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# Best Practices: Behavioral Hiring and Training

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# The Challenge

Finding, hiring, training, and retaining employees and doing it in a way that is effective, positive, successful without compromise?



# The Behavioral Hiring & Training Core Elements

- Investing in the locating, identifying, hiring, and retention of team members
- Employing workplace culture from the start of the process
- Developing a scalable, flexible, customizable model suitable for the organization



# The Result

By using workplace culture to drive the process, from hiring through training and beyond, coupled with behavioral practices, an organization can realize a stronger, more diverse, more aligned workforce.



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Using recent and past experiences, this interactive program is designed to give those in the industry some new ideas for their hiring and training practices including creating a more inclusive and accessible workplace.

BUT before we get too far along...

## HERE'S THE THING

You are probably already doing this to some degree so ramping up your current processes to uncover fresh opportunity (and candidates) may just be a small shift in process.



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# What advantages are there to behavioral hiring?

## FOR POTENTIAL TEAM MEMBERS

- Clear understanding of the organization culture
- Opportunity to demonstrate who they are as an individual and what they bring to the organization
- Levels the playing field from the start

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- Sets expectations from the beginning of the process
- Gives immediate insight into prospects
- Allows for a cultural “vibe check”

# Four Pillars to support Behavioral Hiring

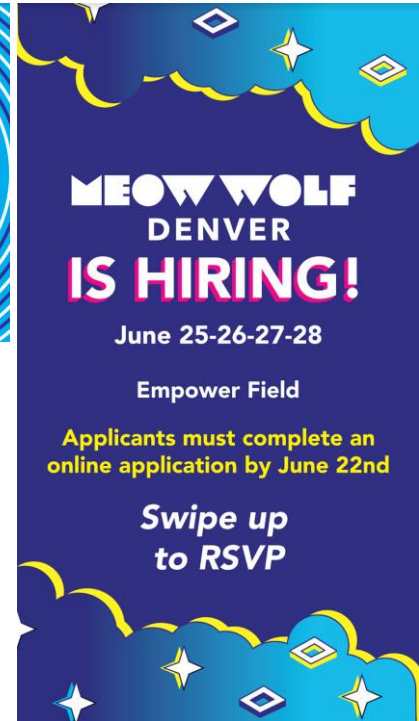
1. Make candidates feel welcomed, comfortable, engaged, and excited
2. Predicated on “real time” responses: unexpected, spontaneous
3. Create the opportunity for matching prospects to the right role – possibly one the individual had never considered
4. Approach program design and intent from organization’s Mission, Vision, and Values



# Makes candidates feel comfortable, welcomed, engaged, excited

## Setting your process up for success – from the start

- **Job Announcements:** *What do potential team members see and learn about your organization from the very beginning? Designs. Color palettes. Language.*
- **Applications:** *Are you asking the right questions to meet your needs? Are they standard or unique? Are they a reflection of your organization, what you represent, and for whom you are looking?*
- **Job Fair/Hiring Event\*:** *Are you creating a space that aligns with your world? Is it a nod to what potential team members may expect their working environment to be? Does it offer a glimpse into how the applicant might perform in your space?*
- **Interview Process:** *How do you establish your criteria for questioning prospects? Do you know what you are looking for specifically? What will best represent your organization to guests? Personality? Skills? Something else?*
- **Job Offers:** *Does an offer to a new team member match your organizational culture?*
- **Training:** *Do your new team members come in ready to go and with a sense of place and belonging?*

