

If you want to hire the best people . . .

Interviewing method touted to help you find the best employees

By **STEVE MacNAULL**
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Ask for examples.

"If you want to hire superior performers from your job interviews, don't ask hypothetical questions," said human resources expert Susan Alley.

"Ask probing questions and get examples. And then ask the interviewee for the name and number of someone (a co-worker or boss) who can validate the example."

This tough and effective style of hiring screening is known in human resources speak as behavioural interviewing.

Alley, a consultant with Vancouver-based Open Solutions Canada, led a daylong workshop on behavioural in-

terviewing this week in Kelowna for human resources specialists.

"If you ask someone in a job interview how they are under stress, they will tell you they are great under stress," Alley said with a shrug.

"But if you ask them to give you an example of when they were last under great stress, how they handled it and what the results were, then you will get a much better idea if this person is qualified for the job."

The same sort of examples can be mined with probing questions about decision-making, customer service, judgment, initiation, innovation and results.

"And always get the name and number of someone who can back up the interviewee's examples," stressed Alley.

"Are you going to call every one of them? No, but call a few to make sure the interviewee has been honest and they would make a good hire."

In these times of labour shortage, employers might be tempted to

quickly hire people just because they have some skills and are ready to work.

That's a mistake, says Alley.

"Always do a full hour-and-a-half interview and follow up," she said.

"Especially in times of a labour shortage, companies should be taking the time to hire superior performers. Hiring superior is the only way a company can be superior and operate in this lean-and-mean atmosphere where fewer people are expected to do more."

Hiring average people means the company will be average, said Alley.

The behavioural interviewing technique allows a company to assess an applicant's knowledge, skills and abilities.

But it also gives the best insight into that huge and hard-to-determine category of personal attributes and behaviours that will make a person an exceptional employee, average worker or pain in the butt.

The behavioural interviewing seminar was organized by the Interior branch of the B.C. Human Resources



STEVE MACNAULL/The Okanagan Saturday

Get specific in job interviews so you can hire the best candidate, human resources expert Susan Alley said at a workshop this week.