



# CLIENT ADVOCATE NETWORK

Connecting PEOPLE, CAPITAL & KNOWLEDGE

1524 Brookhollow Drive, Santa Ana, CA. 92705 | T: (714) 668-9500 | F (714) 668-9700 | [www.ClientAdvocateNetwork.com](http://www.ClientAdvocateNetwork.com)

## FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS THAT AREN'T A WASTE OF TIME

By:

Brad Remillard & Barry Deutsch  
IMPACT Hiring Solutions

The problem with most interviews is that they never get to the core issue: Can this candidate succeed in the open position?

Instead, most interviews skip along the surface of a candidate's resume at 40,000 feet, pausing here or there for an anecdote, or for a brief "Tell me more."

Alternatively, they turn into interrogations—hostile encounters where the interviewer sprays the candidate with rapid-fire accusatory questions, seemingly convinced at the outset that every line on the resume is an embellishment or an outright lie.

Neither interview style is likely to result in hiring the best candidate for the job. Fact is, most common interview questions ask for the same generic information, over and over and over. Interviewers hope some of them will help to uncover critical "culture" and "fit" issues, but they don't. Candidates hope they can respond to the questions in a way that tells the interviewer what they want to hear.

### Useless Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work here?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why should I hire you?
- How do you feel about \_\_\_\_?
- Where do you see yourself in five to ten years?
- What can you do for us that another person can't?
- If you were an animal/tree/plant, what would you be?
- How do you feel about long working hours?

The problem with each of these questions is that they do not focus on what's needed to get the job done. They aren't relevant to the position's Success Factors. They don't allow an interviewer to ascertain, "Will this candidate succeed at what needs to be done?"

A systematic, structured interview based around the Success Factor Snapshot is critical to hiring successful, Top 5% performers.

[www.ClientAdvocateNetwork.com](http://www.ClientAdvocateNetwork.com)

Accounting • Banking • Consulting • HR • Insurance • Legal • Marketing • Technology • Wealth Resources

In our years as executive recruiters, we've seen interviewers stumble occasionally in the first few minutes of an interview. When you are conducting a Success Factor-based interview, it's vital to create conditions that make candidates feel comfortable sharing in-depth information about their background, including their current position.

Candidates need to feel safe about discussing situations and experiences that may be sensitive. So, before diving into the "meat and potatoes" of the interview, take five to seven minutes to establish an appropriate mood and tone for what's ahead.

Basic "small talk" can go a long way toward relaxing candidates enough to ensure a fair interview.

*"Thank you for coming in today. How was your drive?"*

*"Did you have any trouble finding the office?"*

*"Can I get you something to sip: water or coffee?"*

*"Can I take your coat/jacket?"*

While it may seem unnecessary to mention these basic courtesies, it's not unusual for hiring executives to skip right over them in their zeal to get to the heart of the matter. A comfortable candidate is a more honest, candid candidate.

Next, describe the type of interview you're about to conduct. Obviously, it's best if the interview format isn't "sprung" on the candidate on the day of the first face-to-face. They should already have been briefed on this structure ahead of time, during phone screenings and the invitation to be interviewed. Your "setting the stage" is just a way of easing into a form of interview that will in all likelihood be foreign to many candidates.

Most candidates are expecting the interview to be just like every other interview they've ever been through (or even like the ones they conduct) in which the interviewer regurgitates the resume, line by line, occasionally pausing to ask the useless questions like those listed above. When unprepared candidates encounter questions about accomplishments, achievements, outcomes, and results, they may freeze like a deer caught in oncoming headlights. That's why "setting the stage" is a critical element of having a successful interview.

Three other key items to share with the candidate before you start asking questions:

1. Make the job important. You should stress the opportunity and importance of the open position. It's a basic law of human nature that people like to feel important. Make the candidate understand up front how the job is a critical part of the company's overall future success. We suggest in our workshops that you should literally take the job and put it up on a pedestal.
2. State two or three of the most critical Success Factors up front. This serves as a preview for the candidate and helps to get him or her thinking about comparable situations, accomplishments, examples, and anecdotes.
3. Share the vision for your company two to three years from now. Without burning up too much time, share with the candidate the compelling vision of the future for your business. In addition, demonstrate how this role will specifically impact that vision. You've already developed the vision during the writing of the Compelling Marketing Statement – now all you have to do is get everyone on the interview committee to be able to share the same picture.

# # #

---

To discuss this article or other hiring matters, please contact one of our Directors at  
(714) 668-9500 or [info@ClientAdvocateNetwork.com](mailto:info@ClientAdvocateNetwork.com).