

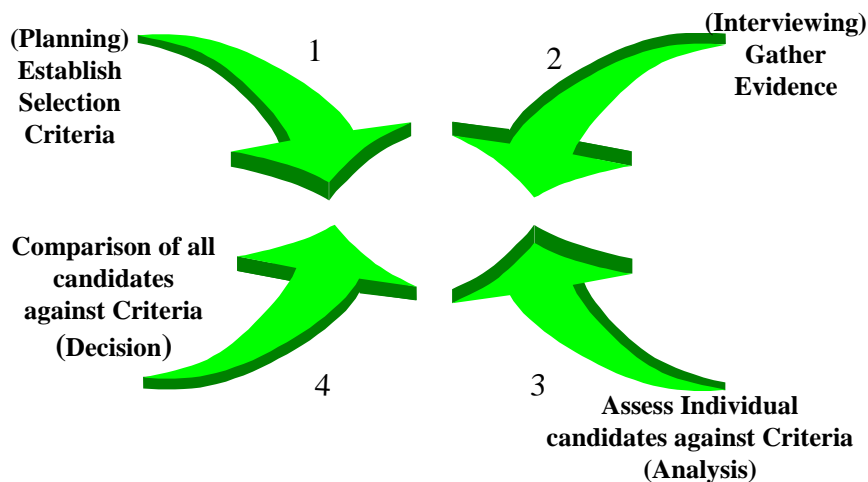
# The Employment Interview

## Part 3

### How to Conduct the Interview

In part 1 of this 4 part series we explored the first step of the selection interviewing framework listed below. In part 2 we discussed the preparation of interview questions. In part 3 we will explore the correct way to conduct the interview itself. As always we will refer to the selection interviewing framework shown below. Part 3 addresses the third stage of the framework, name gathering evidence.

## Selection Interviewing Framework



So far, we have planned the interview, reviewed the do's and don'ts; created a list of interview questions, so now what? Like anything else you do, it is important to create a structure or a roadmap of sorts for both you and the candidate. I would suggest the following sequence. This assumes a 60 minute interview and can be adapted to any length.

# Interview Length: 60 minutes

5

25

20

10/20

Opening	Candidate Discussion	Questions	The Job (Sale)
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1. **The Opening (5 minutes).** The purpose of the opening is to put the applicant at ease, explain the upcoming interview process and answer any general questions the individual might have. Remember, candidates who are comfortable will provide much more information than those who are not. General chit chat is fine, but be sure to tell them what to expect for the next 55 minutes.
2. **Candidate Discussion (25 minutes).** This is the opportunity for the candidate to provide his/her background in their own words and **WITHOUT** interruption. Some of you may use the “tell me about yourself” technique but I would suggest something a bit more structured such as:

“If you could please take me back to High School and take 20-30 minutes to tell me about where you have worked, your school experience and anything else you think I should know about you.”

That’s it. Sit back and listen. Here is where the 80/20 rule really pays off. You listen 80% of the time in an interview. What will you learn from this question? How about:

- Things that are important to the candidate
- Reasons for leaving jobs (if they don’t tell you be sure to make a note to ask later)

- Things they did at their previous employment
- Sequence of employment. (Is this the same sequence as stated in the resume?)
- Detail orientation. Do they accomplish this task in 5 minutes? If so how detailed do you think they are? Better be sure if this is one of the “Gotta Haves”. On the flip side, after 10 minutes are they still discussing college?
- Likes and dislikes about their college experience, jobs, bosses etc.

There is quite a bit you have learned so far, now on to step 3

3. **Questions (20 minutes).** In this section you ask the candidate the various “gotta have” and “nice to have” questions you have prepared. The nice thing about this sequence is that should you decide after step 2 that this is the wrong candidate, skip step 3 and move to step 4. This is also the time to ask questions that were generated by the candidate’s discussion. For example, did they tell you why they want to leave their current employment? If not, ask them! Was there something about their relationship with a previous boss that bothers you? If so ask them! Was there an answer that didn’t make sense? Clarify it!
4. **The Job/Sale (5-10 minutes).** After steps 1-3 are concluded it is time to decide if this is someone you are serious about. If not, tell them a bit about the job and company tell them what happens next and move on. If so, here is your opportunity to “sell” the job, the company and everything associated with the opportunity. Remember even in a difficult economy excellent candidates have options.

Remember, interviewing is really gathering evidence to make a rational decision. Here are some other hints:

1. Do not be afraid to probe. Every candidate is trying to put their best foot forward and will often gloss over important but painful issues. Does this sound familiar?  
 Interviewer: Why did you leave xyz company?  
 Interviewee: Well I found a much better opportunity.  
 Do you accept this on face value? Why was the opportunity better? Or this?  
 Interviewer: Tell me about a failure you have had in your career.

Interviewee: Well to be honest with you I have never had one. You buying this? It is Ok to probe and dig until you are satisfied with the answer.

2. Allow silence. While a little pause may be uncomfortable to you it is important to give the candidate a chance to think of a specific example you have asked for.
3. Be sure to ask questions about the past. This is the best predictor of the future. (See our list of interview questions on our website)
4. Do not use closed ended questions. Yes and no questions are not very valuable and can almost always be phrased in an open ended way.
5. Do not ask multiple questions at once. The candidate will not be able to keep track of the different parts of the question and may stumble trying to answer. Direct simple questions are the best.
6. Do not ask leading questions. “Don’t you think...” lead a candidate in the direction you want them to go and you may or may not get accurate information.

In part 4 we will bring the entire process together. While interviewing is time consuming the results are well worth the effort. Don’t have the time, let GHRO help. GHRO has the experience and resources in this area, give us a call (949) 797-2035 or e-mail me, Jeff Stinson at [jstinson@ghrogroup.com](mailto:jstinson@ghrogroup.com)

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