How to Accurately Assess Personality in an Interview

Here's the science on how to accurately assess personality using an interview.

The interview question type that most accurately assesses personality

You can increase your accuracy when assessing personality during an interview by asking questions that are designed to measure the on-the-job behaviors related to a specific personality trait.

There are two main types of interview questions:

- **SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS**: “What would you do if...”
- **PAST-BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS**: “Tell me about a time when you...”

Research has found:

- Situational Questions: measure general job knowledge
- Past-behavior Questions: measure past experience and some personality traits

For example, to measure Agreeableness, ask the candidate, “Tell me about a time when you had a work-related disagreement with a colleague. How did you resolve it?”

The interview type that most accurately assesses personality

There are two main types of interviews:

- **An UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW**: is the typical job interview. Tell me about yourself, What’s your biggest weakness. Which superhero would you be?

- **A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**: asks questions specifically designed to assess job-related knowledge and skills. asks the same questions to all candidates, rates every answer to each question using a quantitative rating scale, and training the interviewer on how to do this properly.

A structured interview leads to better hiring

- it reduces error
- it reduces interviewer bias
- it reduces the ability of candidates to fake their answers

The best practices for assessing personality with an interview

Use a personality assessment to measure the candidate’s personality before the interview and then verify and expand on those personality ratings during the interview.

- Use a structured interview: asks the same questions to all candidates and take notes of the candidate’s answers.
- Ask past-behavior questions that are job-related and designed to assess the personality trait you’re looking for.
- Rate the candidate’s answers on a scale and use these ratings to make your hiring decision.

Get matched to top salespeople today.