down.
- Participants should not look at the paper until you give the okay.

**DISTRIBUTE** handout.

**TELL** managers to read their paper. After a moment, **TELL** them to count the number of Fs they see, and then turn their paper face down.

FEATURE FILMS ARE THE RE-  
SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTI-  
FIC STUDY COMBINED WITH  
THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.

**POST** a blank flip chart. **DRAW** a vertical line down the middle and a 3, 4, 5, and 6, down the left-hand side.

**ASK:**

**How many people saw three Fs?**

**How many people saw four Fs?**

**Five? Six?**

**RECORD** the numbers on the flip chart. **TELL** managers to turn their papers over; count again, and then put them facedown.

**ASK:**

**How many people saw three Fs again this time?**

**How about four? Five? Six?**

**RECORD** the numbers on the flip chart.



## Icebreaker: What We See

**TELL** managers to turn over their papers and look for six Fs.

**FEATURE FILMS ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.**

**ASK:**

**Any idea why it is so difficult for many of us to see all six Fs?**

*Answers will vary.*

**POST** visual aid No. 2: "Of"

**EXPLAIN:**

- Although we see an F in the word OF, that is not what we hear.
- We hear a V.
- What we hear gets in the way; it clouds our thinking of what is true.

**SAY:**

*The same thing can happen during an interview. If we don't ask the right questions, candidates will tell us what we want to hear. We might miss non-verbal clues. We might make a judgment based on half-truths. The best way to ensure that we are measuring a job candidate's skills is to ask behavior-based questions.*

*Now, let's take a look at the learning objectives.*

## Learning Objectives

**DISTRIBUTE** Participant's Guides. **REFER** managers to page X, Learning Objectives.

**EXPLAIN** that after they complete this workshop, they will be able to:

- Define behavior-based interviewing as a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.
- Explain the benefits of using a behavior-based interviewing strategy.
- Formulate behavior-based interview questions.
- Gain behavioral predictors by asking past-event questions and following up with behavioral probes.
- Ask reverse questions to minimize snap judgments and bias.
- Ask follow-up probes for more information when a candidate's non-verbal signals don't match the answer.
- Improve defensibility and minimize legal risks by asking job-related questions during a structured interview.

### Activity



## Interviewing Stories – Optional

**REFER** participants to page 5 in their workbooks, "Interviewing Stories." Divide the class into groups of three.

**EXPLAIN:**

- They should consider each question individually.
- Then, each person in the group should share their most memorable story.

**ASK** for a show of hands.

**Who has interviewed a candidate and heard that little voice singing in their head – in the middle of the interview – that says, "Yes! This is the one!"**

**What about the voice that screams, "No Way!"**

**ASK:**

**What prompts us to have those kinds of impressions before the interview is finished?**

*The answers remind us of someone we like or don't like... Something we've done or haven't done...*

**Does that tell you about the candidate?**

*No.*

**POST** visual aid No. 3: "Question Your Impressions."

**SAY** something like:

*Your reactions to a candidate say more about you and your experiences, than the candidate's job skills. If you like the candidate, it may be that she reminds you of a favorite teacher; a former, high performing, employee; or yourself. If you don't like the candidate, it may be that he reminds you of a boss you didn't like, a difficult coach, or an opinionated relative. Feelings about someone in your past won't help you assess the future performance of the person sitting in front of you.*

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*Feelings about someone in your past won't help you assess the future performance of the person sitting in front of you.*

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**ASK** for a show of hands.

**Who is familiar with behavior-based interviewing?**

**Who can define it for me?**

*Behavior-based interviewing is a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.*

## Behavior-Based Interviewing

**POST** visual aids No. 4 and No. 5. "Behavior-based Interviewing."

**REFER** learners to page 6 in their Participant's Guide to write down the definition.

**EXPLAIN:**

Behavior-based interviewing is **a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.**

**ASK** for a show of hands.

**Behavior-based interviewing is structured. Who believes that a structured interview is casual and off-the-cuff?**

**Who believes it is planned?**

**Who believes a structured interview is different for every candidate, based on what he or she brings to the table?**

**Who believes the foundation of a structured interview is the same for every candidate?**

**SAY** something like:

*Behavior-based interviewing is structured. It is not off-the cuff. It is planned. Each candidate is consistently treated in a similar way. The interviewer asks every candidate the same (or very similar) questions that related to the skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies needed to perform the job well. Follow-up probes may vary by candidate, based on their answers. But the initial questions during a structured interview are the same (or similar) for every candidate.*

*Now that we have defined a structured interview, let's look at an example.*

**REFER** participants to their workbooks for an example of a structured interview.

Note: An example of a structured interview for a Machine Operator job position is included on the following pages for your reference. Introduce the idea of a structured interview using this example. Later in the workshop, participants will use this structured interview to model what they have learned.



