

Interviewing

A professional person will virtually always be asked to interview with from one to twenty-five or more different members of a hiring organization. Many people look forward to these interviews, especially initial “screening” interviews, with the same ambivalence that precedes an operation—and with good reason. Interviewing, for many people, is an anxiety-arousing, painful experience in which they display little skill or common sense. Exhibit 27-1 outlines some of the common problems that arise in interviews.

The archetype of the poor interviewee is the young student. Such a person goes into an interview, especially at the beginning of the recruiting season, with an awkward feeling that is usually reinforced by his or her friends (“Hey, Jerry, is that really you underneath that suit and without any hair?”). Sometimes people have a gnawing feeling, which they know is silly, that they are basically unemployable (born in the wrong century). At some level, these young people often see the interviewer as someone with life-or-death power over them (which frightens some and enrages others). The fright, anger, and awkwardness are made even worse in the interview when the interviewer doesn’t behave as the interviewee somehow expects. Trembling or hostile, interviewees exhibit defensive behaviors that even they usually recognize are not in their own best interests. As a result, some people have real difficulty getting job offers—even people who eventually go on to have splendid careers.

Much of the anxiety that accompanies a person into an interview can be reduced or eliminated by following the procedures outlined previously in this book. People who are confident in knowing who they are and what they want invariably feel more relaxed going into interviews than people who don’t. Even people who spend just a half-hour or so before an interview (or a set of interviews) doing some research on the employer tend to be more confident and relaxed.

In addition, we have found that anxiety can be significantly reduced if you have a realistic understanding of the context of the job interview, the different types of job interviews, and the situation the interviewer is in. A surprisingly large number of people go into interviewing situations with very unrealistic assumptions.

For example, most job interviews are thirty to sixty minutes long. As any successful salesperson knows, it’s extremely difficult to sell an expensive and complex product (and let’s face it, you are an expensive and complex product) within a short time constraint without excellent preparation. Yet many interviewees do not prepare adequately.

Being prepared in a job interview has two elements: (1) anticipating what the interviewer will want from you and being ready to supply it; (2) knowing what you want from the interviewer and being ready to ask for it.

Exhibits 27-2 and 27-3 supply data on what interviewers want from an interview. When 236 recruiters

Exhibit 27-1

Common Problems in Recruiting Interviewing

Common Problems for Interviewees	Common Causes	Appropriate Action
Is unable to present self and ask questions within short time.	Does not recognize implications of 30-minute interview.	Prepare. Polished answers to usual questions and a set of key questions to ask.
Tries to do too much in on-campus interview.	Does not recognize screening purpose of first interview.	Recognize purpose of first interview.
Behaves in calculated, guarded way. Appears to be insincere.	Assumes goals of both parties are in conflict.	Recognize <i>mutual</i> desire to find a good "fit."
Gets angry at interviewer for not conducting good interview. Anger makes it worse.	Assumes interviewer will be competent.	Understand the interviewer's frame of reference. Be prepared to make his/her job easier.
Gets angry at what appears to be incompetence. Creates poor impression.	Is unaware of organizational and situational constraints on interviewer.	Assume interviewer wants to do a good job, but is operating within unknown constraints.
Stresses wrong things in interview.	Incorrect assumptions about interviewer's criteria.	Try to get some idea in advance about screening criteria.
Highly anxious in interview. Creates poor impression.	Bad history in interviews, assumes stakes are gigantic.	Being prepared tends to relieve anxiety, as do realistic expectations. Know the company, self.
Judges and rejects interviewer quickly.	Fear of rejection.	Be aware of fear, be realistic about process.
Interview ends without discussion of relevant issues.	Interviewee either misunderstands interviewer's purpose and method or is unwilling or unable to take initiative.	Assess the interviewer's skill. If purposeful, realize importance of "fit." If unskilled, gently ask appropriate questions.
Learns nothing from interview.	Assumes the interviewer is the only one who has purpose.	Recognize your purpose to gather information. Prepare questions based on implications and be prepared to seek answers at the appropriate time.

were asked what behavior on the part of the interviewees led to the "best" interviews, they responded as shown in Exhibit 27-2. Interviewers seem generally to like interviewees who have "done their homework"—who know what they want, and who know something about the organization they are interviewing. In another survey of well-known business and industrial concerns, college recruiters were asked what types of questions they typically ask in an interview (see Exhibit 27-3). Exhibit 27-4 lists some common questions by interviewers with different styles. Well-prepared students take the time to create short (one- to five-minute) articulate answers to these kinds of questions before they begin interviewing prospective employers. These students seem to be much more successful.

Types of Interviews

When preparing for interviews and while interviewing, it is important to remember that there are a number of different kinds of job interviews.

Screening Interviews

The primary purpose of the screening interview is to save an organization and its managers time and money by limiting the number of job applications they will have to examine. The interviewer has a very limited number of more or less specific criteria that constitute the rough screen. The question he or she is addressing is simply: Does the interviewee make

Exhibit 27-2

What Made the Best Interviews?*

1. <i>Interviewee knew about company</i> ("had done homework," "knows the field")	66% (174)
2. <i>Interviewee had specific career goals</i> ("knew what he/she wanted," "good fit between our needs and his/hers," "well-thought-out career interests")	41% (108)
3. <i>Interviewee knowledgeable</i> ("asked good questions," "knew what to ask")	29% (76)
4. <i>Interviewee socially adept</i> ("rapport," "in tune with me," "outgoing and expressive")	28% (74)
5. <i>Interviewee articulate</i> ("able to express ideas," "spoke well," "good with tricky questions")	19% (50)

*Based on questionnaire responses from 236 people who recruited at Harvard Business School in 1973; more than one response allowed.

it through the screen or not? The campus interview is typically a screening interview. So are many of the interviews in large companies with a person from "personnel."

