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The Best Interviews:

How to evaluate and sell at the same time

A Presentation for the AIA Practice
Management Knowledge Community:

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“I feel strongly that the interview is the most flawed process in American business.”

-- Larry Bossidy

in “The Job No CEO Should Delegate”

Harvard Business Review

March, 2001

Interview Goals

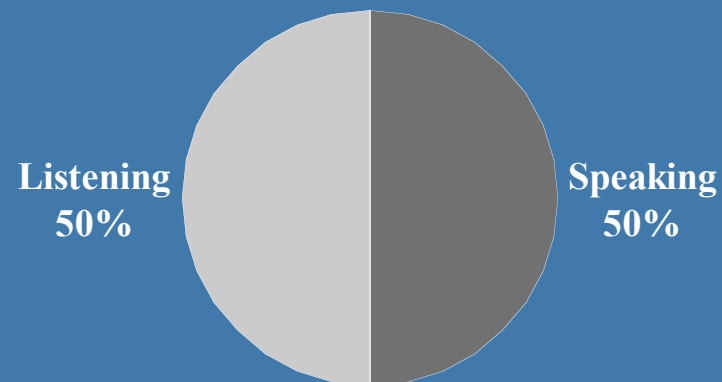
- Before The Interview
- The Initial Interview
- Discovery Interview
- Closing Interview

Before The Interview

- Specific objective (Evaluate)
- Designate interview process manager (Sell)
- Action plan for each meeting with potential candidates (Evaluate and Sell)

The Initial Interview

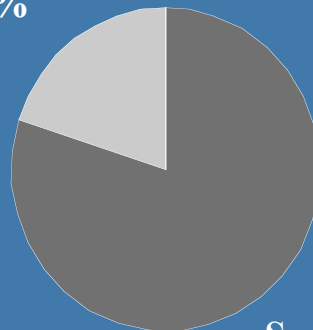
- Determine whether or not candidate returns (Evaluate)
- Curiosity to learn more about your firm (Sell)
- More impressed than before the interview (Sell)



Discovery Interview

- Opportunity to determine if candidate has necessary skills, experiences (Evaluate)
- Opportunity to discover if candidate has abilities and motivation (Sell)

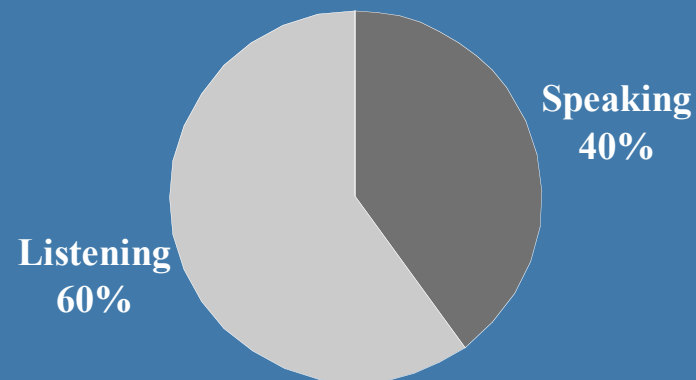
Listening
20%



Speaking
80%

Closing Interview

- Cultural fit (Evaluate)
- Career fit (Sell)



Interview Tone

- Arrangements (Sell)
- Candidate communication (Sell)
- Location (Sell)
- Format (Evaluate)

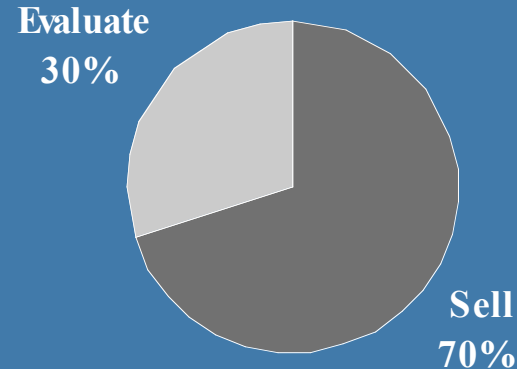
Rules of Thumb for Process

- Choose setting and interviewer based on candidate
- No more than 3 on 1
- Prepare candidate for next step