**Structured Interview: Machine Operator**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Begin the interview with the career question below and continue by reading (and checking off) selected questions to the candidate. Take notes to summarize each answer and probe by re-reading the question or part of it. Use an equivalent amount of time for each candidate. After the interview, check the rating box (below) that shows the level of the answers. Then make your hiring decision based on the match of the candidate’s answers to the job skills/competencies.

**Competencies**

**Rating Anchors**

The full competency definition is at the top of each group of questions. The competencies are NOT ranked in order of importance.	<b>Little Evidence For the Skill</b>	<b>Between</b>	<b>Some Evidence For The Skill</b>	<b>Between</b>	<b>Strong Evidence For The Skill</b>
<b>VIGILANCE</b>					
<b>SAFETY ORIENTATION</b>					
<b>TASK ORIENTATION</b>					
<b>SELF-MANAGEMENT</b>					

Career / Work Experience Question: Please give a quick overview of the professional jobs you have held, and describe the most important work experiences that you have had that relate to the position for which you are being considered.

VIGILANCE ... is being able to maintain focus / concentration and not daydreaming or being distracted during “hands on” tasks. A failure to focus may result in missing warning indicators, skipping important steps, or not attending to spoken information. Effective focus is paying continuous attention to surroundings, following work procedures, and hearing important information.

- \_\_\_ 1. It is important to be alert to hazards or threats as a machine operator. What did you notice only your last job that would show that you stay vigilant, pay attention, and monitor your work situation?
  
- \_\_\_ 2. Describe a time on the job when your noticed a warning / safety indicator and made adjustments?
  
- \_\_\_ 3. The routine of operating a machine can cause you to daydream and not pay full attention to what you are doing. How do you avoid daydreaming when doing routine work operating a machine?

\_\_\_ 4. It can be important to be “tuned in” to your physical environment when operating a machine.

When were you alert to changes in your work situation that helped you avoid an accident?  
SAFETY ORIENTATION ... is being able to follow safety policies, procedures, guidelines, and rules with a 100% consistency level. It involves such things as putting safety over performance, correcting coworkers if needed, participating in safety meetings, and being an example for others to follow.

\_\_\_ 1. It is important to reach production levels but it is critical for follow safety procedures. When did you follow safety procedures even it would lower your personal production?

\_\_\_ 2. When did you see a co-worker break a safety rule? What was the rule and what did you say?

\_\_\_ 3. Being safe at work means following safety procedures with 100% consistency. When were you tempted to break a safety rule but didn't?

\_\_\_ 4. Sometimes following safety procedures means extra work for you. When did you discipline yourself to follow policies and procedures even when they were inconvenient?

TASK ORIENTATION ... is being able to put strong effort to achieve work tasks and objectives. Achievement motivation is shown by working long hours / weekends and making sacrifices to reach goals. Actions reflect drive / initiative, assuming moderate risk, putting work first, multi-tasking, and exceeding expectations.

\_\_\_ 1. People differ in the extent to which they are willing to give full effort to the job. When did you put your full effort into your work, even when others didn't?

\_\_\_ 2. Tell me about a time when you completed a task under difficult or stressful conditions.

\_\_\_ 3. When did you work especially hard and persevere on a job task?

\_\_\_ 4. Describe a time when you made a sacrifice to meet task deadlines.

SELF-MANAGEMENT ... is being able to do a job effectively without supervision. It involves recognizing what needs to be done, doing it, and evaluating the results. Self-discipline is used to maintain a dedicated workspace, minimize distractions, and start / end on time. Goals, priorities, and procedures are set without being directed to do so.

\_\_\_ 1. Give me an example of a time when you worked effectively without being supervised. What were the circumstances, what did you do, and what were the outcomes?

\_\_\_ 2. Pick a day in your work and describe what you did to take the initiative and self-manage.

