

WESTGATE RESORTS
TEAM MEMBER ONBOARDING



WG HOUSEKEEPING
SERVICE STANDARDS

Have you ever interviewed a candidate and afterwards, you realized you didn't have enough information about their experiences and/or skills to make an informed hiring decision? The candidate gave vague or incomplete answers that missed the point of your questions entirely.

It is possible the candidate was nervous, forgetting to share details about their work experiences. Maybe he or she doesn't have the needed experience for this role. Conducting interviews using questions drawing on their previous work experiences, then asking targeted follow up questions, known as probing questions, will help the candidate to provide answers that contain the detailed information you need for making informed hiring decisions.

Situational Interviewing

When conducting interviews, ask scenario-based questions drawn from situations here at Westgate or ask a candidate to recall specific experiences from their past jobs. These questions are designed to assess the candidate's previous job performance to predict how they may perform in this role.

For each question, the answer should provide you with four important pieces of information: the situation, task, action, and result, known by the acronym **STAR**.

- Situation** – What was the situation?
- Task** – What were they expected to do?
- Action** – What did they do?
- Result** – What was the outcome?

When you ask questions seeking the situation, task, action, and results from the candidate, you don't have to settle for incomplete answers. Any time a key piece of STAR is missing from the response, follow-up with a probing or clarifying question to gather more information.

Probing Questions

Probing questions frame the interview as a conversation, rather than an interrogation. Follow up questions starting with 'what,' 'how,' and 'when' encourage the candidate to share deeper details with you. When seeking someone's personal thoughts, opinions, or ideas, ask probing questions beginning with "do/did you?" or "are you?"

Before the first interview:

1. Identify two or three questions from each core competency section contained in the Interview Guide that you will ask **every** candidate. Appropriate probing questions are provided within each core competency section.
2. After you've identified your preferred core competency questions, place a check mark beside each one.
3. Review the probing questions to identify your possible follow up questions to help the interview to flow conversationally.

Let's look at an example where the general manager of Drafts, Manuela, is interviewing Brionna for front of house management. Brionna has previous front of house experience at a restaurant in Daytona Beach.

Manuela: Brionna, now that we know a little bit more about each other and I've shared the responsibilities of our FOH manager, I'm going to ask you a question about a situation that you may have encountered at a previous job. Please tell me the situation, what you needed to do, what actions you took to handle the situation, and what happened in the end.

Brionna: Okay. I'm ready.

Manuela: *[Situational Interview Question]* It's a Friday night, and you've scheduled 10 servers, 2 bartenders, 3 hostesses, and 2 resort delivery drivers for the evening shift that starts at 5pm. When you arrive at 3pm for the shift change the opening FOH manager, Ahmad, he tells you that 4 people have called out. How do you manage the situation?

Brionna: Oh, I've experienced that before. It's never just one person calling out, right?

Manuela: It isn't (chuckling). Today, you're down 4 people. What will you do?

Brionna: *[Situation]* Well yeah, when I've had that happen in the past, *[Task]* the first thing I needed to find out was who wasn't coming in, because I need to know what positions have to be covered and who to swap around. *[Action]* Then I touch base with the people working on day shift to see if anyone wants to pull a double or at least work until dinner rush is over. That's what I'd do.

Brionna's answer doesn't give Manuela enough information to evaluate her ability to assess and react when the restaurant is understaffed. Manuela opts to ask probing questions to learn more.

These are a few probing questions to use to get more information when interviewing.

Example Probing Questions

"Tell me more about that."	"Is this typical for you?"
"What led you to . . ."	"What did you learn?"
"What eventually happened?"	"What did everyone else do?"
"What else can you remember about that situation?"	"Compare this to what others have done."
"Compare this to what others have done."	"Give me more detail about what you did, please."
"What was the outcome?"	"What exactly did you say?"
"What was the situation?"	"I'd like to hear more."
"What led to your decision to do that?"	"How did that make you feel?"
"How did others see it?"	"What was the financial impact?"
"What kind of feedback did you get?"	"How would you do things differently now?"
"How did that turn out for you?"	"What did your supervisor think of this?"

Now, let's revisit Manuela's interview with Brionna to see how the probing questions help Manuela to obtain the answers she needs.

Manuela: You said you've had that happen before. [*Probing Question*] What did you do in that situation?

Brionna: Right. [*Task*] I asked the opening manager, Jerry, if he tried calling anyone else in to cover the shifts. He did, so I didn't waste time calling people. Next, I looked at the schedule to see who I had on hand. It was a Friday night, so we already had the strongest servers working. I could rearrange the stations so that each server picked up one more table and that covered the three servers we lost.

Manuela: [*Probing Question*] Can you tell me more about that night?

Brionna: Oh, sorry, just trying to remember what else we did. [*Action*] The third hostess usually answered phones, but one of our hostesses also knew how to bartend, so I asked her if she would help cover the service bar tickets and answer the phone at the bar. She agreed. It could get a little backlogged, but not as bad as just having one bartender.

Manuela: [*Probing Question*] And what was the outcome?

Brionna: [*Result*] It wasn't too much of a surprise that the service bar got a little backed up when the phones went crazy, but one of the day servers stayed and helped get the bottled beers out of the coolers so that the hostess helping with bartending had one less thing to do. One more table for each server was manageable. By 8pm, we were off wait and everyone was fine. It isn't something you want to happen, but we got through it.

Manuela: It sounds like your team was flexible

Brionna: That's an important part of hiring servers, we looked for people who were okay with last-minute changes.

Manuela learned a lot more about Brionna’s ability to run the front of house by asking probing questions. If Manuela had just accepted Brionna’s first response without digging deeper, she would not have learned:

1. Brionna knew how to assess how to run the restaurant as best she could when short staffed
2. She strategically placed a cross-trained employee into a position where they could perform two roles
3. Brionna has experience hiring restaurant and looks for flexible people to staff the restaurant

Summary

This situational interviewing technique may be new to you. If so, role-play with a team member, a Talent Acquisition recruiter, or another hiring leader to practice asking core competency questions before meeting with your first candidate. This practice helps you ask probing questions as a fluid component of the conversation whenever you need more information to effectively assess this person’s skills and experience.

You’ll notice that probing questions rarely begin with ‘why.’ Asking a why question may sometimes put the candidate on the defensive. Additionally, why questions can be answered with a short, simple response.