

**Interviewing to Assess – Accomplishments**

Adler states that the question below, followed by appropriate inquiry and probing is the MOST

IMPORTANT interview question of all time

*Please think of your most significant accomplishment in your career. Now could you tell me about it?*

Further inquiry and probing might include questions such as:

• What impact did the accomplishment have on the company's bottom-line or business?

• When did it occur?

• What was your specific role on the team and what was your specific contribution to the accomplishment?

• What were the major steps and deliverables involved in accomplishing the task?

• How were you able to use your initiative beyond tasks/duties not required in your actual role?

• What were some of the biggest challenges faced in the accomplishments and how did you overcome these challenges?

• Why do you consider this a significant accomplishment?

• What was your greatest learning from this accomplishment? Why do they see this learning as most important?

• What support will help you achieve success in the position you are interviewing for?

Asking about additional accomplishments specific to the SMARTe objectives of the position you are hiring for may create opportunities for additional probing critical investigation related to:

• The pace of and decision-making methods *I* preferences

• Examples of how the candidate had to change the opinion of others and how they dealt with conflict

• Whether the accomplishment actually met the business objectives; was completed on time and how they performed against plan and budget

**30 Hire with Your Head: Using POWER Hiring to Build Great Companies; Lou Adler, Page 91**

***Recruitment & Selection Page 35* - Saskatchewan Construction Association HR Tool Kit**

• Timing, the candidate's specific role, specific team structure to clarify role of others

(Individual contributor, team leader etc.)

• The biggest people challenges, with specific examples, and how these were overcome

• Technical skills used to accomplish the task and skills learned

• Ranking of the overall success of the task and why

• Ranking of the candidate's performance on this accomplishment and why.

• Identifying the most important aspect the candidate would do differently to move it up the scale (1-10) and improve their performance

Using probes or critical questioning such as these (and ones you develop) will help elaborate on a candidate's accomplishments providing specific examples and building a fact base of results relevant to the position being filled. This methodology will support a more effective assessment of the candidate's potential to be a high performer in your Company. A conversation about one accomplishment can easily become a 10 minute conversation.

Ask for accomplishments and probe the response for 3 to 4 of the most important SMARTe objectives for the position. When investigating performance accomplishments, Adler states it is important to "understand the accomplishment, the process used to achieve the accomplishment, and the environment in which the accomplishment took place ... 31" By focusing on SMARTe objectives, probing individual and team leadership abilities and impact on the business, you are 'anchoring' the information obtained from the candidate as it related to the specific position performance profile.

Accurate interviewing is about getting detailed answers about accomplishments, not about asking a bunch of clever questions. If you have detailed information about these accomplishments, understand the time sequence in which they occurred and how the candidate's impact on the companies they have worked for has grown over the years, you are building a strong fact-base to support effective decisions.