The most common mistake made by job applicants in screening interviews is to try to get into too much depth. In many cases, especially with larger corporations, the responsibility of the individual doing the screening stops at selecting from among the interviewees the most appropriate candidates to be invited for a second interview, usually on the company's premises. The interviewer in such cases is seldom the final decision maker regarding a job offer and may not even know the specific requirements of the jobs to be filled. Consequently, an interviewee who attempts to tell an interviewer everything about him or herself, and who tries to learn everything about the company and job, as if both parties had to make a final decision regarding employment on the spot, seriously undermines a screening interview.

Decision Interviews

A second type of interview is with the person (or one of the persons) whose responsibility it is actually to make the hiring decision. These interviews sometimes conclude with the interviewer making a job offer. The question that guides the interviewer's behavior is this: Do I want to hire this person? In this type of interview, you want to make your full "sales presentation." Forgetting or not having time to tell all the major messages you have—about what you want in a job and career, why you want that, and why you think you can help the company with its needs and problems—can diminish your possibilities of getting a job offer. At this stage, it is important to go into detail.

Data-Gathering Interviews

A third type of interview is with people who will have only an input into the hiring decision, and who often will end up working with the person who is hired. Because they have less at stake in the hiring decision, they often are more casual and less prepared for the interview. The key question that tends to go through their minds is this: What's it going to be like around here if this person is hired?

Exhibit 27-3

The Most Commonly Asked Questions*: General Classification

1. Goals and purposes—Life purposes—Career objectives
2. Type of work desired—Kind of job—Job expectations
3. Reasons for selection of company—Knowledge of company.
4. Personal qualifications—Strengths and weaknesses
5. Career choice—Reasons for decisions
6. Qualifications for the job—How college education has prepared the candidate
7. Educational choices and plans—Choice of college—Choice of major
8. Geographical preferences—Willingness to relocate
9. Major achievements and accomplishments

*From the *29th Annual Endicott Report*, by Frank S. Endicott, Director of Placement Emeritus, Northwestern University, Copyright 1974 by Northwestern University.

Exhibit 27-4

Questions Frequently Asked by Interviewers with Different Styles

Stress Interview Questions:

Given your background, you don't seem to be qualified for this job.
People like you (on whatever dimension) have never done well in our firm. Why do you think you will?
We aren't hiring this year, just keeping in touch.
We only take the best people. What makes you think you measure up?
I think you're wrong. (To whatever you might say.)

Specialized Knowledge or Skill Questions:

How do you calculate ROI?
What is PIMS and how would you use it in this job?
What is the corporation's liability under Title IX?
What would OSHA (or other related regulatory agency) say about that?
How would you assess the future of this industry given the current situation?

Open-Ended Questions:

Tell me about yourself.
What do you know about our company?
What is important for us to talk about today?
What do you plan to do in this industry?
What else would you like to know? Or talk about?
What questions do you have?

Person-Job Fit Questions:

This job demands assertiveness. Are you assertive? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
What kind of person do you think would succeed in our company? Could you?

Interviewees often treat this third type of interview just like the second one; this is a mistake that can create problems. It's important in this third type of interview just to establish some rapport with the person, and not to try to make the big sale. Coming on too strong with potential peers might hurt an interviewee (few people like the idea of too much competition around them). Because the stakes are somewhat lower in this type of interview than in the second type, one can also safely allocate more time to gathering information from the interviewer (more on that in the next chapter).

Although the objectives of these three types of interviews are different, they are seldom in direct conflict with the objectives of the interviewee. Both parties want very much to find someone who can meet their needs. A job decision never works out really well unless both sets of needs are met. (If only one set is met, the employee will typically quit or be fired before too long.) For these reasons it is in the best interest of both parties to see if they have compatible resources and needs. Yet interviewees sometimes assume an adversary relationship, taking the interviewer's objectives to be in conflict with their own. They behave in a somewhat guarded and

competitive way. Not only does that behavior undermine the interview, but it usually gives the interviewer a poor impression of the interviewee.¹

An Interviewer's Perspective

I spend nearly all my time between January and March interviewing at universities. It's a tough three months. I'm almost always on the road and away from home. The pace can be very hectic.

Yesterday is a beautiful example of the difficulties involved in this job. I got in late two nights ago. Yesterday morning during breakfast I briefly looked over the résumés of the 15 people I was supposed to see that day. Three of them looked like a mistake; I couldn't imagine why they wanted an interview with us. Because I was running late I walked three blocks in the rain to flag down a cab. I managed to get to the campus a few minutes before my first interview—who didn't show up.

¹Interviewers usually react negatively if they think the interviewee isn't being honest. This happens surprisingly often. In a 1973 survey of interviewers at Harvard Business School, 60 percent said they felt they were being more honest than the interviewees, while only 9 percent said they felt less honest than the interviewees. An interviewee who assumes an adversary stance often comes across as being not very honest.

I got some coffee and then had a good interview at 9:30. When I asked the 10:00 interviewee, shortly after we started talking, if he had worked full time before coming to school, he gave this annoyed look and said, "I sent you my résumé two months ago—haven't you read it yet?" The interview went downhill from there. My schedule had no break in it until 12:30, and for that last half-hour I thought more about my bladder than about the student I was interviewing. I think my 2:30 interviewee was just trying to kill a half-hour between the naps he takes in his classes. He didn't even know what business we were in and had no conception of what he wanted to do. What a waste of time. My 4:00 interviewee was a very impressive young man, but I can't get over the feeling that I was conned. Some of these kids are more skilled at interviewing than I am. When I got back to my hotel at 5:45, I immediately started reviewing the day and my notes. Already the interviews were beginning to blur together. You know, you end up thinking, now which one was the guy who said such and such.

Last week I came up against one of the parts of the job that really annoys me. I interviewed a young woman that I think could turn out to be a very important addition to one of our divisions. But I decided against recommending her because it was too risky. You see, in evaluating my contribution it can take years and years to determine whether the people I recommended (who eventually join the company) are a real success. But it only takes 12 months or less to determine if they are a disaster. So I tend to be evaluated more on not producing disasters. And that, of course, discourages risk taking. And hiring that woman would, I'm afraid, be risky.

