



Probing in the Employment Interview

Interview Probes

- Interview probes are follow-up questions or prompts used by the interviewer to guide the candidate's description of situations or events or to provide elaboration of answers.

Examples of Interview Probes

- Some probes can be written in advance, and only asked as necessary, in anticipation of probable responses and with consideration of the information that will be required in scoring. Although the situation will determine what appropriate probe is needed, some common probes that might be prepared in advance include:
 - "What was the situation?"
 - "What did you do?"
 - "What did you say?"
 - "What was your role?"
 - "What was the result?"
 - "What would you do differently if faced with this situation again?"
 - "Could you tell me more about...?"

Benefits of Interview Probes

- Probing in the interview can help:
 - **Guide** the candidate's answers in a relevant direction
 - Draw out and **expand** answers so that they can be adequately scored
 - Focus candidates on actual **past events**, versus hypothetical actions or philosophies
 - Assist in gaining **insight** into the competencies, background, experience and learning of the candidate
 - **Clarify** vague and ambiguous facts and ensure understanding
 - Determine the **candidate's role** in the situation as opposed to others by focusing on "I" versus "We"
 - **Validate** what has been said
 - Reduce the influence of **impression management** and rehearsed and non authentic answers

Guidelines for Interview Probes

- In order to ensure you get the most out of probes:
 - Avoid **leading questions** that provide part of, or hint at, the desired answer
 - Make note of your probes and **ensure consistent** use with other candidates as applicable

Reference:

Catano, V., Cronshaw, S., Wiesner, W., Hackett, R., & Methot, L., (2001). *Recruitment and Selection in Canada*. 2nd edition. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Series in Human Resources Management.