\_\_\_ 3. Tell me about a time when you felt that you needed to direct your own actions with little guidance from others?

\_\_\_ 4. When did you discipline yourself to start on time, even when working alone?

**SAY** something like:

*Let's look at this structured interview for a Machine Operator. This structured interview outlines four key job competencies. The matrix at the top allows you rate the candidate in each competency area following your interview.*

**ASK:**

**What are the key competencies for this position?**

*Vigilance, safety orientation, task orientation, and self-management*

**Where do you think the interviewer got these competencies?**

*From a job description or an analysis of what success in the job looks like*

**ASK** for a volunteer to read the behaviors associated with Vigilance.

**SAY** something like:

*Job competencies come from an analysis of the job, or a job description. Once you identify the key job competencies and define the desired behaviors associated with them, you can develop behavior-based questions to interview for the position.*

*Research shows that a structured interview is a reliable way to measure a candidate's skills. There are other benefits of using a structured approach when you interview. We're going to discuss benefits next. We'll be using this interview example again later in the workshop.*

**Activity****Benefits of Effective Interviewing -- Optional**

**DISTRIBUTE** a blank flip chart and marker to each group.

**EXPLAIN** that:

- They should brainstorm the benefits of structured interviewing
- They should brainstorm the importance of being prepared

**Debrief****Benefits of Effective Interviewing**

**POST** visual aids No. 6 and No. 7, "Benefits."

**ASK** each group to share an answer.

**DEBRIEF** round robin until all answers have been shared. Make sure the following points come out:

- You are more likely to hire a candidate that can do the job well.
- Candidates will see that you are prepared and professional
- Interviewers feel more confident in conducting interviews
- Higher morale (based on successful hiring choices)
- Lower risk of legal issues
- Increased retention
- Higher productivity
- Positive impact to bottom line

**Note:** This should be a quick activity. This activity is designed to elicit learner buy-in before playing the DVD. It is not intended to generate discussion about the learning points. Should learners wish to explore a learning point, table the question until after you play the DVD.

## Actions Speak! DVD

**PLAY** the DVD.

### Activity



## Actions Speak! Discussion Questions

**REFER** participants to “Discussion Questions,” page 10, in their *Participant's Guide*, so they can take notes.

### ASK:

**According to Dr. Green, past actions are the best predictors of future performance. Why?**

*Most people follow the same patterns of past behavior when it comes to job performance.*

### What is a behavioral predictor?

*It's the candidate's description of his or her past behavior with information that can help you predict job performance.*

### How do you recognize a behavioral predictor?

*It contains specific information about what the person actually did in a work situation. This includes things like a specific time when the action was taken and a description of the specific actions that the person took.*

### What types of words in an answer show you that you are getting a generality, and not a behavioral predictor?

*Generalities are characterized by words like “frequently,” “if,” “typically,” “usually,” “sometimes.” and “always.” If you hear generalities, ask the question again with emphasis on “a specific time when” or “exactly what you did in the situation.”*

### What is reverse information and why is it important?

*Reverse information is the opposite of what the candidate told you, or the opposite of your reaction to the candidate. It is designed to give you a broad sample of the candidate's job skills and help you get new information to balance an overly positive or overly negative opinion of the candidate.*

### How do you gain reverse information?

*Ask a question that is the opposite of the question you asked. Or, ask a question that is the opposite of your subjective reaction to the candidate's answer. For example, if you asked about the candidate's strengths, you would follow-up with a reverse question on the opposite of the candidate's strong point.*

**If you have an overly positive opinion of the candidate, how could you change the question "Tell me about your primary strength at work?" to draw out reverse information.**

*Tell me about your biggest area for improvement.*

**If you have a negative opinion of the candidate, how could you change "Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your manager's approach and did something about it?"**

*Tell me about a time when you went along with your manager's approach and learned from it.*

**POST** visual aid No. 8, "Gain a Behavioral Predictor."

**ASK:**

### When should you ask a behavioral probe?

1. *When a candidate gives you a general answer even though you asked a behavior-based question.*
2. *When the candidate's feelings and non-verbal cues don't match the answer they gave*

**ASK:**

**What three things do you need to do to gain behavioral predictors?**

*Ask a past-event question, respect the silence, and take notes. If the answer is a generality, continue with a behavioral probe.*

