GLS: WHITE PAPER

THE POWER OF POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

AND YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FIRST QUESTIONS IN AN INTERVIEW

The science proves it: most people make a first impression of a person within 7 seconds so you have to make it count. Not only does your first impression make an impact, but so also does your response to the first questions given in interviews. Be prepared and on the ready with these tips.

KEY POINTS

Understanding First Impressions
The Science of First Impressions
Strategies for First Impressions
Importance of First Interview Questions
Probing Background and Experience
Assessing Behavioral Competencies
Evaluating Job and Company-Specific Competencies
Consequences of Poor Responses

Introduction

In the professional realm, first impressions play a crucial role in determining the future of an applicant's potential engagement with an organization. Studies reveal that most people form an initial impression within seven seconds, highlighting the importance of the initial encounter during an interview (Van Edwards, n.d.). This research brief delves into the criticality of first impressions and the importance of responses to the first set of interview questions in the education sector.

Understanding First Impressions

THE SCIENCE OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Research has identified six key elements that form a first impression: trustworthiness, competence, extroversion, likeability, aggressiveness, and attractiveness (Van Edwards, n.d.). In the education sector, qualities like trustworthiness, competence, and extroversion can greatly influence the interviewer's perception of an educator's ability to connect with students, manage classrooms, and collaborate with peers.

STRATEGIES FOR FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Strategies for making a strong first impression include understanding the context of the interaction, displaying positive body language, and showing genuine interest in the other party. Applying these strategies can help educators demonstrate their suitability for a role right from the outset.

References

Van Edwards, V. (n.d.). First Impressions: The Science of Meeting People. Science of People. Retrieved from https://www.scienceofpeople.com/first-impressions/

Importance of First Interview Questions

PROBING BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Initial interview questions often aim to explore an applicant's background and experiences, providing a glimpse into their potential fit for the role. For instance, asking a candidate about a significant accomplishment in their career can provide insights into their professional values, problem-solving skills, and sense of initiative.

ASSESSING BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES

Initial behavioral questions are designed to evaluate a candidate's soft skills and ability to handle job-specific scenarios. Responses to questions about dealing with pressure, making difficult decisions, or collaborating with challenging team members can highlight a candidate's resilience, decision-making ability, and interpersonal skills, all vital for educators.

EVALUATING JOB AND ORGANIZATION

First interview questions often delve into a candidate's understanding of the job role and the company culture. These questions assess whether the candidate's professional approach aligns with the organization's mission, values, and policies.

Consequences of Poor Responses

Ineffective responses to initial interview questions, such as expressing a desire to move for personal reasons or considering the role as just the next step in a career, can signal a lack of genuine interest in the specific role or the institution. This can negatively impact the hiring committee's perception of the candidate's fit and long-term commitment to the position.

Examples of Poor Responses

- I really like the local golf course.
- My kids want to move to a larger community.
- This is just the next step in my career.
- The search consultant encouraged me to apply.
- The more I looked at your website the more I felt like I could do the job.
- We have family in the area.
- The salary enticed me to apply.
- I need to find another job.

Beginning of Interview Question Examples

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS
- Can you briefly tell me about yourself?
- What made you interested in applying for this position?
- Can you talk me through your resume?

EXPERIENCE-RELATED QUESTIONS
- Can you tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in your career?
- Can you describe a challenging work situation and how you overcame it?
- How do your skills and experiences make you a good fit for this role?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS
- Can you describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision at work? How did you approach it and what was the outcome?
- How do you handle pressure or stressful situations at work?
- Can you give an example of a time you had to collaborate with a difficult team member?

JOB-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
- What strategies would you use to manage a team?
- How would you handle a situation where a project deadline is at risk due to a team member's delay?
- Can you tell me about a time when you implemented a successful change in strategy?

COMPANY-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
- What interests you about our company?
- How do you feel you can contribute to our company's mission and values?
- How would you handle a situation that is against our company's policy or culture?

FUTURE-RELATED QUESTIONS
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- How do you seek to develop your professional skills and knowledge?
- What are your career goals and how does this position align with those?

Conclusion

First impressions, coupled with well-considered responses to the first set of interview questions, can set the stage for successful interviews for educators. Applicants should strategically prepare for these initial exchanges to effectively communicate their suitability and enthusiasm for the role!

Remember

Remember, an interview is also an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions. Asking the hiring team questions demonstrates interest and enthusiasm for the role and your organization. It also evaluates the fit between the candidate and job.