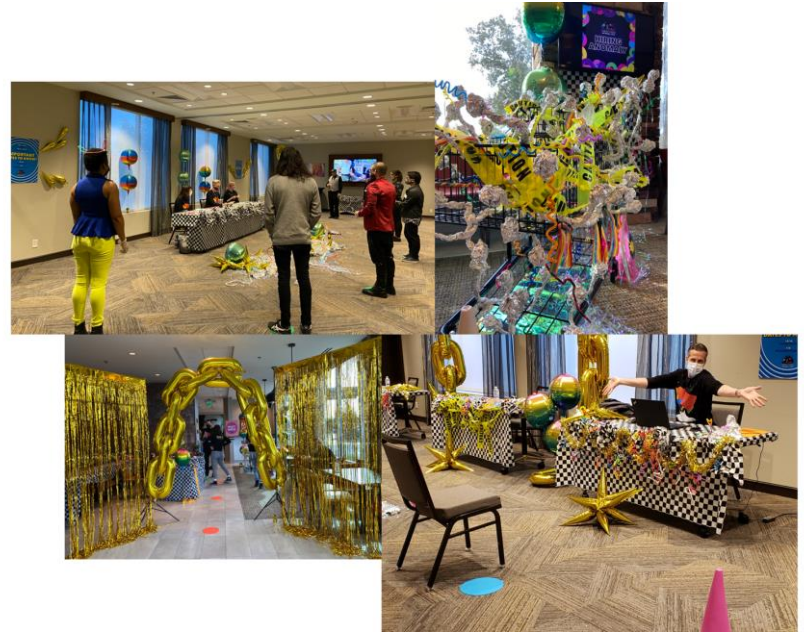


#### Ways to connect:

- Website
- Social Media
- Printed Material
- Distribution Sites
  - Community Centers
  - Educational Spaces
  - Vocational Schools
  - Clubs
  - Employment Centers
- Traditional Media

# Make candidates feel comfortable, welcomed, engaged, excited

- Atmosphere can play a key role in getting the best from your applicants:
  - Décor: Is your space inviting and what does it say about your organization?
  - Check-in: Are team members friendly? Do they “look” the part? Are they modeling the kind of individual for which you are hiring?
  - Interviewing Formats: Are you using a process that makes sense for your operation?
    - Group Interviews
    - Individual Meet & Greets
    - Single Session or Multiple Rounds
- Atmosphere does not need to be limited to the physical environment in which you conduct interviews:
  - Applications
  - ZOOM
  - Phone calls
  - Letters



## Inspire real time responses from applicants

- Thoughtful, challenging, even silly questions relevant to operations will push prospects past basic resume information into details about their actual experiences – takes the “running down a list of skills” out of the equation
- Interviewers can get beyond traditional generalities to a much clearer picture of an individual’s accomplishments
- Allows exploration of transferable skills or deeper questioning as to why someone is interested in a particular role and or the organization
- Lets character, personality, and discussed skills/interests shine, making it easier to see if someone is a match for a role, even if it may require training in new skills
- Creates a great opportunity to view people for what they bring to the table as a person vs. relying on a resume (if there is one) for a more accurate picture of the applicant

# Inspire real time responses from applicants

## WHY MIGHT THIS BE IMPORTANT?

- Opens up job opportunities for more individuals by not eliminating potential candidates solely on resume or perceived experience
- Levels the playing field between applicants by demonstrating “human skills” critical to front line operations
- Allows interviewers to see public speaking skills, view body language, evaluate responses, and gauge personality in the moment



## Opportunity to match potential prospects to the right job

Some positions can be more difficult to fill than others

Some positions have more excellent candidates than opportunities

*The right process can help on both accounts to:*

- Identify transferable skills
- Demonstrate natural aptitude for specific roles
- Exhibit interest in learning something new (be trained)
- Revealing of skills/talents not seen (traditionally) on a resume



Opportunity to match of potential prospects to the right job

**Getting into a conversation can reveal more than reading a paper or electronic resume ever will**



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Base on company culture - customize for any organization

# CONSIDER YOUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES



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**Base on company culture - customize for any organization**

## **MEOW WOLF:**

**Our mission is to inspire creativity in  
people's lives through art, exploration,  
and play so that imagination will  
transform our worlds.**



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**Base on company culture - customize for any organization**

**Take your organization's Mission Statement and make the central component of your hiring program**

- How is your Mission represented in your job descriptions?
- How does it show in the application process?
- How does it apply in the vetting process?
- How does it align in the group interview/solo interview process?
- How can it aid in your decision making?

