

# The Basics of the Behavioral Interview Process



Nora Riva Bergman

**Interviewing individuals for a position with your firm is as important as any case-related interview.**



## Training Objectives

- **Select more high potential candidates.**
- **Develop a system to assess candidates more completely.**
- **Decrease time-to-productivity dramatically.**



# Interviewer Time Bombs

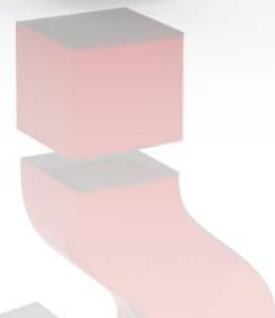
- Age
- Medical conditions
- Disabilities or impairments
- Previous work-related injuries
- Race, color, national origin or religion
- Marital status
- Childbearing plans
- Child care arrangements
- Arrest records
- Credit History
- Military leave requirements
- Union activities or sympathies
- Memberships in social organizations



# **Why hypothetical questions don't work.**

**"What if . . ." questioning reveals very little about how candidates will actually perform on the job.**

**Answers to typical hypothetical questions can be memorized and rehearsed.**



# Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.

- Clearly identify the behaviors necessary for success in a position.
- Create questions that allow the candidates to provide real-life examples of how they have behaved in similar circumstances.



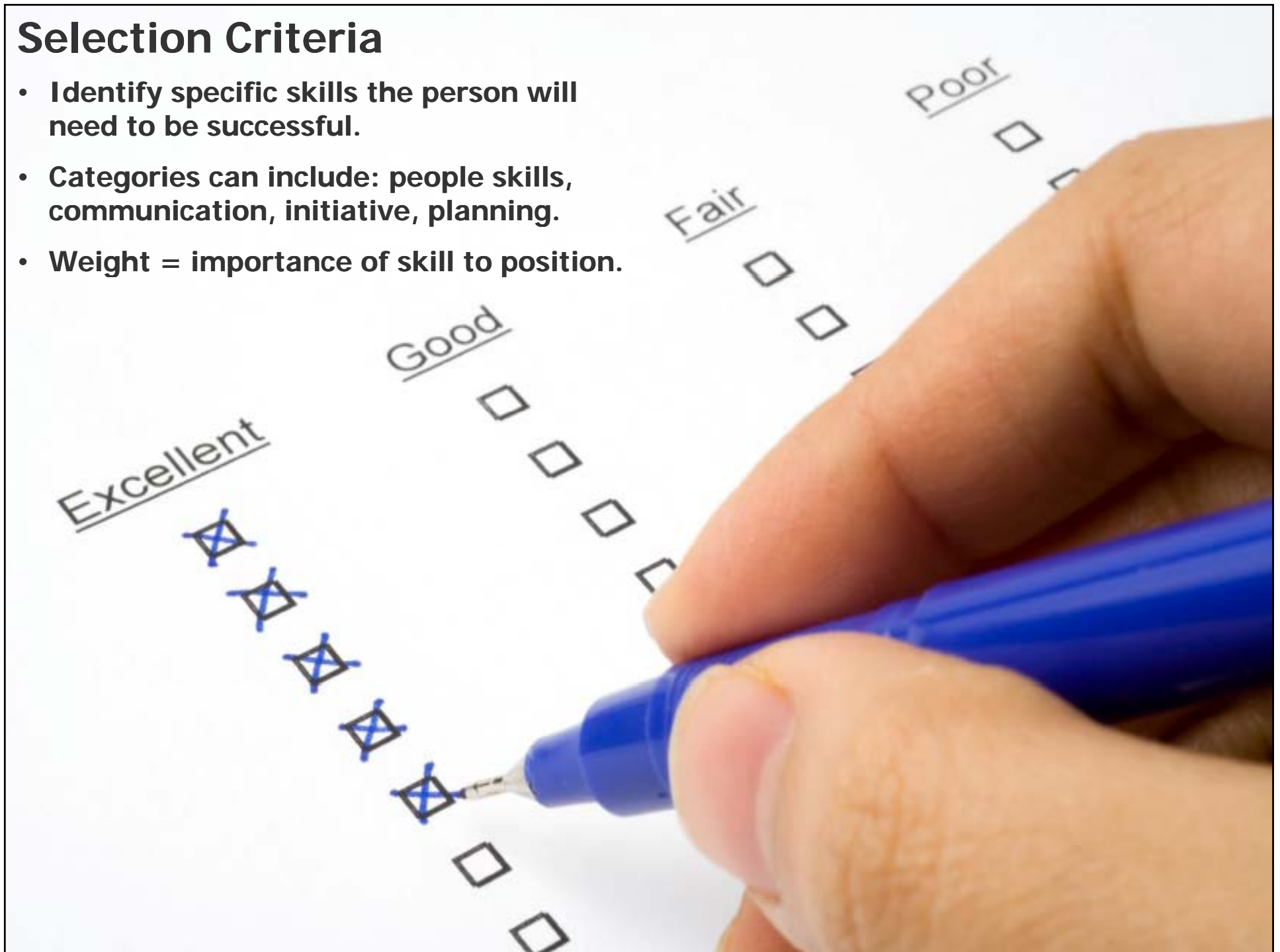
# Behavioral Interviewing Basics



1. Analyze the position
2. Identify skills
3. Develop questions
4. Evaluate the candidates

## Selection Criteria

- Identify specific skills the person will need to be successful.
- Categories can include: people skills, communication, initiative, planning.
- Weight = importance of skill to position.





