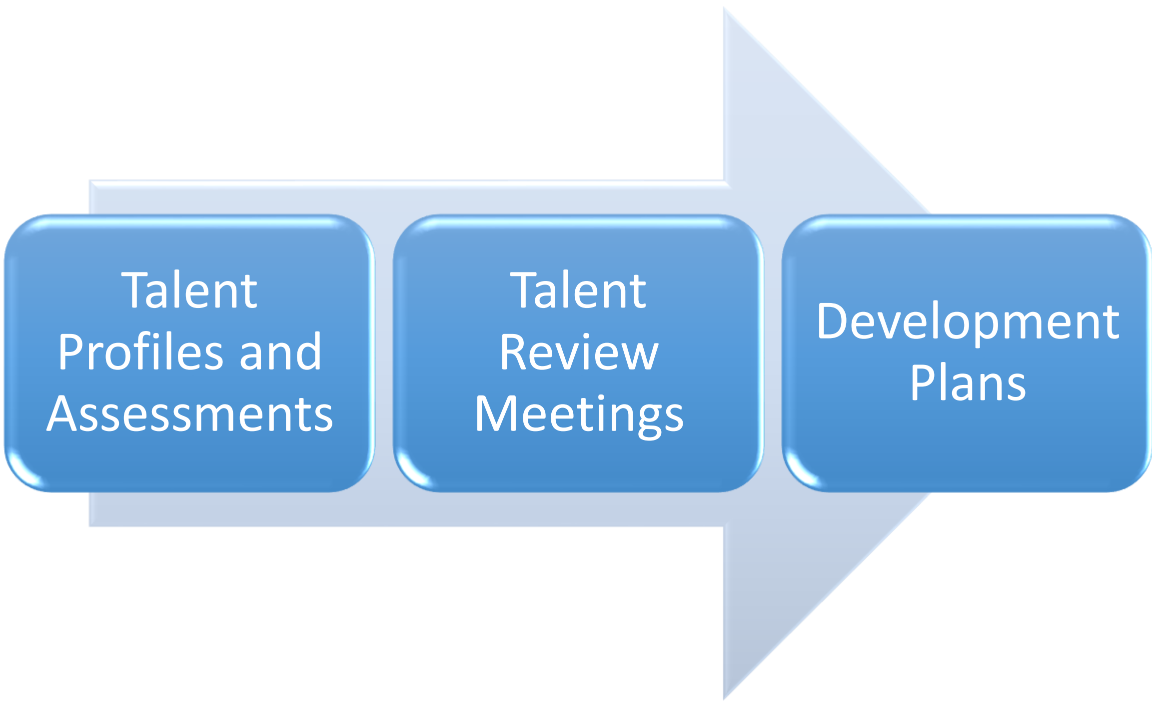
Unit 2 Creating a Talent Management Plan

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:
✓ Recognize and foster talent within an organization ✓ Explain the principles of competency-based management

Unit 2

Creating a Talent Management Plan

Overview
A good talent management program has three steps:



We'll look at each element as the course progresses.

Developing Your Vision
Before you begin to develop a talent management program for your organization, you should first create a vision for it. This will help you focus your program and achieve the desired results.

To start, gather your organization's vision statement, mission statement, long- and short-term goals, and any other planning documents. (If your organization hasn't thought about these things, now is the time!)

Next, plan a vision-setting workshop and invite all the key players. If possible, have the workshop off-site (preferably somewhere that incites creativity). If you can't afford to have it off-site, decorate a boardroom to make it look like somewhere exotic. You may also want to choose a facilitator to lead the meeting.

Before the workshop, ask everyone to perform the following exercise:

Sit down with a sheet of blank paper in front of you. In an ideal world, what would our new talent management process do? Don't think about what it can't do, or why certain things aren't possible. List all ideas and goals, no matter how lofty.

Then, at the meeting, have everyone share their vision. Key points should be consolidated on the flip chart.

Once everyone has shared their ideas, narrow the focus down and create a vision statement. This statement should explain what will change and how it will change as a result of your talent management program. It should also be attainable and worthwhile.

