

Interview views

In an endeavour to identify and hire the right candidate, most companies today are resorting to newer interviewing techniques as opposed to the mundane ones, discovers **Sheetal Srivastava**

Picture this! You walk in for a job interview at your dream company and the interviewer asks you – “How many golf balls would you fit into a school bus?” Baffled? Obviously, you were because you weren't prepared for it. But several progressive companies are devising unique interviewing techniques to hire the best. And as job-seekers, you will have to take into consideration these changes, for the job interview scene has undergone a major transformation.

Beyond work and role, is HR now grilling candidates on problem-solving and real-life situations? “Since the work pressure is tremendous and every employee is expected to perform within the set parameters, HR has to now work on evaluating candidates on problem-solving and real-life situations. If an employee is unable to tackle tough situations and is asked to leave, it hampers the whole work process till another suitable candidate for that role is found and trained accordingly. This affects the overall output of the company and makes hiring an expensive process. Thus, it is imperative for HR managers to handpick employees, especially the ones holding key positions,” explains Pritpal Kullar, director-human resources, Max Bupa Health Insurance.

As organisations are becoming more vigilant about whom they hire, Nihilent too, has formulated a unique approach towards finding the right candidate. To judge a candidate's listening skills, willingness to explain, humility, patience, etc, he/she is asked to present before a nasty group and see how he/she behaves. This helps in judging how capable the candidate is in handling a difficult situation. They are also asked to draw diagrams and explain or write a letter. “We can train people in technology, but cannot teach human evolution. This is a skill, which is inborn and cannot be taught,” says Ravi Teja, senior associate vice president, country manager - India and head - enterprise transformation group, Nihilent.



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“Today, interviewing techniques not only test the candidate's skill-set in a particular domain, but they are also about gauging his/her mind-set and adaptability. There are questions that focus on specific behaviour and action; for example, what is your recent achievement? Or what was your recent failure and what did you learn from it? All of these reveal personality traits of the person that help interviewers evaluate if the person will fit in an organisation's culture and how he/she will deal with people around him/her,” expresses Prashant Bhatnagar, director hiring, Sapient India.

Organisations no longer want people who have mastered their theories; they would rather have real people who have suffered failures and worked on them. “Some of the techniques we use are multiple rounds of interviews and cross functional interviews, so that we can get a wider perspective of the candidate from the organisational context. Also, we get a better understanding of the candidate's accomplishments and thereby an indication of his/her potential. We also conduct Behavioural Event Interviews (BEIs), which helps in profiling the candi-

date's suitability to the organisation,” shares Sudakshina Bhattacharya, head HR, IL&FS Financial Services.

At Sapient, the recruitment process integrates a combination of recruitment techniques. “We start off with a pre-screen test, which focuses on understanding the candidate's problem comprehension and problem-solving ability and also their technology skills. Short-listed candidates then go through an attribute test to gauge their fitment with the company's culture and value system. It is then followed by a domain round, which helps us understand the thought process involved in solving a business problem using technology,” notes Bhatnagar.

So the next time an interviewer asks you an offbeat question, don't fret. And if you are preparing yourself for questions like, “Where do you see yourself five years from now?,” you need to revisit your strategy.

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