

APPENDIX 2

PROBING DURING AN INTERVIEW

During an interview, probing refers to the interviewer's technique of asking follow-up questions to get a deeper understanding of a candidate's initial answers. It's essentially a way to dig beneath the surface of what's been said and gain further details.

Here are some reasons why interviewers probe:

- **To clarify something unclear:** Maybe the candidate used an ambiguous or technical term, or you just want to be sure you fully understood their point.
- **To get more details:** If an answer is brief, probing questions can encourage the candidate to elaborate on their experiences, skills, or thought process.
- **To fully assess a competency,** the Interviewer might probe to see a concrete example of how the candidate used a particular skill they mentioned.

Probing questions can take many forms, but some common examples include:

- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "What was your specific role in that project?"
- "What challenges did you face in that situation?"

By using probing effectively, interviewers can get a better picture of a candidate's skills and experience and determine if they are a good fit for the role. Probing questions offer advantages for both the interviewer and the interviewee during an interview. Here's a breakdown of the benefits for each side:

Advantages for the Interviewer

- **Deeper Understanding of Skills and Experience:** Probing goes beyond one-word answers or surface-level explanations. It allows the interviewer to truly understand how the candidate has applied their skills in past situations and the thought processes behind actions.
- **Uncovering Hidden Gems:** You might mention a relevant skill or experience briefly. Probing can help the interviewer delve deeper and uncover valuable details that might have otherwise been missed.
- **Assessing Fit for the Role:** By probing how a candidate handled specific challenges or projects, the interviewer can gauge how well their strengths and experiences align with the specific demands of the position.
- **Identifying Red Flags:** Probing can sometimes reveal inconsistencies or weaknesses in responses. This allows the interviewer to get a clearer picture of suitability for the role.

Overall, probing fosters a more in-depth and interactive interview experience, allowing both parties to gain valuable insights that lead to a better fit between candidate and role.

Training in Interview Techniques

Interviewing is a skilled practice. To ensure the highest quality of outcomes and to prevent discrimination and bias, there should be training for those involved. The alternative is a sterile and limited process, based more on preventing any allegation of discrimination rather than selecting the best person to do the job (Warner, 1992). All staff selection processes must ensure fairness and anti-discrimination. Training on these issues is essential to reduce the risk of unconscious prejudice.

Warner (1992, p.61) states,

We consider that it is essential that those conducting interviews are properly trained to undertake them. No person should be allowed to take part in interviews without having received thorough training in interviewing techniques and the proper application of equal opportunities policies.

And (p.62),

Employers should only assign people to interview panels if they have had the appropriate training, and should consider the use of external assessors when it is difficult to appoint a panel without an independent element.

Reference

Warner Report (1992) *Choosing with Care - The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Selection, Development and Management of Staff in Children's Homes*, HMSO