A few notes:

- This process can be very simple or very complex depending on your organization. Make it work for you.
- You may need several sessions to build your vision statement.
- Once your vision has been created, celebrate it! Share it with the organization and make it a core part of your talent management program.
- Don't be afraid to re-evaluate your vision a few months down the road.

Competency-Based Programs

Understanding Competencies

What is a Competency?
A competency can be described as a standardized requirement for knowledge, skills, or abilities. An organization may want competencies in areas like communication, leadership, planning, or teaching.

Competency Clusters
Competencies can be clustered together to outline the requirements for a particular skill. For example, a line manager's competency cluster might look like this:

Communication:

- Promotes open conversation
- Presents information clearly

- Listens actively and effectively

Leadership:
- Negotiates effectively with team members
- Encourages team members
- Helps team set realistic goals

Critical Thinking:
- Able to solve problems in a logical manner
- Able to assist others in solving problems
- Finds resources efficiently and uses them effectively

What is a Competency Model?
Competency models outline the skills that an organization needs to be successful. It's about looking at all aspects of an individual, including:
- Knowledge, skills, abilities
- Self-image
- Motivators
- Personality traits

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model
One of the most popular competency models is Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence model, which outlines the following competency areas:

(Note that each of these sub-points is a cluster and has corresponding sub-sub-points. For more information see http://www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional_competence_framework.html.)

Competency models can help your talent management program in several ways:

- They can ensure that everyone involved is speaking the same language
- They can outline the values and skills considered key in the organization

Your competency model will depend on what characteristics are important to your organization. You may choose to develop a competency model for a particular part of your organization (like executives or middle managers), for a particular department, or for a particular position.

Identifying Talent

Key Talent Groups
Identifying the talent in your organization must be a key part of your talent management process. There are several major groups that employees typically fall into.

Average Citizens
These are the average Joes that keep the company running. They meet or perhaps sometimes exceed your expectations. They can be counted on to do their jobs consistently at an acceptable level. This group often forms the majority of your organization. They are the workhorses, and they must be kept happy in order for your organization to continue being productive.

High Performers
These are your superstars – the people who consistently go above and beyond what's expected. You can identify them by asking:

- Who consistently exceeds expectations?
- Who pitches in and helps when there's a crisis?
- Who can we go to for new, exciting ideas?
- Who inspires others to go above and beyond?
- Who do we miss when they are away from the company?
- When we think of the company's values and mission, who do we think of?

High Potentials
This group identifies individuals who have high potential for leadership growth. Individuals will likely move in and out of this group over their career. High potentials must have both the motivation and the ability to move forward in the company.

Some things to look at to help you identify high potentials include:

- Who has taken on challenging assignments and projects lately, and done well with them?
- Who are the leaders in our company?
- Who has taken initiative in personal development, requesting training, coaching, and feedback?
- Who has taken opportunities to learn more about the company?
- Who has a wide breadth of experience inside the company?

Some companies sub-categorize high potentials into categories like:

- Upcoming high potentials
- Prepared high potentials
- Executive high potentials

Successors
A successor is someone who will replace a particular individual in your organization. Identifying and grooming successors so that you aren't left with a talent gap is an important part of talent management planning.

There are typically four levels of successors that should be identified:

- Prepared Successors: Who is ready to fill the position now?
- Future Successors: Who will be ready to fill the position in one to two years?
- Potential Candidates: Who could be ready to fill the position over the next three to five years?
- Emergency Successors: Who could fill the position for a short term if there was an emergency?

Aren't Successors and High Potentials the Same Thing?
Not necessarily… and here is why:

Successors…

- Are often well suited for a single position
- May not be interested in lateral or promotional moves

High Potentials…

- Have a skill set that is suited for several different positions
- Want to move laterally and vertically in the organization, and have the skills and abilities to do so

Key Experts

Depending on your organization, you may also want to identify key experts and develop a talent management and succession plan for them. Key experts are individuals who have a very high level of expertise in their field. They often have:

- Credibility in the field
- Specific credentials or academic achievements
- Membership on important boards and committees
- Publication and/or speaking credits
- Innovation in their field

When planning succession and talent management for key experts, you will focus on individuals who have a particular area of expertise (or desire to achieve that level) rather than individuals who want to advance in the company.