Interview Content

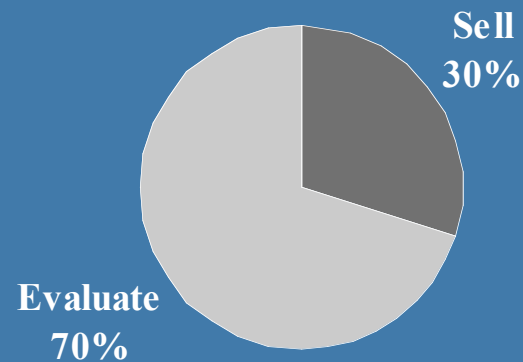
- Varies by phase
- Varies by candidate
- Varies by goal

The Initial Interview



- Tell the firm's story in broad strokes
- Share the vision; give examples
- Ask about candidate's career desires and motivations
- Explain how this hire will move firm towards vision

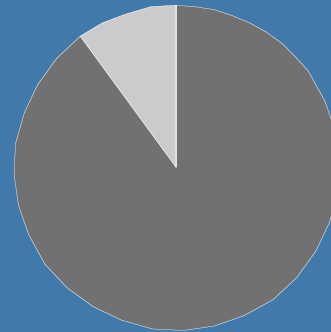
The Discovery Interview



- Ask question after question about candidate's achievements
- Skills, experience, ability, motivation
- Summarize by describing meshing candidate's motivation to firm's vision

The Closing Interview

Evaluate
10%



Sell
90%

- Every word spoken should have a selling component
- Laser-beam focus on how this move will enhance candidate's quality of life

Rules Of Thumb For Interview Content

- Take notes and refer to them
- Seek immediate feedback
- Provide positive feedback
- Remember “square peg-round hole” mistakes

After The Interview

- Solicit feedback from candidate and interviewer immediately
- Change interview process and content if necessary
- Remember feedback is tainted by hidden agendas
- Set up next step or eliminate candidate as soon as possible

Don't let your behavior sabotage the interview!

1. Your attitude
 - in general
 - specific to an interview
2. Your interview style

Your attitude toward interviewing in general

- Hubris
- Houseblind-ness
- Impatience

Possible attitudes

- Desperate
- Curious
- Tolerant
- Circumspect

Instead ...

Be Enthusiastic!

Interview styles

- The friend
- The interrogator
- The critic
- The salesperson

Interview Styles: advantages and disadvantages

Type	Interview Tone	Interviewing Advantages	Interviewing Disadvantages
The Friend	Free-flowing; intimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The candidate will like you. •You get a sense of the candidate's real personality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Candidate realizes that you're not guiding/structuring the interview. •Candidate can be confused
The Interrogator	A series of questions aimed at candidate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You get answers. •Candidate-centric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Puts candidate on defensive •Does not acknowledge that candidate needs information •Not collegial. •Not conversational. Interviewer gets information he wants: does not let other information emerge
The Critic	Like a Design critic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gets at rationale, motivation •Demonstrates candidate's ability to think on feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Puts candidate in subordinate position •Makes candidate guarded
The Salesperson	Pitch the firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creates excitement •Provides persuasive information that the candidate may not know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Candidate does not feel valued.

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The Blend

Type	Recommended Emphasis	Rationale
Friend	40%	Puts the person at ease. They will be more open, revealing more about themselves than if they are put on guard.
Interrogator	20%	Gets answers to important questions.
Critic	10%	Demonstrates and ability to be a critical thinker, not just a cheerleader.
Salesperson	30%	Creates enthusiasm and cache about the firm and the position. Conveys information the candidate needs to know ... especially with his/her hot buttons in mind.

What you want an interview sequence to do

- Understand background
- Gauge ability
- Determine fit
- Create interest

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Using styles to get what you want

	Interview Goal			
	Understand background	Gauge Ability	Determine Fit	Create Interest
Friend	X		X	
Interrogator	X			
Critic		X		
Sales Person				X

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Two Truths: don't forget them

1. You're in a seller's market
2. Candidates have long memories



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