I hired seven people for my department last year. I must have interviewed around 50 people. Of all the parts of my job, I feel in many ways least sure about this one. I keep thinking, there must be a better way.

Interviewing is often an intrusion on other parts of my job. As a result, I'm sure that at least some of the time when I'm interviewing someone my mind and heart are elsewhere. And I can't believe I do an effective job under those circumstances. I often wish I could spend a lot more time with interviewees, but that's just not possible.

I've read a few things on the subject of how to interview, but they haven't been terribly useful. I still wonder if I'm asking the right questions or correctly interpreting the interviewee's remarks.

I just don't know what to do with the person who doesn't really know much about us or our industry, or the one who isn't sure what he or she wants. You could spend hours talking to that kind of person trying to sort things out.

On some days when I'm tired and hassled, I wish the interviewee would run the interview. I've actually seen a few who did just that.

Some of the most common mistakes interviewees make stem from their own inaccurate assumptions regarding the interviewer and the position such a person is in. Job hunters, for example, often behave as if the responsibility for the success or failure of

the interview were solely the interviewer's. They themselves assume no responsibility. They further behave as if they expect the interviewer to be extremely competent and working under ideal conditions. When the interviewer subsequently doesn't behave as he or she "should," these people get angry or annoyed, and that feeling further undermines the interview. Less-than-ideal conditions, a less-than-perfect interviewer, and an interviewee who is prepared to tolerate neither systematically produce bad interviews.

The best interviewees not only have realistic expectations regarding the interviewer, they even try to empathize with him or her. Such activity helps them develop a rapport that leaves a favorable impression, as well as helping promote the kind of information exchange that is needed to meet the objectives of the interview.

Interview Structure

Interviews occur in a variety of ways. Sometimes the candidate does all the talking; sometimes the recruiter does all of the talking. Given our basic premise that recruiting is an attempt on the part of *both* the organization and the individual to find a good fit, we believe that a balanced approach is most effective. By that we mean that since the fit is important to both parties, *both* parties in essence have a screen and need to collect data to see if the other passes the screen.

Thus, it is as important for you, the job candidate, to collect information as it is to give it. The company has to sell itself as well as you having to sell yourself. With this mutuality of purpose in mind, you will be able to approach interviews with less anxiety (since the evaluation process is two-way rather than one-way) and with greater clarity about *your* objectives for the interview. Your self-assessment provides the base from which you can develop a list of questions specifically designed to gather information related to your most prominent themes.

Given this dual purpose to a recruiting interview, a common thirty-minute interview structure looks like this:

Greetings and introductions	1–3 minutes
Recruiter's questions and candidate's responses	5–10 minutes
Recruiter's summary question or comment	1–3 minutes
Agreement on the nature and timing of the next step	1–3 minutes
Goodbyes	1 minute

Some recruiters may have so many questions to ask that they may not allow you the time to ask questions (see Exhibit 27-4). You should remember that *you* bear part of the responsibility for the success of the interview. All recruiters are not professional interviewers. Hence, you must decide how you will meet your objectives for the interview. Will you interrupt or divert the recruiter? Will you save your questions for a later interview?

Getting a Commitment

Always get a commitment from the employer before leaving an interview (or a set of interviews) regarding what will happen next, and when you will hear from them next.

Some of the uncertainty that accompanies this period in job hunting can be eliminated simply by asking the employer to clarify the process. When will you make a decision as to whether a job offer will be made? How is that decision reached? When will I hear from you next? Most employers will expect better, more confident job applicants to ask these questions.

In addition, by getting a specific date when you can expect to hear next, you put yourself in a less dependent position. The knowledge of that date allows you more accurately to plan the other aspects of your own job campaign so that you don't suddenly find yourself caught in a timing conflict. If you find that date is too far away—after, for example, you are expected to accept or decline someone else's offer—you can tell the employer so and often get it changed. And when you interview with other employers and are asked when you can reply to their offer, you can respond knowing that it will be after you hear from the places you have already interviewed.

Getting a commitment regarding the time of an employer's reply also reduces the chances that you will be strung along. Without a date, some job hunters wait for weeks or months, often afraid to call or write the employer because it will make them look impatient or desperate. The job applicant who has a commitment to a specific date can legitimately call at once if the employer doesn't respond as promised.

After the Interview

It is a good idea to record your reactions to each interview after it is over. These data will be very

useful to you later during the decision-making process. When you have written your observations down, file them in the folder for that firm.

Your log of the interview may include the data, name of the organization, the name and a description of the recruiter, a list of the questions he/she asked, and an outline of your responses. Note which answers you need to think about and prepare better. Note too the data you collected and how it relates to your self-assessment. Are there still large unanswered portions of your themes and implications? What additional data will you want to get next time? Ask yourself too if you accomplished *your* objectives for the interview. Did you present yourself well?

An Interviewing Exercise

It is probably a good idea for most people to do some practice interviewing before undertaking any serious job interviews. There are any number of ways in which you can practice, (including the one we have just given you based on the Martin Taylor case), but let us also suggest the following exercise.

PARTICIPANTS: 4 people.

TIME: 3 hours.

PREPARATION:

1. Each participant should give a résumé, a brief description of a type of job he or she would like to interview for, and a description of the interviewer and the interview location to one of the other three people.
2. To prepare for being an interviewee, each participant should think about the kinds of questions that may be asked and the kinds of questions he or she may wish to ask in return. (It may be useful to write out some of these questions and answers.)
3. To prepare for being an interviewer, each participant should look over the résumé and job description he or she has been given and consider how to conduct the interview.

THE EXERCISE: The exercise will consist of four thirty-minute interviews (each involving an interviewer, an interviewee, and two observers), each followed by a fifteen-minute debriefing.