Missing Pieces

Equally as important as identifying where the talent is, is identifying where the talent is not. Which departments lack the categories mentioned above? Which departments lack a succession plan and the resources to support it?

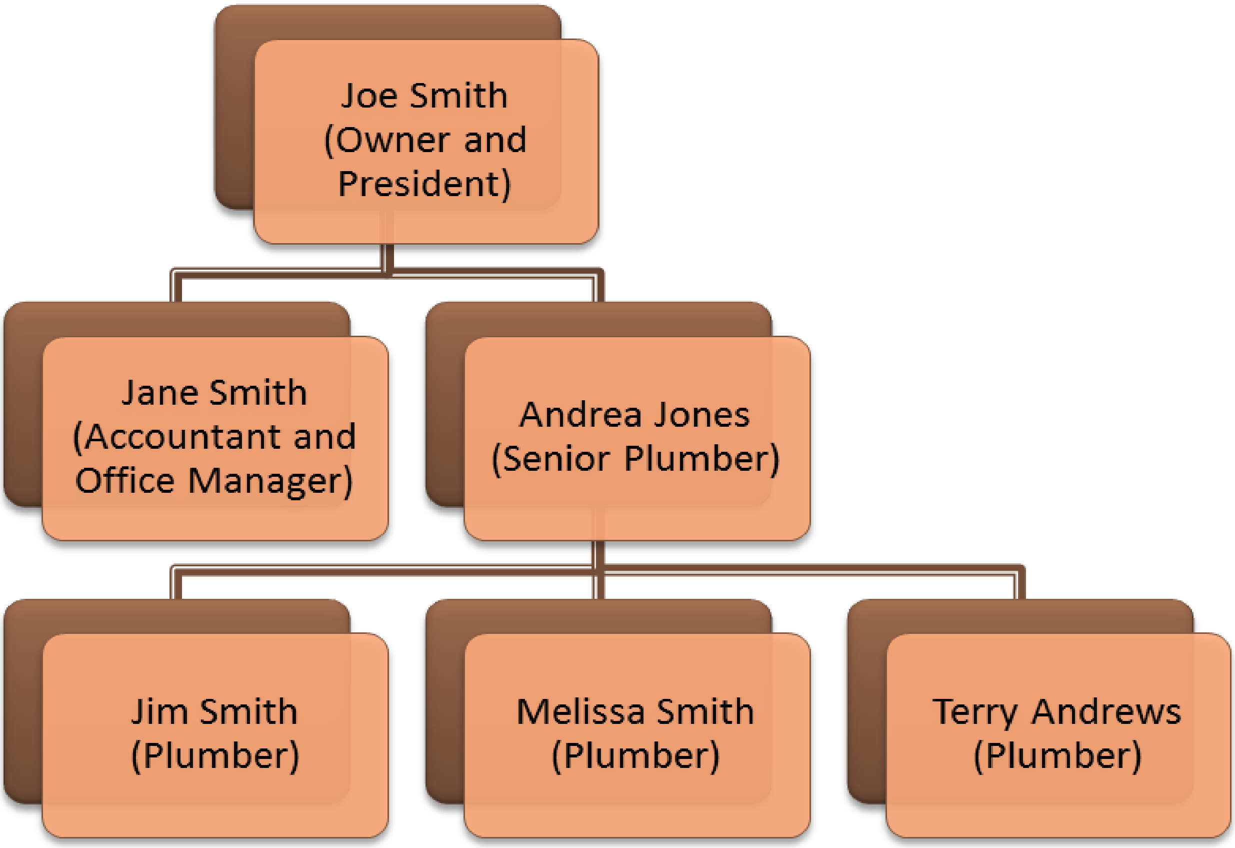
Case Study: Smith Plumbing Inc.

Background Information

Joe Smith opened a family plumbing business in 1964. Recently Joe has started thinking about retiring, and he's realized that he's not sure who would take over the business. His daughter, Melissa, is very smart and always goes above and beyond her duties. However, she has no desire to be anything but a plumber. His son, Jim, is also a plumber and has expressed desire to take over the company someday, but he doesn't have any business knowledge.