**POST** visual aid No. 9, "Read question."

**SAY:**

*Let's talk about respecting silence during an interview.*

**POST** visual aid No. 10, "Silence." Flip chart answers.

**What is the benefit of respecting silence in the interview?**

*When you respect silence you give the candidate a chance to think of an answer. It can be difficult to remember a specific example of a time when a skill was used at work.*

**SAY:**

*Respect for silence shows the candidate that you recognize his need to take time to think of an answer.*

**Activity**



## **Writing Behavior-Based Interview Questions**

**REFER** participants to the activity on page 13 in their *Participant's Guide*.

**EXPLAIN** that:

- The activity is designed to illustrate the difference between a traditional interview question and a behavior-based interview question.
- Participants should rewrite the traditional question so that it is behavior-based.
- Participants should work individually.



## Writing Behavior-Based Interview Questions

**ASK** for volunteers to share their rewritten questions with the class. Answers will vary. When debriefing, ask the class whether the response elicits information about a past-event.

1. We have a lot of things going on and sometimes priorities change halfway into a project. How would you handle a change in direction after you have committed time and effort to a project?

Tell me about a specific time at your current job when you had to change gears even though you had already put in a significant amount of time and effort on a project.

2. Not all customers are happy customers. What do you think you should do to handle a customer who was upset and started yelling at you?

Describe a time when you had a customer who was upset and started yelling at you. What happened and what did you do?

3. What steps should you take if you promised something to a customer, a co-worker, or your boss, and you couldn't deliver?

Give me an example of a time when you made a promise to a customer, a co-worker, or your boss and you couldn't deliver.

4. We are changing the software we have used for the last 7 years. For many of our employees the changeover will be challenging. What would you do to help them through the learning process?

We are changing the software we have used for the last 7 years. For many of our employees, the changeover will lead to resistance to change. Tell me about a time when you taught a coworker something new and helped him overcome his resistance to change.



5. How would you handle a difference in opinion with your boss?

When did you use a practical approach to handle a difference in opinion with your boss? What was the difference about and what did you do?

## Activity



## Job Tasks and Behavior-based Questions

**REFER** participants to page 13 in their workbooks. **EXPLAIN** that:

- They will work in groups.
- They should read through the list of job tasks associated with a job and develop a minimum of three behavior-based questions
- Assign a job to each group.
- Have each participant write out each question and prepare to share it with the whole group

Note: Three job descriptions / job task lists are included here for your reference. Sample behavior-based questions are included at the bottom of each job list. If you have time constraints, consider using just one of the lists of job tasks and debrief by taking questions from each group.



## Job Tasks and Behavior-based Questions

**Note:** There are many different types of behavior-based questions that would be appropriate based on the following job tasks. When you debrief, elicit feedback from the class on the questions each group shares.

Make sure each answer:

- Asks about a specific past-event at work
- Is based on the wording in a job task

**Note:** The job tasks are similar to those found on a full job description. Each question is developed by taking an important phrase from the job task.

## Job Title: Call Center Customer Service Representative

### **SUMMARY**

Answers phone, sells, manages customer database, resolves customer database, and recommends process and procedural improvements.

### **PRIMARY JOB TASKS**

1. Answer phones and respond to customer requests.
2. Sell product and place customer orders in the computer system.
3. Provide customers with product and service information in a timely and accurate way.
4. "Up-sell" products and services.
5. Follow-up on customer complaints/issues and resolve them.
6. Recommend improvements in the service process/procedures as needed.

### **Suggested Questions based on the job tasks**

1. Tell me about a specific time when it was challenging for you to answer the phones and respond to customer requests. What did you do?
2. Describe a time when you were particularly effective in selling products and inputting orders in a computer system.
3. When were you timely and accurate in responding to a customer's request for product and service information? What was the product or service and what did you do?
4. Sometimes there is an opportunity to "up-sell" a customer's request. When did you expand a customer's initial purchase request into a bigger sale?
5. Describe a time when you were skilled in resolving a customer complaint/issue?
6. Tell me about a recurring problem you experienced in your customer service process/procedures. What did you do to improve the situation?

## Job Title: Office Assistant

### **SUMMARY**

Answers phone, greets customers, handles correspondence and administrative tasks as needed.

