Hire right with Motivation Based Interviewing

Do you want to ensure you are hiring the best, brightest, and highest achieving employees?

Then using motivation-based interviewing might be for you! Motivation Based Interviewing (MBI) helps to determine if a prospective employee has the drive, skillset, and attitude to succeed.

First developed by Carol Quinn, MBI has become a standard for finding the right talent.

Why? Because MBI shows that skill level does not equate to job performance. It provides the tools and resources to move beyond basic behavioral and skill-based interviews, and gain a deeper understanding of the candidate's actual potential to be a high performer.

What is motivation-based interviewing (MBI)?

MBI assesses the three major components that are common to high performers – this leads to more successful hires.

This practice uses three simple rules to create effective interview questions that allow you to extend offers based not only on skill but also on the standard of high performance. What three things do all top performers have in common?

- **Attitude** – They ask how can I achieve what is necessary, and how do I overcome this obstacle?
- **Passion** – What motivates the person?
- **Skillset – Does the candidate have the basic skills to do the job?**

In short, these three things lead to self-motivation and better results!

An employee with skills but no motivation will not be a good hire for your company.

However, an employee with motivation, skills, and passion will have the ability to go above and beyond when others can't or won't.

In the hiring process, employers often undervalue that a candidate with the right motivation can overcome any skill deficits – because they are motivated to learn, overcome any skill gaps, and ultimately succeed.

Skills can be taught, but motivation and passion are intrinsic – they can't be taught, and so those attributes are what employers should be looking for to ensure they are making outstanding hiring decisions.

Also, hiring managers often place too much importance on how long a candidate has been doing a job, assuming that years of service are equal to higher skill levels and, therefore, higher performance.

These are false assumptions that can contribute to employers making bad hires.

In a traditional interview behavioral-based process, there are downsides such as:

- Candidates can rehearse answers.
- The interviewer's bias can affect interpretation.
- Lack of flexibility in questioning.
- Not a great predictor of on-the-job success.
- Places a lot of focus on presentation skills, not actual skills or behaviors.
- Questions aren't always relevant for the future role.
- Does not predict the motivation or passion of the candidate.
- Interviewers fall back on "gut feelings," not data.
- Poorly crafted questions can lead to a poor outcome.
- It can tell you what a candidate would do or has done, but not how well they did it.
- Encourages self-report bias (embellishment).
- Providing a few examples of motivation, drive, or initiative does not predict a candidate's self-motivation.

While many companies are still using behavioral-based interviews, it is easy for candidates to study for these interviews and incorporate their responses using the STAR method.

The STAR method is a well-known way to structure answers that focuses on the situation, task, action, and result. Candidates often are aware that these behavioral questions will be asked and can rehearse their answers using the STAR method.

While this approach might give you some insights, it isn't the best way to determine underlying motivation or passion.

Benefits of MBI

The benefits of Motivation Based Interviewing are plenty – with the outcome being an engaged, happy workforce that you are more likely to retain.

Using MBI questions in an interview, you can find candidates with the right confidence and culture fit who go on to become high performers.

Behavior-based interviews can reveal some aspects of a candidate's personality – but it leaves out the motivation factor, and that is a driver of success. The MBI series of questions show the patterns of a candidate's behavior, revealing their typical response to challenges – a much better indicator of future success than action or skill-based assessments alone.
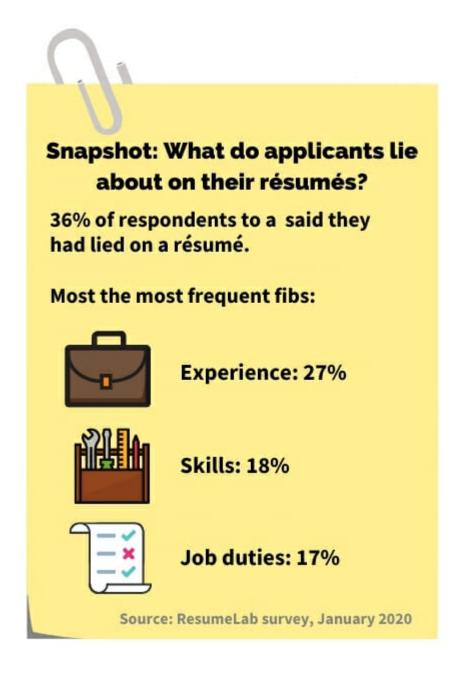
Asking the right questions in the interview can help you determine why the candidate is interested in leaving their current role, as well.

You can ask:

- What would motivate you to stay with our company for five years or more?
- What would it take for you to stay at your current role?
- How do you determine a healthy work/life balance?

Using MBI techniques can also help you to weed out candidates who aren't a great fit or maybe less than truthful on their application.

It is a quantitative way of determining the attitude and passion of a candidate and provides verified ways of decreasing turnover and ensuring the hiring of high performers.

Snapshot: What do applicants lie about on their résumés?

36% of respondents to a said they had lied on a résumé.

Most the most frequent fibs:

Experience: 27%

Skills: 18%

Job duties: 17%

Source: ResumeLab survey, January 2020

How to implement MBI

Interviewers will likely have little-to-no training on how to craft questions and conduct interviews that strive to understand the candidates' motivation.

To implement MBI at your company, start with training for HR and hiring managers so that they can learn how to craft the right questions. This will allow them to weed out those who may be trying to fool the system or are exaggerating their skills.

One thing that can be done is to craft questions that include an obstacle in them, such as "tell me about a time that you had to fix a problem you didn't create?"

This type of question can help shed light on how the candidate handles finding a solution – a high performer will focus on fixing the problem or finding a solution rather than placing blame. The attitude of a top performer is different from other applicants.

Here are other questions that might help you determine if a candidate will be a high performer:

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with poor performance in an employee.
- Describe a time that you had to deal with an angry customer.

- Share with me about a time when you disagreed with a coworker.
- Tell me about a time when you struggled to meet a deadline.
- Describe a time where you had a colleague on your team who wasn't pulling their weight.
- Tell me about a time when you had a problem and had no idea how to solve it.
- Describe a situation when you exceeded expectations at work. What were the circumstances, and how did you go above and beyond? Why?

If you don't know where to start, begin by tracking your quality of hire metrics – how quickly are new hires leaving? Why are they leaving? What is the job performance data? Are there a large number of employees performing below the expected range?

All of these things are indicators of poor hiring processes. If your organization has high turnover, lacks a high-performing culture, or is falling below expectations on performance, it might be time to implement the MBI interviewing process.

MBI offers hiring managers and human resources professionals a different approach to managing interviews and developing interview questions. This fresh take can help you find the right candidates who will be contributing to the bottom-line and hit the ground running from day one.

Ensuring that your organization is built with high-performing candidates adds to the bottom line, improves retention, and ensures ongoing success. By crafting your interview questions to ensure drive, skillset, and attitude to succeed, you'll have better hiring outcomes and a better success rate as a company, too.