Interviews and Assessment from an Employer Perspective: History, Present Day, and the Future
Independent Study

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Abstract

According to some accounts, the first job interview was devised by Thomas Edison (Smith, 2015) when the acclaimed inventor devised a series of questions and tests to assess a candidate's ability to do the job at hand. While Smith contends that interviewing has come a long way since 1921, this independent study research paper will posit that such changes have only begun to take effect in recent years, and, that these changes are quite varied depending on industry and job skillset (Sullivan, 2017). Measurements of success rates of these changes are also sporadic, with limited information on universal changes that can be made across industry that have strong returns on investment.

There is considerable information available in publicly accessible websites on how to adapt interview styles to suit the interviewer and the job, including the importance of verbal, nonverbal and visual communications styles (BetterTeam, 2019). While common belief would posit that non-verbal cues are important in an interview, pivotal research by Hollandsworth (2006) found that our preconceptions on non-verbal cues may not be as pronounced as previously anticipated. On the other hand, he does find that the content of what is shared and articulated remains an important feature of the job interview.

This paper steps away from discussions of both interview vehicles and interview styles and concentrates entirely on the method of interview and assessment from the interviewer/organization's perspective. Why do some companies still interview for positions in the classical one-on-one subjective manner? What commonly identifiable evolutions have taken place? What results have they produced and can they be directly connected to a return on investment and successful hires?

This study is divided into three sections. Section One reviews the history of job interview processes and assessment methods, limited for the sake of focus, to the second half of the 20th century. Existing studies will be examined, including in-depth academic research and anecdotal information from industry leaders.

Section Two reviews changes in interview and assessment methods in the last two decades, with a particular emphasis on how the internet age and online working has changed the

interview process. In so doing, equal focus will be paid in this section to the advent of online assessment tools with a focus on if such tools have aided the selection process and produced successful worker-to-job matches.

Section Three will be a predictive analysis of the future of interviewing from an organizational perspective. It will cover two areas: A. Current predominant practices in interviewing that should be retired, and, B. A list of new steps that companies and organizations can undertake that will make a tangible change in their hiring success, based on current research and labor trends.

The ultimate aim of this study is to serve, in whole, as the precursor to a wider study of interviewing in the higher education administration sector with recommended changes for starting, stopping and continuing existing wide-spread job selection practices.

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