Joe has brought you, a talent management expert, in to help him identify the talent in his organization. This will give him a start on planning his company's future.

Organizational Chart



Individual Profiles
Joe Smith

- Born: August 1944
- Family Details: Married to Jane Smith. They have four children: Jim, John, Melissa, and Mary.
- Education: 10th grade
- Work Experience: Worked as a plumber from 1959-1964; opened his own business in 1964
- Current Duties:
    1. Networks to recruit new clients
    2. Does the occasional plumbing job
    3. Supervises Jane and Andrea
    4. General work to run the business

Jane Smith

- Born: September 1944
- Family Details: Married to Joe Smith. They have four children: Jim, John, Melissa, and Mary.
- Education: High school, vocational training as a secretary
- Work Experience: None other than Smith Plumbing

- Current Duties:
    1. Answers phone
    2. Manages office
    3. Schedules vacation
    4. Does all bookkeeping and accounting
    5. Oversees contracted employees (for cleaning, land maintenance, etc.)

Andrea Jones

- Born: January 1970
- Family Details: Married to Andy Jones. They have one daughter, Samantha.
- Education: High school and trades training in plumbing, electrical, and business administration
- Work Experience:
    1. 1991-1993: Manager for a small construction business
    2. 1993-1995: Plumber for a rival company
    3. 1995-2000: Plumber for Smith Plumbing
    4. 2000-Present: Senior Plumber with Smith Plumbing
- Current Duties:
    1. Supervises junior plumbers
    2. Schedules plumbing jobs
    3. Does all commercial plumbing work
    4. Performs assessments on junior plumbers
    5. Advises Jane and Joe on staffing and business decisions

Jim Smith

- Born: January 1985
- Family Details: Not married, no children
- Education: High school, trades training in plumbing
- Work Experience: Has worked for Smith Plumbing since 2000 as a plumber; has been around the business and performed odd jobs all his life
- Current Duties:
    1. Does residential plumbing
    2. Assists with commercial plumbing jobs as needed
    3. Assists Joe and Jane with office work as needed

Melissa Smith

- Born: April 1982
- Family Details: One son, Alex
- Education: High school, trades training in plumbing
- Work Experience: Has worked for Smith Plumbing since 1997 as a plumber; has been around the business and performed odd jobs all her life
- Current Duties:
    1. Does residential plumbing