## What did we do?

Made available materials that were representative of who we are, what we do, and whom we are seeking

- Website
- Job descriptions
- Visuals
- Tone/word choices

## Vetted candidates based on:

- Interest/knowledge of Meow Wolf and the Arts (Creative/Artistic)
- Guest Service Aptitude (Personable/Friendly)
- Ability to respond (Flexible/Adaptable)
- Talent/Culture Fit (Experience/Uniqueness)

## The Basic Process

- Applications used screener questions – informational and knockout
- ZOOM Group Interviews
- Job Fair
- In-Person Group Interviews
- Speed Interviews
- 1:1s
- Review with Management Team
- Sending out offers/Hiring

# Behavioral vs. Traditional Interview Differences

## BEHAVIORAL

Goes beyond a candidate's past experiences and looks toward culture fit, ability, and potential as relates to a future position.

Takes into account other experiences, identifies transferable skills, listens to the individual's story.

Candidates move forward in the process based on culture fit verses skills. Skills can be taught.

BOTH METHODS have value and for certain jobs make more sense. However, often the best processes are a combination of both, with the Behavioral component taking the lead in the initial interview round and the Traditional component being applied in the follow-up when the skill evaluation is more critical.

## TRADITIONAL

Evaluates based on past experience as relates to applied position.

Uses check box approach for skill sets against specific criteria.

A more traditional model will assure a skill match but does not assess culture fit.

# Behavioral vs. Traditional Questions

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you give me an example of a difficult problem you solved at work? How did you go about reaching a solution?
2. Tell me about a time when you made sure an employer was pleased with your service.
3. Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.
4. Give me an example of a time you were able to be creative with your work. What was exciting or difficult about it?
5. Tell me about a time when you had to develop a new skill? How do you approach the learning process?
6. Please share a time when you faced an unexpected challenge. How did you overcome this challenge?
7. Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment and why this achievement is significant to you.

Using the “STAR” approach (Situation or Task, Actions, Result) is a great way to develop questions focused on answers that are directly relatable to the role.

*NOTE: These are also great questions for management candidates.*

## TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. Why are you interested in working for us?
4. What would you do if you were having difficulties with another employee on your project?
5. What would you do if someone asked you to overlook a problem with your project?
6. Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?
7. How did you like your last job?

While these standard questions can seem to set level evaluation of individual candidate, there are shortfalls as they can be closed-ended or limit further information unless the interviewer is empowered to query further. They can set-up hypothetical answers that may more often be a candidate's response to what they think the interviewer wants to hear verses how they would truly react which plays into the interviewer's bias.

Hypothetical questions can be valuable to determine how the candidate thinks on their feet with little notice to prepare but should not be the only basis of evaluation.

# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Environment

Replicating your environment, giving applicants a sense of the sights, sounds, smells, and similar, sets them, and you, up for success:

- Is the location quiet or noisy?
- Is there music central to the space or in the background?
- Are there lighting elements or special effects in the vicinity?
- What is the ratio of staff to guests?
- What is the general demographic of the location?
- How active is the space?
- Is there a specific color palette?
- What kind of signage is there?

What the environment can reveal includes demonstration of:

- Interpersonal engagement
- Observation skills
- Natural behavior in a like-space to the potential work location
- Learning preferences (visual, audio, tactile, logical, natural, et. al)

This doesn't mean recreating your entire location but rather giving a nod to what they can expect. For example, interviewing a potential waitperson at a food truck, fast food restaurant, or sit-down location that has parallels to where they may be working gives the interviewer a chance to evaluate how they react and respond, if they are engaged or distracted, how observational they are, and if they seem comfortable in their surroundings.

# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Questions

A key to the success of Behavioral Interviewing is to use the same analysis assigned to developing the job description as creating the questions or challenges. Some of the standards the hiring manager should consider the following questions:

- What skills are necessary skills for this role?
- What are the position deliverables?
- Why have people left this position previously?
- What is the most difficult part of this job?
- Putting together a sample list of skills that match the job description such as:
  - Decision making
  - Problem solving
  - Guest aptitude
  - Communication
  - Interpersonal skills
- Are there specific skills or transferable skills to be identified?
- What makes a successful applicant?
- What would make an unsuccessful applicant?

From here the team can formulate specific questions and preferred response levels that equate to a grading rubric bearing in mind the Behavioral Question model.



# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Interviewers

Who will be doing the interviews? The obvious would be the immediate managers for that department. The less obvious? Leadership from other departments.

You should also take the time to prepare your hiring managers/interviewers to assure everyone is on the same page:

<b>Interest in Organization: Creative &amp; Artistic</b>	<b>Guest Service Aptitude: Personable &amp; Friendly</b>	<b>Ability to Respond: Flexible &amp; Adaptable</b>	<b>Talent / Culture Fit: Experience &amp; Affinity</b>
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- How does the evaluation process work?
  - What is the overall “run of show” for the interview?
  - How many people per group?
  - What are the questions/activities?
  - What are the categories of evaluation and how are they defined?
  - What is the scoring process and how does it work with the categories of evaluation?
  - Will there be discussion by evaluators on scoring after each round or will it remain private?

# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Interviewer Prep

- What are the expectations for the interviewers?
  - Friendly? Fun? High energy? Relaxed?
  - Will one person take the lead on questions or will it be mixed up?
  - What happens if the interviewers don't get to all the questions or finish them all up early?
- How many people are being sought to fill each role?
- In addition to a culture fit, is there specific criteria for those positions to be considered?
- Consider an initial bias review and open conversation with all interviewers
- What are the expectations for the applicants?
- What qualities are being sought for team members overall?
- What is the primary objective for this initial round?
  - Culture fit?
  - Department fit?
  - Specific skill or transferable skill identification?
- Is there anything that is an absolute knock out for further consideration?

**And perhaps an often-overlooked component of good interviewing is **how to take notes.****  
**And where to take notes.**

# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Round 1, 2, 3

Depending on your needs, time, and hiring manager bandwidth, you may want to consider the following for your hiring tracks:

## **APPLICATION - Informational:**

- Standard information
- Specific questions regarding job interest
- Unexpected, unusual questions
- Types of questions
  - Yes/No/NA
  - Multiple choice
  - Short answer
  - Knock out questions vs. informational questions
- Mini essay
  - If your favorite color was a flavor, what would it taste like?
  - Describe yourself in 10 words or less
  - What would be your personal theme song and why?
  - What is the best way for someone to help you get rid of hiccups?

Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Round 1, **2**, 3

**Can I have some  
volunteers, please?**

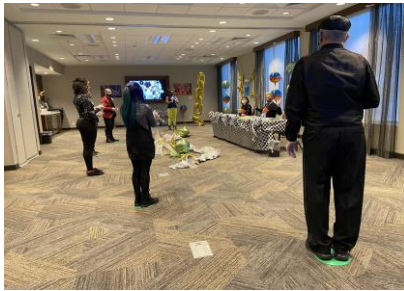


# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Round 1, 2, 3

REMEMBER THE OBJECTIVE: Keep it fun, aligned with organization's Mission, Vision, Values, reflective of environment, and, ideally, delivered in a manner that makes it accessible and less stressful than a traditional interview might be.