1. The interviewer should start and stop the interviews.
2. The observers should record their observations.
3. At the conclusion of each interview the observers should share their observations with the others, and everyone should discuss them.

You may find it useful to enter in this notebook any feedback you receive plus answers to common questions.

Assignment

Read the Martin Taylor case that follows and the On Campus Recruiting Interview Forms that follow it. Try to take the perspective of Martin Taylor about to interview Kathleen Johnson (see page 300 for her résumé) for a position as a commercial banker. What questions would you ask her? Why?

If you had a choice, which of the five recruiting forms would you use? Why? What do you learn from these forms about the variety of criteria used in screening interviews? If you were Kathleen Johnson, what questions would you ask of Martin Taylor? (See below for a copy of Kathleen's theme list.)

Note: If you are taking this material as part of a course, you may want to use a classmate's résumé rather than Kathleen Johnson's to role play the interview. If so, ask the interviewee (job candidate) to give you a copy of his or her résumé before class so you can prepare your questions.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON: THEME LIST

Theme Labels

1. Needs to be close to "family."
2. Needs a group of friends and time to spend with them.
3. Enjoys meeting new people.
4. Wants a job with a lot of interaction with people.
5. But doesn't want to have to get involved with social service or counseling activities.
6. Has a need for constant attention and support.
7. Will buck strict social or organizational norms but then reacts poorly to estrangement.
8. Wants things to be fair and just.
9. Enjoys roles involving leadership and responsibility.
10. Needs a standard or goal to measure myself against.
11. Needs to be a success, preferably number one.
12. Prestige is important.
13. Often needs to be motivated, needs encouragement from authority figures.
14. Is indecisive when confronted with too many options.
15. Disorganized.
16. Practical orientation.
17. Wants activity and variety.
18. Doesn't like situations that require long periods of intellectual effort or theoretical or academic approaches.
19. Uncomfortable with situations requiring creativity.

This case was prepared by Ellen Porter Honnet, research assistant, under the direction of Assistant Professor James G. Clawson for class discussion. Copyright © 1980 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Harvard Business School case 9-481-040.

MARTIN TAYLOR

Martin Taylor, a corporate account manager for one of the largest commercial banks west of the Mississippi, had been asked by the bank's head-

quarters to make a two-day recruiting trip to the East Coast to interview second-year MBA students at a large Eastern business school. This was to be

This case was prepared by Mark P. Kriger, research assistant, under the supervision of Assistant Professor James G. Clawson as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Copyright © 1979 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Harvard Business School case 9-480-035.

the second year in a row that he would be recruiting, a task he had performed conscientiously the previous year. He was not a full-time recruiter, but looked forward to speaking with MBA graduates-to-be from his alma mater. Martin knew that, as much as he tried to plan ahead, the two days of interviewing would be an intense, energy-consuming process and that at the end of it he would be more exhausted than after two days at his regular job at the bank.

Taylor's Background and Preparation for Employment

Martin Taylor grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and had a fair amount of freedom to travel and to choose his own summer activities. His mother had been the first person on either side of the family ever to go to college.

During the summer of his junior year in high school, Martin made a trip east. Upon seeing Amherst, Massachusetts, he knew that Amherst College, with its rural setting and relatively small student body, was for him. He ended up attending Amherst and doing, in his words, "reasonably well." He majored in economics, which he felt was "a pretty marketless degree."

Upon graduation, Martin went to work for the government as a bank examiner in Detroit, Michigan, for which he received an occupational deferment from the draft. Although his job with the government was relatively comfortable and his pay was better than it would have been in private industry, Martin was concerned that he might get stuck working for the government. So, two years after receiving his BA he applied to three business schools and was accepted into all three.

After Martin Taylor's first year in the MBA program of his first-choice school, Martin went back in the summer to his job as a bank examiner in Michigan because he "could live at home and earn a good salary." In addition, Martin liked what he had been doing, so he did not really try to find another summer job. In the back of his mind he could see himself directing the efforts of a small bank. However, Martin felt that he had to start out in a large bank because, as he put it, "You could go from a big bank to a small bank, but you can't go the other way around."

During the fall of his second year in the MBA program, Martin began his job search process by visiting the placement office and doing some reading. Martin mentioned to Jim Davis, one of the staff members of the placement office, that he had worked as a bank examiner. Davis, in response, made a passing reference to one of the

major banks west of the Mississippi River and stated that more people always signed up for their interviews than the allotted interview slots. Martin said to himself, "Well, if everybody wants it that bad, it must be worth looking into." So he examined the material available on the bank, including the annual report, and signed up for an interview with a high rank on his preference card.

Over Christmas vacation he set up several interviews with banks in Detroit, mostly as practice for future interviews with firms that were among his top choices. He quickly concluded that his choice had to be in a large bank in a major city with a corporate banking orientation. Martin ended up flying out during spring vacation to the bank first mentioned when he was in the placement office, and eventually accepted the offer he was given.

Martin's New Job

When Martin arrived for work there was no formal training program at the bank. He was temporarily assigned to Bill Johnson, who was willing to take him on as a special projects assistant. Martin was then given a number of different tasks designed to give him exposure to a number of areas in the bank. In his words, he "spent a lot of long hours in the evening just trying to get the overall picture without a great deal of help from anyone else."

One of the line people who worked for Mr. Johnson as head of the western region in the corporate bank got a position in another part of the bank. As a result, the western territory opened up and was assigned to Martin. After just one previous business trip, Martin Taylor found himself responsible for servicing corporate customers ranging in size from about \$20 million to \$3.5 billion in sales. His territory expanded and shrank over the next year and a half, but generally it covered the Southwest, including the Rocky Mountains, New Mexico, and Texas. In order to service his customers Martin spent an average of one week per month on the road. Several weeks of additional travel time were required each year for special bank meetings and seminars, but since he was single he rather enjoyed the chance to move about.

