

# THE STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Enhancing Staff Selection

**Normand Pettersen  
and André Durivage**

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**A**CCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH, the structured interview is a more effective way to conduct interviews compared to the traditional approach. In addition, the structured interview offers a more equitable treatment of candidates and is more easily defensible in court.

In this book, the authors present the most current knowledge and techniques regarding the selection interview. They provide a practical guide which takes into consideration numerous organizational constraints. Depending on the specific situation in which it may apply, different ways of conducting a selection interview are presented along with their advantages and limitations.



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The authors explain in detail how to prepare a structured interview, develop the best questions possible, conduct the interview, and use the information gathered to evaluate candidates. They propose answers and possible solutions to the most common questions and problems that arise when conducting interviews. They also provide meaningful tools and practical exercises designed for human resource professionals and for anyone willing to improve their ability to use structured interviews, an indispensable tool in personnel selection.

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### ■ THE STRUCTURED JOB-RELATED INTERVIEW DEFINED

- Criteria for the Effectiveness of the Selection Interview
- The Structured Interview: Characteristics and Advantages
- The Job-related Interview: Characteristics and Advantages
- Comparison with Other Evaluation Methods
- Most Common Objections to Using the Structured Interview

### ■ THE SELECTION INTERVIEW PROCESS

#### Step 1 – Job Analysis

- Writing a Job Description for Selection Purposes
- The Critical Incident Method
- The Competency-based Approach

#### Step 2 – Selection Criteria and Decision Rules

- Turning the Job into Selection Criteria
- Defining the Selection Criteria
- Choosing the Selection Criteria to Be Measured by Interview
- Determining the Indicators or Expected Responses
- Establishing Decision Rules

#### Step 3 – The Interview Guide

- Standardizing the Questions and Their Sequence
- Formulating Questions
- Content of the Questions

- Main Types of Questions
- Communication Techniques and Ways of Asking Questions
- Preparing and Sequencing the Questions
- Length of the Interview and Number of Questions
- Preparing the Introduction
- Preparing the Conclusion
- Writing the Interview Guide

#### Step 4 – Conducting the Interview

- Remember the Objectives of the Interview
- Limit Access to Ancillary Information
- Establish Facilitating Conditions
- Techniques for Maintaining the Structure and Keeping Control of the Interview
- Techniques for Preserving the Candidate's Self-Esteem
- Let Them Talk: You Listen
- Observe Certain Rules of Conduct
- Taking Notes
- Conducting an Interview by Committee
- Using the Same Interviewers for All Candidates

#### Step 5 – Evaluation

- Standardizing the Evaluation
- Evaluation by Questions
- Evaluation by Criteria
- By Questions or by Criteria?
- Recommended Rating Scales
- Supplementary Notations
- Factors That Can Distort the Evaluation
- Evaluation by Committee
- Overall Evaluation Sheet

#### Step 6 – Making the Decision

- Overall Score
- A Cut-off Score for Each Selection Criterion
- Mixed Systems
- Other Considerations

#### Appendixes

- Example of a Job Description for Selection Purposes
- Tools for Collecting Critical Incidents
- Example of Selection Criteria Identification
- Inventory and Definitions of Selection Criteria for Management Positions
- A Guide to Designing Situational and Behavioural Questions
- Exercise on Preparing Situational and Behavioural Questions
- Exercise on Recognizing and Obtaining a True and Complete Behaviour Description in Response to Behavioural Questions
- Exercise on Maintaining the Structure of the Interview and Preserving the Candidate's Self-Esteem
- Exercise on Distinguishing between a Fact and an Interpretation When Taking Notes
- Exercise on Organizing Candidates' Responses According to Evaluation Criteria