### **PRIMARY JOB TASKS**

1. Solicit a volunteer as needed to run a reception desk temporarily.
2. Take and transcribe minutes of Board and Committee meetings.
3. Assist staff with administrative duties as requested.
4. Distribute incoming mail and prepare outgoing mail accurately and on time.
5. Record incoming checks and donations in an effective way.
6. Maintain lobby and front desk area and keep it clean and free from clutter.

### **Suggested Questions based on the job tasks**

1. Tell me about a time when it was difficult for you to get a coworker to volunteer to sit in for you when you were away from your desk. What happened and what did you do?
2. When were you effective in taking and transcribing a conversation in an important meeting? What did you do?
3. Describe a time when you had to support more than one person with their administrative needs and faced a conflict in priorities. How did you handle it?
4. It is important to distribute mail accurately and on time, even when dealing with time pressures. When were you accurate and on time with a challenging administrative task such as distributing or preparing mail?
5. When did you face a problem with an important piece of mail, such as a donation check? What was the situation and what did you do?
6. In this job you will be responsible for keeping the lobby and front desk clean and free from clutter. What have you done at work that shows you would perform this task effectively?

## Job Title: Graphic Designer

### **SUMMARY**

Create and produce images and logos. Create layouts. Oversee design and IT involvement.

### **PRIMARY JOB TASKS**

1. Create and produce images, layouts, and logos.
2. Create layouts for magazines, newsletters, brochures and other print pieces.
3. Develop a creative design and produce artwork to support it.
4. Keep abreast of developments in technology and design in developing websites.
5. Work well in a team, including printers, copywriters, photographers, other designers, account executives, website designers, and marketing specialists.
6. Develop a design brief to pitch an idea by gathering information and data to clarify design issues and solutions.

### **Suggested Questions based on job tasks**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to create a layout under a tight deadline. What did you do to ensure that you stayed on track?
2. What has been your most challenging experience in creating layouts for print pieces such as magazines, newsletters, and brochures? What was the situation and how did you deal with it?
3. Describe a time when you came up with a creative design and artwork, but your manager didn't like it. What happened and how did you handle it?
4. Tell me about a time when you put forth extra effort to stay current with the changes in technology and design needed for website development. What did you do?
5. In this job you will work with printers, copywriters, photographers, designers, account executives, website designers, and marketing specialists. When have you been proud of your skills in doing good work with this type of team?
6. Tell me about a time when you use a "design brief" to help you pitch an idea. What did you do to prepare and how did it go?

## Behavioral Probes

Post visual aid No. 11, "Ask Behavioral Probes."

**ASK:**

**What is a behavioral probe?**

*A behavior-based follow-up question that will clarify what the person did in a situation*

**When should you ask a behavioral probe?**

**FLIP chart** answers.

**SAY** something like:

*When the answer is a generality, self-promotional, not behavioral, isn't complete or the candidate's non-verbals don't match what the candidate is saying, follow-up with behavioral probes to draw out more information. You discover that the specifics the candidate gives can be linked to job requirements.*

**Activity**



## Asking Behavioral Probes

**REFER** participants to page 18 in their workbooks.

**TELL** participants to work in groups. **EXPLAIN** that:

- They should read the behavior-based question and the candidate's response.
- They should write a behavioral probe to follow-up and draw out specifics.
- They will share their answers with the class.



## Asking Behavioral Probes

**ASK** for volunteers to share their behavioral probes with the class. Answers will vary. When debriefing, ask the class whether the response draws out additional information about a past-event. Suggested skill building examples follow:

1. Question: *"Tell me about a time when you had to learn new software and you had difficulty completing your tasks because you weren't yet proficient?"*

Candidate's Response: *"Well, I am a fast learner. I have had many opportunities to learn new software and I can usually jump in and figure things out. That has never been a problem for me."*

*Behavioral Probe: Describe a specific time when you didn't learn all the features of the program and as a result, you didn't complete a task or project in a timely manner.*

2. Question: *"Tell me about a time when your patient arrived late for her appointment, you had to reschedule her, and she wasn't happy about it."*

Candidate's Response: *"Oh, that happens often. I usually just say that the doctor has already seen the next patient so we need to reschedule. It usually isn't a big deal. They understand."*

*Behavioral Probe: Tell me about a time when you had a patient who was upset and didn't understand. What did you do?*

3. Question: *"Tell me about a time when you had an idea you were excited to share with your boss but your boss wasn't interested. What did you do?"*