Martin's Selection as a Recruiter and Preparations for Interviewing

In 1975 the corporate bank took over its own recruiting from central personnel. That year there was a graduate from Martin's alma mater

who had more seniority, so he did the recruiting. However, when this person left the bank in 1976, Martin went to the corporate personnel manager and asked, "Who are you sending back this year?"

The response was, "I'm going to try to go, but I don't know if I'll have the time. Would you be interested?"

Martin was glad to have the opportunity to go back to visit his former school. He also hoped to develop some faculty connections and establish some continuity in relations that he felt had not existed in the past between the bank and his school.

The first year that he went recruiting, he had ample time to prepare. When the résumés arrived at the bank in early December, he took time out to familiarize himself with all 800. He then wrote letters in advance of Christmas to some of the people inviting them to come to the bank during the holidays if they were available. He also wrote a second set of letters in advance of his interviewing trip in February.

The next year Martin was asked to recruit once again. He was to interview only at his alma mater, even though the bank made recruiting visits to about fifteen schools. This time Martin was very busy with business obligations during the latter part of November and most of December. It suddenly occurred to him on December 20 that he had not looked at the résumés yet and the recruiting trip was only a few weeks away. He did manage to screen the résumé book with the help of the preselected list the students put their names on. Martin wrote letters to eleven people who impressed him as having more than just passing interest in the bank for which he worked. He had chosen these people by virtue of their record and their interest in locating in the West.

The Recruiting Trip

Martin's plane arrived two hours later than expected due to a snowstorm. As a result, Martin had less sleep than he would have liked. In addition, he had only a doughnut and a glass of orange juice for breakfast, since he wanted at least a half hour for reading the résumés for the day's interviews. Despite the relatively short sleep and quick breakfast, Martin was looking forward to the interviews with enthusiasm.

When Martin arrived at the Office of Career Development at 8:20 A.M. to pick up his schedule for the day and the stack of résumés, he found the place in tumult. Three additional recruiters, each from other divisions of the bank, were to have arrived. However, the snowstorm had prevented one of the members of the four-person team from coming. Martin, looking at his

schedule, noticed that he had received a couple of shift-overs from the absent man's schedules. This further crowded his schedule.

Martin arrived at the interview carrel at 8:30 to spend a half hour reading over and familiarizing himself with the résumés. To his surprise Martin found the carrel without any chairs and had to go and borrow some from a classroom. He then organized the company literature and brochures he had brought with him and finally turned to reviewing the student résumés.

A few minutes before 9 A.M., Martin was smoking a cigarette while finishing reviewing the résumés of the people on his list. He wondered why some of the people were interested in interviewing with a bank since their résumés revealed no banking experience whatsoever. He felt that the preferences listed in the résumés book probably had little correlation with the positions people finally accepted. Upon reading one résumé his interest was piqued by the phrase "presented findings to management." Martin reflected, "That's relevant to us in our loan review committee work. I'll ask him about that, for sure."

Martin's objective in recruiting was to spot from the 25 interviews four or five people who would be invited west to the bank's headquarters for further interviewing. Martin would have to decide who was going to be advanced to the next step in the recruiting process based on a 25-minute interview plus a résumé. Each person invited back to headquarters would cost the bank approximately \$500 to \$600 in expenses.

Taylor's 9 A.M. appointment did not show up. At twenty past the hour, he was not angry but he felt he would write to the person later, saying that he missed him at the interview and hoped that he would stop by and visit the bank if he were in the area. Martin believed in offering the person the benefit of the doubt. The student for the 9:30 interview showed up on time.

For each of the interviews Martin followed pretty much the same tactics and timing. He would begin the interview by asking a few questions to try to get a feel for how interested the person was in banking. Martin would use the résumé to spot key experiences and interests. If the person had some banking experience he might ask, "What is it about banking that you like?" On the other hand, if the person had a lot of varied experience, but none in banking, he might ask, "Could you tell me how your interest in banking developed?" The second question after that often would be, "How did you learn about our bank?" or, "As you reviewed the many banks that interview here, why did you choose us?" A tougher version of this last question might be, "Could you give me your impressions or notions about what made our bank different from

the other banks you have looked at and, therefore, why are you talking to me now?" After the first eight to ten minutes Martin would let the person being interviewed come back at him with some questions for about ten minutes. Next, he would go back at him or her for another five minutes, leaving time for one final question.

He used this strategy of alternately questioning the student and then allowing the student to ask questions because he wanted to meet two objectives: first, to see how the interviewee conducted himself in response to focused questioning, and, second, to give the interviewee a chance to get some basic questions answered. Furthermore, the quality of the questions asked gave him considerable insight into how well prepared the person was, as well as how seriously they were considering working for the bank. Finally, it would take two to five minutes to say goodbye, leaving Martin from three to five minutes to fill out his interview form. After each interview, Martin filled out his impressions of the candidate on the company interview form. His company had separate forms for campus recruiting and for home-office recruiting.

At noon Martin received a letter from Peter Carlson, the person who was to have been Martin's 9 A.M. appointment. The letter, which was poorly typed with a number of words crossed out, stated that the people in charge of interviews had told him that since one of the interviewers on the bank's team had not arrived, all the interviews were cancelled. The letter seemed to be sincere to Martin, and he appreciated that the student had gone out of his way to let him know what had transpired. Martin planned to get in touch with Carlson as soon as possible.

The remaining interviews Martin conducted in the morning went relatively smoothly, with Martin feeling enthusiastic and on top of the interviewing process. "For me, the best time for interviews is early in the day. But I can't remember them all. I have to rely on my brief notes."

Martin's luncheon discussion with his colleagues ran on so late that when Martin returned to his carrel, his next appointment was already waiting. Although Martin needed to visit the men's room, he did not want to keep the student waiting.

As Martin was about to go into the carrel another MBA student approached him and said, "I'm not on your list, but I'm supposed to be. Can I see you sometime? Here's my résumé."