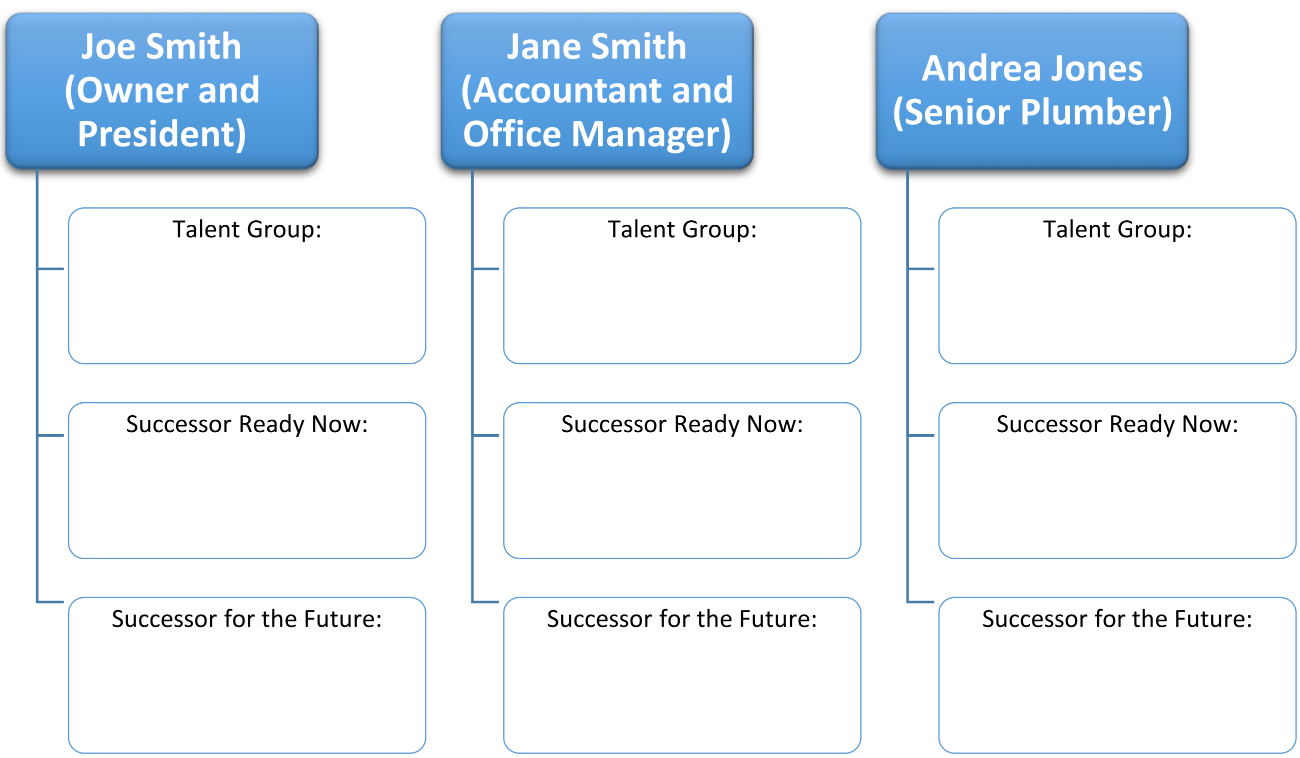
2. Assists with commercial plumbing jobs as needed