Candidate's Response: *"I waited a few days and pitched my idea again. In the end, he came around."*

*Behavioral Probe: Tell me specifically about a time when your boss just wasn't interested in an idea you had and made it clear that your idea wasn't going to be implemented. What happened and what did you do?*

4. Question: *"Tell me about a time when you missed an important deadline."*

Candidate's Answer: *"Oh, that really never happens. I always make my deadlines."*

*Behavioral Probe: Tell me about a particular time when things didn't go well -- something happened out of your control and it impacted your work, a deadline, or a deliverable. What happened and what did you do?*

**SAY** something like:

*Let's talk about reverse information next. Asking reverse information help you eliminate bias from your interview.*

## Reverse Information

**ASK:**

**What should you do if the information you uncover is negative and you start to overweigh the response?**

*Ask for reverse information.*

**POST** visual aid No. 12, "Ask Reverse Questions."

**ASK:**

**When should you ask for reverse information?**

*When you are getting a one-sided view of the candidate – positive or negative – you should ask for an example of the opposite. This is designed to protect the candidate from your snap judgment or subjective reaction.*

**Activity**



## Asking Reverse Questions

**REFER** participants to page 19 in their workbooks.

**TELL** participants to work in groups. **EXPLAIN** that:

- They will write behavior-based questions designed to elicit reverse information.
- They will share their answers with the class.





## Asking Reverse Questions

**ASK** groups to share their answers.

Note: Answers will vary. Two suggested answers are provided here. As you debrief each response, make sure:

- Questions are designed to elicit information that balances the negative or positive impression.
- The reverse questions are behavior-based.

Suggested skill building examples follow.

1. Summary of Candidate's Answer: *Hank explains the way he handled a customer problem. You are impressed by the way he took care of the customer and managed the product mix-up so the problem wouldn't happen again.*

**ASK:**

**What kind of impression do you have?**

*Positive*

**What is an example of a reverse question?**

*Tell me about a time when you dealt with an upset customer and things didn't go as well as you hoped. Describe specifically what you did.*

*Tell me about a time when you made a customer problem worse. What did you do?*

2. Summary of Candidate's Answer: *Mildred shares her frustration with the way her boss "manages everyone as if they were 6 years old." She says that she was working in the hospital long before her boss was even out of diapers and she doesn't need her boss to tell her how to do her job.*

**ASK:**

**What kind of impression do you have?**

*Negative*

**What could you ask to gain reverse information?**

*Tell me about a time when you learned something from your boss that surprised you. What was the situation, what did you learn, and how did you apply your learning?*

*Tell me about a time when someone taught you something new and it made your job easier. What was the situation, what did you learn, and how did you apply your learning?*

3. Summary of Candidate's Answer: *Terri describes how her collaborative style of management was a catalyst for innovation when her team came up with a new product line. She said, " We came up with a new line, the marketing materials, and the design in under six weeks, which is unheard of in our industry. My team knows I'll work side-by-side with them in the trenches."*

**ASK:****What kind of impression do you have?**

*Positive*

**What could you ask to gain reverse information?**

*Describe a time when your collaborative style of management wasn't effective.*

*Tell me about a time when your collaborative style of management made you miss a deadline or interfered with a decision.*

4. Summary of Candidate's Answer: *Rich seemed frustrated when he talked about the system upgrade. After a few probing questions, he tells you, "I told him we'd have problems converting the older files to the new system but he wasn't listening to what I had to say. Good thing I took it upon myself to protect the data before the conversion. And, let me tell you...he was glad I did. In less than 24 hours I went from troublemaker to hero."*

**ASK:****What kind of impression do you have?**

*Negative*

**ASK:****What could you ask to gain reverse information?**

*That example illustrates how everything worked out based on the choices you made. Now, I'd like to hear about a time when things didn't go well. Tell me about a time when you took matters into your own hands and the outcome wasn't very good.*

*5. Summary of Candidate's Answer: Well... let's see. One time we had a problem with our spending account. I couldn't figure it out. I decided to look at the budget report from the previous year and compare it to the current year. Then, I took every line item and cross-referenced it to our spending account to try to figure out where the money went. In the end, I determined that money was incorrectly applied to three different line items. We transferred the line item amounts and then everything balanced. It took awhile but in the end, we figured it out and my boss was pleased."*

**ASK:****What kind of impression do you have?**

*Positive*

**What could you ask to gain reverse information?**

*Great example, but things don't always work out like they did in that case. Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge and you just couldn't find a workable solution.*

## Keeping it Legal

**ASK:****What three things can you do to minimize your legal risk during an interview process?**

FLIP CHART answers.