Martin doubted that the student had done his homework because the appointment office had made no mention of any slip-up. As a result, he shunted the student off to one of the other inter-

viewers from his bank who had had a cancellation. Martin conjectured, "Maybe he'll get in, maybe not."

After his 2 P.M. interview, Martin remarked to the casewriter, "That was a big disappointment. His résumé looked the best to me—my most promising candidate. But he was the most nervous, shy and unaggressive of all. It may be under there, but it wasn't showing today."

Martin was filling out the form from his previous interview when the next interviewee popped his head into the carrel and asked, "Do you want me to give you a minute or two?" Martin replied, "Yes, just a minute, 'til I finish filling this out." Meanwhile, Martin's colleague in the next cubicle could not get the sliding door unlocked. He and the person he had been interviewing were working on the door from the inside, while the next appointment was banging on it from the outside. After five minutes of banging, shoving, and exchanging suggestions back and forth, the door finally snapped open.

At 3 P.M. Martin was due for a half-hour break, and by this time, much needed, but Peter Carlson came by. Since Martin had been favorably impressed by Peter's effort and honesty, Martin broke his rule of not conducting interviews during the break. Breaks were important, he felt, as a chance to refresh himself mentally and physically. Martin agreed to see Peter and had no break.

Fortunately, however, the 3:30 appointment did not show up. Martin was finally able to take a break. As he and the casewriter walked down the hall, Martin commented on his interviews:

The people don't seem so well prepared now. When I was interviewing as a student, I read every issue of *American Banker* to be up on the latest. I don't see it in these people. They're not aware of the major news in the industry. If they're sincerely interested in banking, they should be on top of all that stuff.

By 4:30 P.M. Martin had interviewed ten people (see Exhibit 27-5) and was beginning to get rather tired. He felt he was starting to fumble. With less than six hours of sleep, he thought that he was starting to lose the advantage in the interview process. He wanted to give each person interviewed an equal chance, but his mind was just not as sharp as it had been at 9 A.M. and had begun, in his words, "to turn to mush." Martin's thoughts drifted to his plans for that evening: to see an old friend, drink a couple of beers, and get some badly needed sleep before another day of the same thing. In this state of mind, Martin Taylor finished filling out the interview form, and rose to meet his last interview of the day.

Exhibit 27-5
Martin Taylor's Schedule

Arrival (Monday evening)

- 11:30 P.M. Snowstorm caused delay in airplane schedule; Martin's flight arrives 2 hours later than expected.
- 12:30 A.M. Martin arrives in hotel room.
- 12:45 A.M. Goes to bed.

First Day of Interviews (Tuesday)

- 6:30 A.M. Wakes up.
- 7:00 A.M. Leaves hotel without having had breakfast.
- 8:00 A.M. Martin has a doughnut and a glass of orange juice on campus.
- 8:20 A.M. Picks up résumés and schedule for the day.
- 8:30 A.M. Has a half hour to read résumés.
- 9:00 A.M. First interview does not show. Continues reviewing résumés.
- 9:30 A.M. Interview.
- 10:00 A.M. Interview.
- 10:30 A.M. Coffee break at a coffee machine in the hallway near the interview carrel.
- 11:00 A.M. Interview.
- 11:30 A.M. Interview.
- 12:00 noon Interview.
- 12:30 P.M. Lunch. Discussion with two other colleagues.
- 1:30 P.M. Interview.
- 2:00 P.M. Interview.
- 2:30 P.M. Interview.
- 3:00 P.M. Scheduled coffee break, but 9 A.M. appointment comes by for interview.
- 3:30 P.M. Appointment does not show. Takes a break.
- 4:00 P.M. Interview.
- 4:30 P.M. Interview.
- 6:00 P.M. Plans to meet an old friend for dinner and drinks.

Second Day of Interviews (Wednesday)

- 6:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M. Similar schedule expected for the second day.
 - 6:00 P.M. Plane flight west, shortly after last interview.
-

ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING INTERVIEW FORMS

This case consists entirely of interview forms used by five companies for on-campus MBA recruiting. It is intended to give you a perspective of the range of complexity of forms used and a sample of the criteria used by recruiters in evaluating on-campus interviews.

Company A

One major company that interviews on campus has no recruiting interview form. Recruiters are free to make notes as they please.

This case was written by Mark P. Kriger, research assistant, under the direction of Assistant Professor James G. Clawson, as a basis for class discussion. Copyright © 1979 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Harvard Business School case 9-480-023.

Company B

Candidate		Previous Interview Data	
Position			
Interviewer			
Today's Schedule			
<p>1. Please briefly summarize the major topics covered in your conversation with the candidate, including both his/her major questions about us and the major topics you raised.</p>			
<p>2. Based on your interview, do you believe that this candidate would make a positive contribution to the morale and internal work environment of the firm? Would you enjoy working with the candidate on a project team? Why?</p>			
<p>3. What are the candidate's major career alternatives? How does he/she currently rank them? If _____ should eventually extend an employment offer, what do you think the probability of acceptance is? Timing of decision?</p>			

Company B (continued)

4. What major topics should we pursue or follow up on with the candidate in subsequent interviews?

5. Please use this space for general comment and to expand on your answers to the other questions if you need to:

Signature: _____

Company C

CANDIDATE: _____ INTERVIEWER: _____

POSITION: _____ DATE: _____

The purpose of this form is to aid you in your assessment of the candidate's strengths in each of the key areas listed. Consider the candidate's academic background, work and/or military experience, extra-curricular activities and personal interests. Be sure to cite the evidence behind your assessments. Also, please check one of the three symbols located to the right of each key area.

+ = Good
o = Acceptable
? = Questionable

1. ACHIEVEMENT/ACCOMPLISHMENT

(Is there a solid, consistent record of achievement? Is there evidence of clear objectives, personal initiative, perseverance, and growth?)

+ _____

o _____

? _____

Supporting evidence:

2. LEADERSHIP

(Has the candidate been an effective leader? Has he/she actively sought leadership roles? Was this candidate able to instill confidence in his/her peers and subordinates?)