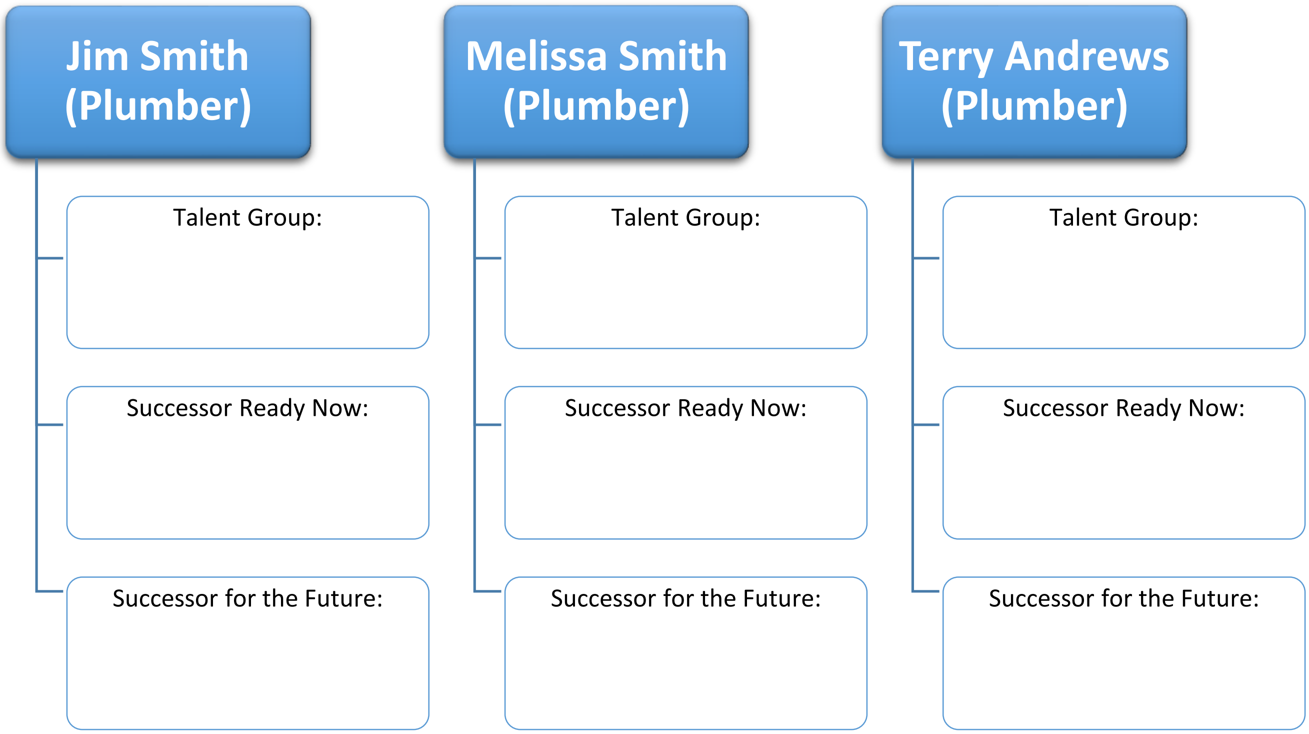
Terry Andrews

- Born: July 1990
- Family Details: Not married, no children
- Education: High school, trades training in plumbing and auto body repair
- Work Experience:
    1. 2007-2009: Worked odd plumbing jobs
    2. 2009-Present: Plumber with Smith Plumbing
- Current Duties:
    1. Does residential plumbing

Questions

Fill out the talent template below. Mark N/A to any categories that do not apply.





Fast-Track Programs

Having a talent management and succession plan in place will help you better respond to emergencies and crises in your organization. It is far easier to make decisions when the pressure is off. And when the pressure is on, you can look at your plan and focus on implementing it, rather than scrabbling around trying to figure out who knows how to work the bottle-capping machine.

Although it is ideal to have an emergency short-term successor in mind for each of your key positions, this often isn't possible. Most often, you're left in a situation where you have successors for the position, but they may not be ready for a year or even several years.

What are some ways that we can fast track talent development?

Bring on Bench Strength

Getting the Right Person for the Job
Although your talent management program may be focused on the high potentials, high performers, and successors in your organization, don't forget about the majority of your workforce: the average citizen. The high performers in your organization will only be as successful as the people that surround them. You need to make sure that you have all of the right people in the right job, even the average citizens.

Hiring the right people is easier said than done. Hiring is not yet a science, but with the right knowledge and tools, you can get top-notch people every time you hire.

You have probably heard that people are an organization's most important asset. Today, this statement is more significant than ever, particularly as many organizations have seen their labor costs rise dramatically while at the same time customers expect increasingly better service. Don't take the job of hiring lightly and don't go into it poorly prepared.

The cost of improper selection can be very high. When the unsuccessful employee must be terminated, the recruiting and interviewing process must begin all over again, and the successor must first be trained before being put on the job.

These costs, however, are only the more visible ones. The hidden costs are frequently even higher: low quality of work performed by the unsuccessful employee while still on the job, the internal disorganization and disruption the employee may have caused, the ill-will and alienation that may have been generated, and perhaps even the loss of valued customers.

What can you do to make sure you have the best people working for you?
Have position descriptions for your employees so you know what the job entails and what skills you are looking for.

A position description is a legal document. Without one, both employee and employer can be confused about roles and expectations. There is a widely held belief in some organizations that giving employees clear job descriptions will have a detrimental effect on productivity. Research indicates that just the opposite is more likely to be true. Employees who know what their role is will be more willing to work hard, and to stretch the boundaries of their position when required.

An effective position description should include:

- A job title
- Job purpose (Why are they there?)
- Reporting relationships (Who do they report to?)
- Key responsibility areas (What are they specifically to do?)

- Limitations of the position in terms of problem solving and decision making authority
- Environmental factors (What culture and environment will they be working in?)

Requirements to perform the job, also known as job specifications, may be a part of the position description as well. This will include the education, experience, training, and competencies required to do the job.

Even if your company is not big on job descriptions, write one up yourself before you talk with an employee about expectations. Then you will know what you expect that person to do.

Job descriptions should be written out for every employee. There is a strong management trend NOT to give people job descriptions, in the belief this will make the employee more flexible. However, what often happens is that employees either go off on tangents or do nothing in case they do the wrong thing. For most employees, the biggest problem is not knowing what they are supposed to do, rather than feeling they have too many responsibilities.