- Keep questions job-related
- Treat people in a similar way
- Avoid protected questions or comments

***What is a protected question or comment?***

*A protected question or comment involves gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disabilities or lifestyle.*

*POST visual aid No. 13, "Stay Job-related."*

**ASK:**

**How does behavior-based interviewing help you be defensible and legal?**

*Behavior-based questions focus on job-related actions.*

**SAY** something like:

*Behavior-based interviewing helps keep the interview away from stereotypes, snap judgments, bias, personal questions, and lifestyle. When you interview, it is also important to treat all candidates in a similar way and avoid questions/comments that relate to gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disabilities or lifestyle.*

*We've talked about how to develop behavior-based questions from a job description, how to probe, how to ask for reverse information to avoid snap judgments, and how to keep the interview defensible. Now, it's time to put it all together.*

**Activity**

## Modeling An Interview

**BREAK** participants into pairs. **EXPLAIN** that they will:

- Work in pairs.
- Take turns being the interviewer and the candidate.
- Ask behavior-based questions, behavioral probes, and reverse questions.
- Interview for a Machine Operator position.

### ***Preparing for the Interview***

**TELL** participants that they will be using the structured interview in their workbooks.

**EXPLAIN:**

- Before the interview, each participant should review the job competencies and questions that follow.
- Each partner should pick one job competency and a set of questions for the interview.
- Participants should prepare by developing behavioral probes and reverse questions to elicit balanced information for the competency they chose.
- The interviewing team should decide who is going to be the interviewer first.
- As the candidate, each participant should first answer in general terms to allow the interviewer the chance to ask a behavioral probe. Then, give a specific example after the behavioral probe is asked by the interviewer.
- As the candidate, each participant should answer at least one question in an extremely positive or negative manner to allow the interviewer the opportunity to elicit reverse information.

Note: For your reference, the actual structured interview is at the end of this Leader's Guide. As learners are working, walk around and make sure their behavioral probes and reverse information questions are appropriate.

## ***Conducting the Interview***

### **EXPLAIN:**

#### ***When You are the Interviewer***

- Ask the behavior-based question and follow-up behavior probe.
- Ask for reverse information.

#### ***When You are the Candidate***

- When your partner asks you a behavior-based question, first answer in general terms so your partner can follow-up with behavioral probes.
- Answer at least one question in an extremely positive or negative manner so your partner can seek reverse information.

**Activity**

## Wrap-Up Summary Quiz Bowl

Note: This is a quick-paced summary activity designed to reinforce the learning points. Small prizes will add energy and fun to the competition.

**BREAK** the class into two teams and explain the rules. **TELL** participants to close their workbooks. (Wrap-up questions and answers are included in the Participant's workbook.)

**EXPLAIN** that:

- There are two teams.
- Each team should select a spokesperson.
- You will ask the question and teams can huddle for a moment to discuss.
- When you say "time," the spokesperson needs to provide an answer.
- If the answer is correct, the team earns points. If the answer is partially correct or incorrect, the other team has an opportunity to answer and earn points.

### Question #1

**Behavior-based interviewing is a job-related interviewing strategy that does what?**

*It samples from a candidate's past actions to predict future performance.*

### Question #2

**According to Dr. Green, why are past actions the best predictors of future performance?**

*Because most people follow the same patterns of past behavior as they go from job to job.*

### Question #3

**What is a behavioral predictor?**

*It's a description of past behavior with information that can help you predict job performance.*

**Question #4**

**What are two benefits of written interview questions?**

- A structured interview with written questions improves overall accuracy in measuring job skills.*
- You have proof of what you asked the candidate.*
- You have proof that you asked the same (or similar) question of all candidates.*

**Question #5**

**What do you do when you ask a good past-event question and still get a general answer?**

*Probe by asking a follow-up, past-event question.*

**Question #6**

**What are two ways to avoid snap judgments?**

*Continue with the interview to find more behavioral predictors.*

*Ask for reverse information.*

**Question #7**

**How do you use feelings to find behavioral predictors?**

*Non-verbal clues can help you uncover past behaviors that the candidate would rather not bring up.*