+ _____

o _____

? _____

Supporting evidence:

3. THOUGHT PROCESS

(Did the candidate appear to be alert and attentive? Did he/she proceed logically from premises to conclusions? Was the candidate insightful in his/her questions?)

+ _____

o _____

? _____

Supporting evidence:

4. INNOVATIVE ABILITY

(Has he/she demonstrated an ability to think and act creatively?)

+ _____

o _____

? _____

Supporting evidence:

Company C (continued)

5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

(Did the candidate provide clear, concise, logical answers to questions?
Is the candidate direct and persuasive? Did he/she listen well?)

Supporting evidence:

+ _____
o _____
? _____

6. SELF-CONFIDENCE

(Did the candidate present himself/herself in a mature and professional
manner? How has the candidate reacted to pressure situations?)

Supporting evidence:

+ _____
o _____
? _____

7. CAREER DIRECTION

(Is the candidate's record consistent with his/her stated objectives? Is
the candidate genuinely committed to this position?)

Supporting evidence:

+ _____
o _____
? _____

8. POTENTIAL

(Does this candidate have the ability to grow and accept increasing
responsibility?)

Supporting evidence:

+ _____
o _____
? _____

DECISION

Do you recommend this candidate for a second interview? _____ Yes _____ No

WHY?

Company D

PRIMARY EVALUATION for CORPORATE ACCOUNT OFFICER

CANDIDATE'S NAME: _____

INTERVIEWER'S NAME: _____

INTERVIEW DATE: _____

SCHOOL: _____

1. Rate each skill or trait in one of the following categories:

SKILLS AND TRAITS	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	EXCESSIVE
Demonstrated Initiative:				N/A
Priority-Setting Ability:				N/A
Conceptual Ability:				N/A
Analytical Ability:				
Perceptiveness:				N/A
Enthusiastic Demeanor:				
Verbal Communication:				N/A
Pressure-Handling Ability:				N/A
Aggressiveness:				

NOTE: In questions #2 - #4, please check only one answer per question:

2. Rate the candidate's composure in the interview:

- a. Very poised and personable.
- b. Somewhat nervous but could be developed.
- c. Poor.

3. If you were a corporate client, what would your initial impression be of this individual as a calling officer?

- STANDS OUT AVERAGE NEGATIVE

Company D (continued)

4. Given background and experience, how insightful was the candidate about this job?

A. AMOUNT OF BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE:

Summer only

Bank or bank-related

0 to 2 years

Non-bank

Greater than 2 years

B. INSIGHTFULNESS:

Superficial understanding

Some research and understanding

Realistic understanding

5. How do you rate the candidate's knowledge of our bank or the banking industry?

Superficial knowledge

Some research and knowledge

Very good knowledge

6. Is there anything about the candidate that you feel might distinguish this person as a calling officer?

7. In which group will this person fit best? _____

8. Do you feel that this candidate should be invited back for the second interview?

YES

NO

INTERVIEW EVALUATION GUIDE

PURPOSE

This guide is designed to:

- Help you obtain the information you'll need to make a good selection decision.
- Be consistent with _____'s commitment to equal employment opportunity and compliance with Federal and State EEO laws.

SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS

- The Selection Characteristics listed on the following page were judged most important by _____ Managers surveyed.
- All characteristics listed should be scored. The most relevant to the position under consideration should have the most influence in the final decision.
- The questions provided should be viewed as aids to the interviewers. Alternative questions which help interviewers to focus on relevant experience information can be substituted.
- If a special technical or professional skill is required, use the blank space provided to describe the relevant characteristic following the guideline format.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

NOTE:

An Interview Evaluation Guide must be completed for each external candidate interviewed for a _____ position.

This guide can be used most effectively if before interviewing you familiarize yourself with the questions and rating scales. In addition, you should keep in mind the following basic principles:

- Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes or no.
- Try to obtain clear and detailed responses about the applicant's experiences — what has been done.
- Satisfy yourself that the applicant's descriptions are consistent and generally accurate.
- Concentrate only on those areas that are relevant for evaluating applicants on the Selection Characteristics.
- Complete this form as soon as possible after the interview, and definitely before interviewing any other applicants.

Company E (continued)

SELECTION CHARACTERISTIC	CONSIDER	SUGGESTED PROBES/QUESTIONS
EXPERIENCE/CAREER/SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicability of courses, studies to position • Ability to apply skills and knowledge in solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your major course of study in school? • What parts of your course work are most applicable to a (position) at
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE		
WORK EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicability of prior work to current position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were (are) the major responsibilities (activities) of your last (current) job? What did you do? • What was your most outstanding achievement in your last (current) job? What impact did it have on the organization? • What responsibilities have you had supervising others? How many? What did you do?
CAREER ASPIRATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and specificity of career goals and plans • Ability to assess own strengths and weaknesses in relation to career in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you accomplish in your last job that was most related to your career goals? • How did you decide on your career? What characteristics do you feel you have that are most (least) suited toward a career in
TECHNICAL/PROFESSIONAL (Please complete prior to interview)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
ASSERTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefulness, ability to persist in accomplishing goals • Ability to overcome obstacles and problems in attaining goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the most challenging task/activity you've ever attempted? Why was it difficult? What happened? • Why did you try to accomplish (complete) that task/goal/activity? Who set the goal? Why?
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to present ideas in a clear, interesting and persuasive manner – orally and in writing • Ability to sell self; persuade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you consider your most outstanding success in persuading someone to do something? What did you do? What happened? • To what extent are you (have you been) involved in public speaking, debating or dramatic presentations? What did you do? What happened?
DECISIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the time and information needed to make a decision • Uncertainty about decisions; frequency with which decisions change • Ability to accurately assess risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the most challenging decision you were ever asked to make? What happened? What did you do? What effect did this have on your organization? • What was the worst decision (best decision) you ever made? What happened? What did you do? Why?
ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work hard over extended period of time • High activity level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been in a situation that required long and hard work for a period of time? What was this due to? What happened? Were others in this situation required to work under the same conditions? • How often do you find yourself in this type of situation?
FLEXIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adapt to changing situations • Alertness and sensitivity to the environment in which one is working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were you ever faced with a situation where you had to change the direction (nature) of your activities? (change direction on a project)? What happened? What did you do? • How did you feel about having to change direction in the middle of an activity?
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships • Tact, sensitivity to the feelings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your most challenging personal encounter with someone? How did you deal with him/her? • Consider a project where you had to work with other individuals to complete some task. What happened? What was your role?
MATURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of responsibility • Ability to avoid impulsive or confusing actions • Calmness under pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about an occasion when you were responsible for some major activity. What impact did this activity have on your organization? What did you do? What happened? • What was the most frustrating experience you've ever had? How did you handle it? • Have you ever worked under pressure? What happened? What did you do?
REASONING/JUDGMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to abstract the essential elements of a problem and develop/find an appropriate solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the most challenging (work/technical) problem you've ever encountered? What happened? What did you do? • Given the following situation . . . what would you do? Why?