Here is something else for you to think about: a job description is one of the most important legal documents in your organization. It is the first piece of evidence that judges and arbitration or human rights investigators ask for when legal challenges crop up.

The job description should be self-explanatory for both employee and supervisor. If they are so fuzzy neither of you know expectations, you are in trouble.

Three Pillars
In order to keep the talent that you bring on, you need to be world-class in three areas: interviewing, orientation, and retention.

Interviewing
Your goal when interviewing should not be to woo everyone that comes through the door. Instead, think of it like a first (or second) date: you're getting to know each other and trying to determine whether this is the best fit for both of you. Sure, you may be an industry leader who offers top-notch compensation, amazing offices, and personal assistants – but maybe your work environment is too structured for this particular candidate.

In order to conduct accurate, productive interviews, consider the following tips.

Know what behavioral interviewing is all about.
The goal of the interview is to predict future job performance by learning more about the candidate's past performance. The interviewers will be looking for past behavior in situations similar to those that

will be encountered in the new job. By relating a candidate's answers to specific past experiences, you'll develop much more reliable indicators of how the individual will most likely act in the future.

Behavioral questions ensure spontaneity since candidates can't prepare for them in advance like they can traditional questions. When you are talking about your own past behavior, most people find it hard to lie consistently.

The behavior-based interview uses structured questions on the candidate's past behavior in situations similar to those that will be encountered in the new position. It goes beyond determining whether a person can do the job. It better determines if a person will do a good job; it determines how it will be done and to what extent.

The behavior-based approach to interviewing has an accuracy rating of around 70 percent because it is based strictly on performance. Candidates also feel the process is fair and equitable.

Situational interview questions can further communicate job expectations.
The purpose of situational interview questions is to identify job candidates' work-related behavioral intentions by presenting them with a series of incidents which might occur on the job, and for each one asking, "What would you do in this situation?" Situational questions will be valid to the extent that they parallel events which actually occur on the job. The closer they reflect real life situations, the more likely these questions will predict future job performance.

Brush up on your communication skills.
Make sure you ask open questions of the candidate to gather as much information as possible. Probe for more information so you have the whole story and listen to the candidate's response. Listen to what is said and what isn't said.

Watch your body language. Candidates are watching your every move so make sure you do not convey by facial expressions, hand movements, or tone of voice whether you are favorably or unfavorably impressed by a candidate. Be pleasant and noncommittal to all.

Orientation
When designing your orientation, remember these eight points.

Induction is not orientation.
Orientation is not induction. Induction is about showing a new employee the ropes. It's about filling in forms and learning where the washroom is. Everybody has to go through it, but induction is not orientation. There is nothing wrong with induction, but it has a wholly different dynamic from orientation. Orientation is about pointing people in the right direction.

On-the-job training should include coaching or mentoring.
On its own, on-the-job training is not orientation. No matter what sort of technical or equipment related or other on-the-job training needs to be given to a new employee, that training is not orientation.

Simply putting someone in the seat of a dump truck or putting them in front of a computer with Lotus Notes on it, or accompanying them on their first few sales visits is, by itself, not orientation.

On-the-job training is actually a completion of induction, in that it completes what is necessary to get an employee to the point where they can actually use what you expect them to use. This doesn't point them in the right direction. It merely trains them how to use the resources they need to use.

However, there is one exception to this, and that is where on-the-job training is accompanied by coaching or mentoring. Mentoring or structured coaching alongside on-the-job-training will assist with orientation by saying to new employees, "Here are the tools you use, and here is what we want you to do with these tools."

When you think about on-the-job training in your organization, is it included as part of the orientation program? Is there some coaching or mentoring to go along with this training?

Orientation is a process, not an event.
World class organizations also realize that orientation is a process, not an event. Anything that makes orientation seem to be a narrowly focused single event (such as an orientation day or an orientation lunch) has a negative impact on the relationship between the employer and the employee.

A top notch employee doesn't expect to be "processed" in the sense of being hired, put through a single event, patted on the back, and sent out to do their job. These employees expect a relationship, not an event, not even a series of events. Rather, orientation is the process of forming or building a relationship.