## **JOB FAIR/GROUP INTERVIEW - Behavioral:**

- **Interpersonal engagement**
  - Solo activities
  - Solo questions; individually asked/group asked
  - Group activities
- **Observations**
  - Awkward challenges
  - Who is quiet when working? Who is conversant? Who listens? Who tries to take center stage?
  - Who is comfortable with speaking in public? Can be heard easily? May need some encouragement to speak up?
  - Are there natural leaders? Natural followers?
  - Are there any caretakers?
- **Natural behavior in a like-space to the potential work location**
  - Are people comfortable from the start? Do they acclimate?
- **Learning preferences (visual, audio, tactile, logical, natural, et. al)**
  - People that do well when they are doing something tactile?
  - People who listen well?
  - Who does better when there is a demonstration or movement is happening?



# Preparing for Behavioral Interviewing: Round 1, 2, **3**

## **SPEED ROUND/ 1-ON-1s – Behavioral/Skill Assessment/Job Alignment:**

- Set a time element – think about the length of time a guest might interact with a team member
  - 1 – 10 minutes depending on method used
  - Allow time for note-taking which may mean adding in a break
- Depending on model used, select a single or several standard questions that can lead to additional conversation
  - For Speed Round use 3 – 5 interviewers. Similar to “speed-dating” each interviewer has a single, individual question they ask of each candidate then carry on based on application, resume, job-specific skills, or areas of interest from prior interview to explore
  - 1:1 involves several core questions that are open-ended allowing for additional discussion. Can also include something prepared or surprise improv specific to the role. Maybe a 2<sup>nd</sup> person in the space who is timekeeping and taking notes
- Approach conversationally but keep on point

It is, again, important to reiterate with your hiring team the objectives specific to this round.



# The Interview





# Four Pillars to support Behavioral Hiring

1. Makes candidates feel welcomed, comfortable, engaged, and excited.
2. Predicated on “real time” responses: unexpected, spontaneous
3. Creates the opportunity for matching prospects to the right role – possibly one the individual had never considered
4. Approaches program from organization’s Mission, Vision, and Values

# The Results

1. Training will start with new team members who are already aligned culturally with your organization
2. Team members will already feel “seen” and supported by leadership
3. Naturally diverse workforce
4. Higher retention rates
5. Your team will be ready to get training



# From the team



# The Team Member



# Preparing for Behavioral Training - SAME RULES APPLY! Use those 4 Pillars!

1. Make team members feel welcomed, comfortable, engaged, and excited.
2. Use opportunities for “real time” responses/discussions/interactions: unexpected, spontaneous
3. Give team members the encouragement and confidence to know they are in the right role
4. Approach your training program from organization’s Mission, Vision, and Values

# Behavioral Training Considerations

- Start with your Mission, Vision, & Values to drive all aspects of your training
- Have a great training environment and program
  - Use a variety of training methods but build daily on previous learnings...including what was done as part of the Hiring Event
  - Take into account all the varying levels of learning
  - Let your new team members drive part of the time
  - Touch back on your organizational culture daily
  - Make sure your training team is prepped
- Set clear expectations for ALL team members – front line and managers
- Look at what can be trained collectively to encourage team members to know others from different departments



# Behavioral Training Considerations

- Seek unique opportunities to educate your team on cultural beliefs and practices
  - EXAMPLE: At Meow Wolf we include modules on Accessibility and Sensitivity
  - Move things around – change locations, trainers, go from PowerPoint to game play
  - Change group sizes and dynamics
  - Ask the team to problem solve
  - Use icebreakers to set the tone for the trainings of the day
- Consider how the “practical” part of training can be scaled
- Consider how the “practical” part of training can be conducted as close to “real” as possible
- Practice, practice, practice so all team members feel good about their work
  - Make sure your training team is prepped
  - Look at “dress rehearsals” as opportunities to clear team members, identify challenges, celebrate successes
  - Use every opportunity to touch back on the key values for your organization in the face of guest interaction

One last thing:  
Take advantage of the momentum from your hiring event and keep it going with your training...





# Best Practices: Behavioral Hiring and Training

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