**Question #8**

**Why is it important to pay attention to feeling cues?**

*Feeling cues are important when a non-verbal signal doesn't match the answer. This can reveal issues that the candidate is troubled or bothered about.*

**Question #9**

**What is the benefit of asking for reverse information?**

*It helps you form a more balanced picture of the candidate.*



**Question #10**

**How do you elicit reverse information?**

*Ask for a specific example of the opposite (positive or negative) behavior.*

**Question #11**

**What is the benefit of respecting silence in the interview?**

*Respect for silence shows the candidate that you respect his need to take time to think of an answer.*

**Question #12**

**When you interview, what are three things you can do to stay out of court?**

- Ask job-related questions
- Treat people in a similar way
- Avoid protected questions or comments.

## Conclusion

**REFER** participants to the Structured Interview template in the back of their workbook. It is also in the back of this Leader's Guide.

**EXPLAIN:**

- There is a template for a structured interview in the back of your workbook. Feel free to use it as a worksheet to identify specific job competencies and the associated behaviors for success in that position.

**THANK** participants for attending.

# **HANDOUTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**Meeting Announcement Letter**

**Meeting Announcement Posting**

**Icebreaker: What Do You See**

**Structured Interview Template**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You have been selected to attend a behavior-based interviewing strategy class, called *Actions Speak*.

Following the workshop, you will be able to:

- Define behavior-based interviewing as a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.
- Explain the benefits of using a behavior-based interviewing strategy.
- Formulate behavior-based interview questions.
- Gain behavioral predictors by asking past-event questions and following up with behavioral probes.
- Ask reverse questions to minimize snap judgments and bias.
- Ask follow-up probes for more information when a candidate's body language signals a strong feeling about an answer.
- Improve defensibility and minimize legal risks by asking job-related questions during a structured interview.

Workshop details are:

Date:

Time:

Location:

All managers and supervisors are invited to attend  
a behavior-based interviewing strategy class,  
called *Actions Speak!*

The workshop details are as follows:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Following the workshop, you will be able to:

- Define behavior-based interviewing as a job-related interviewing strategy that draws from past actions to predict future performance.
- Explain the benefits of using a behavior-based interviewing strategy.
- Formulate behavior-based interview questions.
- Gain behavioral predictors by asking past-event questions and following up with behavioral probes.
- Ask reverse questions to minimize snap judgments and bias.
- Ask follow-up probes for more information when a candidate's body language signals a strong feeling about an answer.
- Improve defensibility and minimize legal risks by asking job-related questions during a structured interview.

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**Structured Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_ (job)

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Before the interview**, look at a job description and identify four key job skills. Write each job skill in the Competencies section of the matrix. Write each competency again in the Competency boxes. Define what an employee would need to do to be successful in that area. Create behavior-based questions related to each competency in the space that follows the Competency boxes.

**Begin the interview** with the career question below and continue by reading (and checking off) selected questions to the candidate. Take notes to summarize each answer and probe by re-reading the question or part of it. Use an equivalent amount of time for each candidate.

**After the interview**, check the rating box (below) that shows the level of the answers. Then make your hiring decision based on the match of the candidate's answers to the job skills/competencies.

**Competencies**

**Rating Anchors**

The full competency definition is at the top of each group of questions. The competencies are NOT ranked in order of importance.	<b>Little Evidence For the Skill</b>	<b>Between</b>	<b>Some Evidence For The Skill</b>	<b>Between</b>	<b>Strong Evidence For The Skill</b>
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Career / Work Experience Question: Please give a quick overview of the professional jobs you have held, and describe the most important work experiences that you have had that relate to the position for which you are being considered.

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Competency #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
... is being able to

\_\_\_ 1.

\_\_\_ 2.

\_\_\_ 3.

\_\_\_ 4.

EVALUATION ONLY

Competency #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
... is being able to

\_\_\_ 1.

\_\_\_ 2.

\_\_\_ 3.

\_\_\_ 4.



Competency #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
... is being able to

\_\_\_ 1.

\_\_\_ 2.

\_\_\_ 3.

\_\_\_ 4.

EVALUATION ONLY

Competency #4 \_\_\_\_\_  
... is being able to

\_\_\_ 1.

\_\_\_ 2.

\_\_\_ 3.

\_\_\_ 4.

# For more information...

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