Relationships change in their nature. They change in their assumptions, they change in their expectations, and they change in their needs, and so should the relationship between employer and employee.

Orientation should not be seen as something that happens on the first day, or the first week, or even the first month that a new hire is with an organization. It happens over a period of at least nine months, and perhaps even the first 15 months of the relationship between employee and employer.

Many stakeholders should be involved.
You can't afford for any stakeholders in your organization, anyone who has a stake in the success of the new hire relationship, not to be involved in your orientation process. That means simple things like making sure senior management are fully included in whatever your orientation process is. They should not see it as "something to be put up with." They shouldn't see it as lost revenue. If anything, they

should see it the other way around. After all, orientation done properly reduces employee turnover and gives an organization employees who are more committed to getting the job done.

The "destiny managers," those people who have responsibility for the people who will be going through orientation, should also be involved, as should the new hire's peers.

You should think very creatively about who else they are going to be impacting and who else is a stakeholder in the success of this relationship.

For example, some of the most successful orientations involve an organization's supply chain. Sometimes suppliers or customers may be very dependent on your organization developing high caliber hires over the next few years. They have a vested interest in seeing the relationship work out between employee and employer.

Orientation relates directly to the organization's business plan.

It is possible to put too much emphasis on having fun, with scavenger hunts and group activities that don't have a direct relationship to business. This can have a detrimental effect on the orientation program.

Research tells us that the closer employees are to their first job, the less they want, and the less they enjoy, getting involved in so-called fun activities. They have enormous expectations for what, to some, is a rite of passage. They want to come in, wear whatever is appropriate dress, feel they are being taken seriously, acknowledged as business people, and treated that way by others.

You can have an awful lot more fun with middle managers. They don't have the same expectations as entry-level hires. They are quite ready to kick back, loosen their tie a bit, and have some fun.

However, when all is said and done, people want to contribute, and they want to contribute early and that added value is really what it's all about.

New hires will want to hear:

- Why does the organization exist?
- What does it do?
- How can I contribute?

What are the fundamental issues that your new employees should hear about?

How can you best communicate these issues during the first 9 to 15 months of your employee's time with you?

Orientation should not be solely HR's responsibility.
Orientation is not solely the job of the human resource department. It isn't something they do in a corner, on their own. That isn't to say that the human resource department doesn't set up the employee orientation, provide or at least arrange for the facilities, and guide and lead it.
However, the human resource department is providing a resource, a vital resource to the operational divisions of the organization. Thus it is really the job of the organizational divisions to see orientation through to its natural conclusion—assimilating a productive, value-added employee.

In some organizations there is a real dichotomy between "orientation," some fancy little thing HR does with new hires for a day or two, and the "real work" that goes on in their department. This mentality does nothing to build trust and a sense of integrity between the new hire and the organization.

Focus on honesty, not quantity or quality.
Honesty must be the cornerstone of your orientation program, because honesty is the cornerstone of any relationship. New employees want you to tell it like it is. They can sniff out dishonesty a mile away, and if they detect this in your orientation program, they will react very strongly against it.

Consistency must be maintained.
We've said that the orientation period is about 9 to 15 months, so it is easy to take off at a gallop and then have the intensity of the whole process fade away. If the commitment to updating materials is falling off, or the employee isn't getting feedback on a regular basis, then the employee is back to getting those conflicting signals that derail the whole orientation process.

In orientation, you will want to suggest a variety of tools to convey the orientation material, including classroom training, online training, feedback sessions, focus groups, and interviews. The thing that is most difficult and takes the most time is the disconnect between what is said at one point and what is actually happening at another.

Retention and Development

Don't forget about the employee once their orientation is over. Later on in this course, we'll discuss several key aspects of employee retention, including:

- Motivational strategies
- Development strategies
- Ways to foster engagement

Further Reading:

- ✓ ***Berger, Dorothy R., and Lance A. Berger. The Talent Management Handbook (Second Edition). McGraw-Hill, 2010.***
- ✓ ***Blanchard, Ken, and Sheldon Bowles. High Five! The Magic of Working Together. William Morrow, 2000.***