# Suggested Steps and Timing

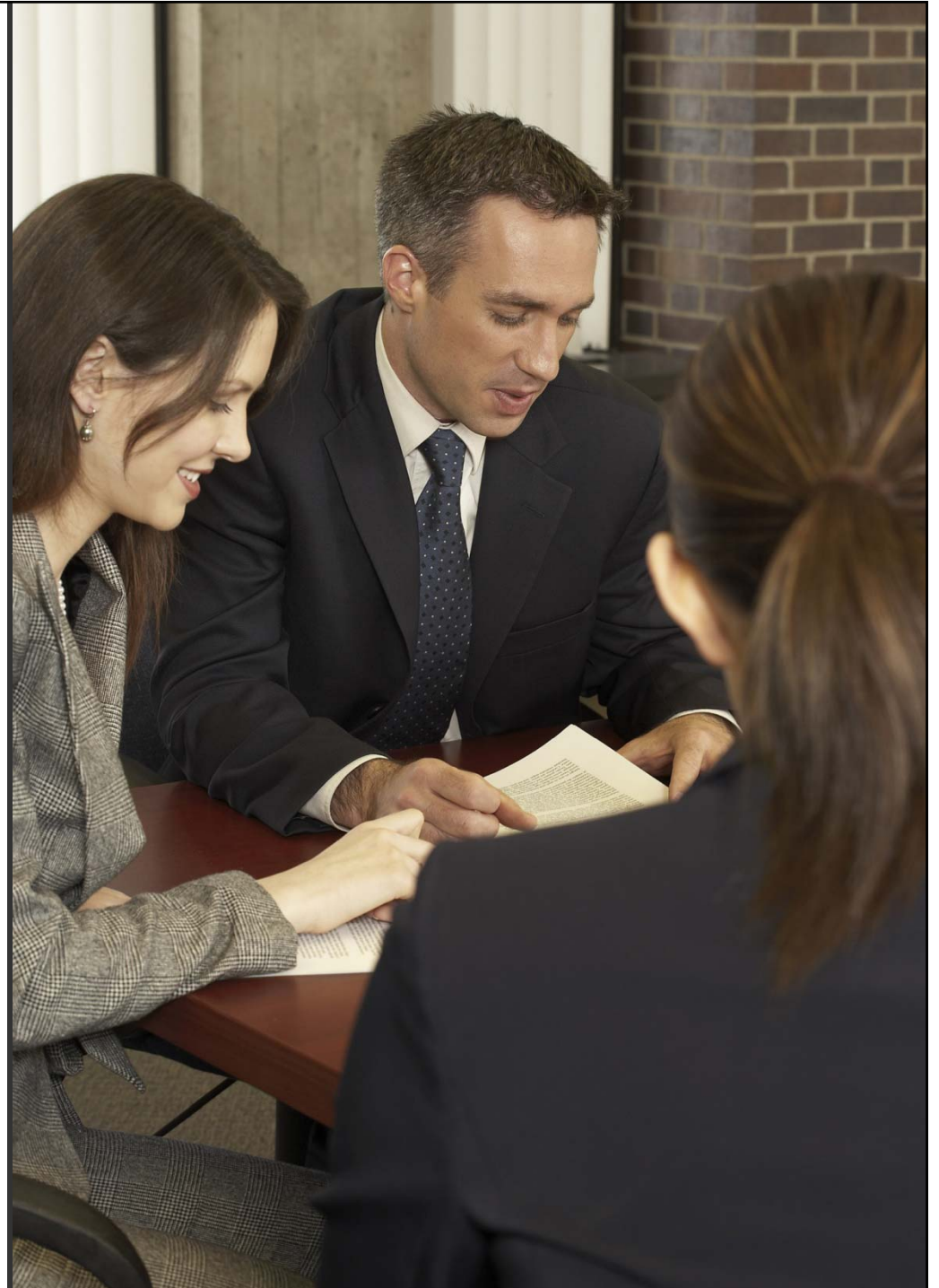
- **Step 1 - Open the interview, discussion of firm culture; 3 min.**
  - **Step 2 - Ask questions about application materials; 5 min.**
  - **Step 3 - Ask prepared questions and take notes; 2-3 min. each.**
  - **Step 4 - Ask if candidate has questions and answer them; 5 min.**
  - **Step 5 - Close the interview; 2 min.**
  - **Step 6 - Evaluate the candidate; 10-15 min.**
- 
- **Average interview time with seven to ten criteria: 1 to 1.25 Hours**



From *Behavioral Interviewing Guide*, by Tom S. Turner

## Interview Structure

- **Develop rapport.**
- **Explain format:**  
Questions about your background and skills, then an opportunity for you to ask questions.
- **Do not** describe job.
- **Do not** use leading questions.
- **Interview plan.** Keep them talking!
- Answer their questions and next steps.



# Educational and General Questions



**Let candidates know in advance you'll be asking specific questions about things they've done in the past.**

**Give candidates a few moments to think before they respond.**



## **Behavioral Interview Objectives**

- **Goal is to find evidence of past behaviors that duplicate what you need for the position.**
- **Force the answers to be specific.**



# How to listen . . .

- Listen. Don't interrupt.
- Don't finish the other person's sentences.
- Don't say "I knew that."
- Don't even agree with the other person. Just say "thank you."
- Don't use the words "no," "but," and "however."
- Don't be distracted. Don't let your eyes wander elsewhere while the other person is talking.
- Maintain your end of the conversation.
- Don't try to impress the other person with how smart or how funny you are.



**IMPORTANT!**

**Take lots of notes from start to finish.**





**For each behavioral question asked,  
note the following:**

- **Event (E):** The event or situation described by the candidate.
- **Reaction/Response (R):** What the candidate did in response to the event described.
- **Outcome (O):** What was the outcome of the action taken?



# Evaluation

- Rate candidate responses based on the criteria.
- Use individual evaluation forms.
- Share your results and concerns with other interviewers.
- Compile scores for each candidate on the combined evaluation sheet.



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