



VAYA GROUP

## Behavioral Profiling

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& Dave Ross

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It's one of the HR managers' toughest challenge -- separating job candidates who are merely good at interviewing from those who have what it takes to be productive, long-term employees. If only there was a secret formula, a magic potion, a crystal ball that would instantly reveal to us which candidates are the real thing and which have simply mastered the art of interviewing.

### **Professional Fortune Telling**

Historically, we have attempted to predict the future performance of job candidates by reviewing their college transcripts, analyzing their resumes, checking their references and searching for clues in their body language as they respond to our carefully-crafted interview questions. Some of us are better at this method of fortune telling than others. Most of us have hired just as many winners as losers using these subjective methods. However, for some companies, a technique called Behavioral Profiling is taking the mystery out of employee selection and helping managers forecast future success.

Using Science to Predict the Future Behavioral Profiling is typically conducted by a third party trained in competency modeling and assessment. The process begins with an in-depth job analysis of the position to be filled. One-on-one interviews and focus groups are conducted with individuals currently holding the position, individuals who supervise the position, individuals who report to the position and customers in order to get a complete 360 degree look at the job. Performance data and job reviews are factored into the analysis. This data is then analyzed to identify the core competencies, motivations and skills that are critical to successful performance in the job -- this becomes the behavioral model.

The next step is to construct a reliable interview tool to assess these critical-to-success competencies. The more these interview questions reflect the situations that candidates would encounter on the job, the better the interview will be. Along with the interview questions, behavioral "anchors" are developed to enable the interviewer to evaluate how much "positive evidence" can be found in the candidate's responses.

Before using the new interview with real-life candidates, it is validated with a group of the company's current incumbents. Typically a sample of top performers and randomly selected performers are assessed with the interview to develop validity evidence and norms. Once the validity of the interview is established, the assessment of candidates can begin. Candidates are typically interviewed by a trained interviewer who codes a candidate's responses and provides an objective assessment of how well a candidate matches the behavioral model developed for the position.

### **GE Medical Systems - Case Study**

In cases where this method has been used, Behavioral Profiling has been able to predict top performers with a success rate as high as 90 percent. In one recent study, GE Medical Systems, a \$6 billion international division of GE located in Waukesha, Wisconsin, utilized Behavioral Profiling. Concerned with selecting and retaining top leadership talent, Global Leadership Development executive Steve Patscot, contracted with Vaya Group, an organizational development firm in Aurora Illinois, to develop a global leadership behavioral profile for this important group of employees. Before the resulting two-hour phone interview was incorporated into GE's hiring process, it was tested on 34 of the company's current executives in the United States, Europe and Asia.

To their credit, GE wanted to rigorously validate the model to ensure that the behavioral profile could accurately distinguish between current executives who had received strong performance evaluations during their last review and those who hadn't. The result...Thirty out of 34 times, the behavioral profile results matched the prior performance evaluation. According to Patscot, "GE Med Systems was so impressed with the accuracy of the behavioral profile that we immediately began using the interview as part of our hiring process and still use it today to assess external leadership candidates and to develop our own internal bench strengths."

### **Could Behavioral Profiling Benefit Your Organization?**

Behavioral Profiling has been used to develop competency models for sales, management, IT, and most functional areas in which behaviors make a big difference in a person's success on the job. As a bonus, the information provided by behavioral profiling can be used to more quickly develop training road-map for new hires, to assess the competencies of current employees, and to provide a snapshot of a corporation's core competencies for strategic planning purposes.

Consider the following questions to determine if behavioral profiling could benefit your organization.

1. How much money do you invest in the recruitment, selection and development of your people?
2. Are there jobs within your organization for which behaviors seem to really make the difference in successful performance?
3. Have you defined the behaviors that are needed for successful performance by your leaders and managers?
4. In financial terms, is there a large difference in productivity measures between your top performers and your mediocre performers? Do these productivity measures translate into dollars and cents?
5. Have you identified the necessary bench strengths within your organization that will enable you to meet future strategic objectives?
6. How does your company decide what training to offer -- is it carefully linked to most critical-to-success competencies?

### **The Power of Behavioral Profiling**

When used appropriately, Behavioral Profiling can dramatically increase the odds of selecting successful employees. It can provide the hiring manager with a six-month head start in getting to know the candidate, and a day-one development plan for new hires. Ultimately, it can help companies pin-point their most critical development needs and help HR and training managers better allocate their budget resources.