Company E (continued)

COMMENTS		EVALUATION				
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Course of study not relevant to position			Major course of study directly relevant to position	
WORK EXPERIENCE	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Academic knowledge; shows little understanding of problems involved in applying skills and knowledge			Has practical experience applying skills and knowledge; understands and able to handle problems applying knowledge	
CAREER ASPIRATIONS	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Prior work experience not relevant to skills and knowledge required			Prior work experience directly relevant to skills and knowledge required	
TECHNICAL/ PROFESSIONAL	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Little or no supervisory responsibilities; experience mostly as an individual contributor			Has had broad management responsibilities; experience in coordinating and integrating functions	
ASSERTIVENESS	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Career goals vague and poorly articulated; low agreement between personal qualities and career			Career goals clear and well articulated; high agreement between personal qualities and career requirements	
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Easily discouraged; passive; tends to react to events; avoids challenging situations			Initiates activities; continues at tasks despite problems and setbacks; confident, seeks new and challenging situations	
DECISIVENESS	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Hesitant and uncertain; has difficulty presenting ideas clearly and logically			Poised, confident and convincing; can present complex ideas in a clear and interesting manner	
ENERGY	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Uncertain, ill-at-ease about decisions; frequently changes mind; takes excessive time to make decisions			Confident about decisions; accurately assesses risks and implications; makes decisions within appropriate time frame	
FLEXIBILITY	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Rarely works hard; appears to have difficulty maintaining a heavy workload and performing efficiently			Frequently works hard; capable of maintaining a heavy workload while remaining efficient	
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Unaware, oblivious of changing situations; has difficulty adapting and changing goals, directions, etc.			Sensitive to changing situations; capable of adapting to changing demands, goals, requirements, etc.	
MATURITY	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Has difficulty maintaining relationships; insensitive; lacks tact			Capable of working effectively with others; sensitive to the feelings of others; tactful	
REASONING/JUDGMENT	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Responds carelessly and impulsively; avoids assuming responsibility for own actions; panics under pressure			Carefully considers effects of potential actions; reliable; willingly accepts responsibility for handling difficult problems; calm under pressure	
REASONING/JUDGMENT	Not ascertained; Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
		Doesn't seek enough information; misses essentials of problem; solutions are superficial			Identifies need for and seeks relevant information; solutions have been innovative and effective	

MANAGEMENT RECRUITING / COLLEGE INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM

RETURN COMPLETED FORM WITH RESUME TO

CANDIDATE'S NAME	SCHOOL	DEGREE / YEAR	DATE OF INTERVIEW / /
SOURCE (CHECK ONE)			
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERVIEWED ON CAMPUS	<input type="checkbox"/> REFERRAL	<input type="checkbox"/> WALK IN / WRITE IN	<input type="checkbox"/> CAREER DEVELOPMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> SUMMER INTERN	<input type="checkbox"/> INTERNAL TRANSFER (OTHER THAN CAREER DEVELOPMENT)		

OVERALL IMPRESSION

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL OF THE RELEVANT INFORMATION YOU HAVE OBTAINED IN THIS INTERVIEW, WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THIS CANDIDATE?

1	2	3	4	5
VERY WEAK	WEAK	CAPABLE	STRONG	EXCEPTIONAL

COMMENTS

PLEASE COMPLETE EXPLORATORY OR FULL DAY SECTION

<p>EXPLORATORY INTERVIEW (ON CAMPUS OR IN HOUSE)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> INVITE FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION BY YOUR GROUP</p> <p>GROUP _____</p> <p>SUGGESTED AREA (IF APPLICABLE): _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> REFER RESUME AND EVALUATION TO OTHER GROUP FOR INVITE OR TURNDOWN DECISION</p> <p>RECOMMENDED GROUP _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> TURNDOWN</p> <p>SALUTATION: DEAR _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO INDICATE WHETHER YOU WOULD LIKE TURNDOWN LETTER SIGNED BY A PROFESSIONAL RECRUITER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>FULL DAY INTERVIEW</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RECOMMENDATION TO HIRE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO YES</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>									
<p>DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX - FOR CRU USE ONLY</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">NO LETTER</td> <td style="width: 60%;">TYPE OF LETTER</td> <td style="width: 30%;">DATE OF LETTER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">A B C D E F G H I #9 #12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">/ /</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="height: 100px;"> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> </td> </tr> </table>		NO LETTER	TYPE OF LETTER	DATE OF LETTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	A B C D E F G H I #9 #12	/ /	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
NO LETTER	TYPE OF LETTER	DATE OF LETTER								
<input type="checkbox"/>	A B C D E F G H I #9 #12	/ /								
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>										

INTERVIEWER'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT OR USE STAMP)	INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE
	DATE / /