



**Participating CAHRS
Companies:**

American Express
Cornell University
DocuSign
GE Vernova
Medtronic
MassMutual
Procter & Gamble
Prudential Financial
XPO



ILR School



Context

In this working group, CAHRS companies gathered to discuss how they facilitate structured interviews in their companies. Participants explored key questions including: What role does HR play in facilitating structured interviews? How much pushback do you get from hiring managers regarding following an interview guide and filling out a rubric? How do you gain managerial buy-in?

The Role of HR in Facilitating Structured Interviews

The responsibility for designing and implementing structured interviews tends to fall under the purview of Talent Acquisition (TA), but with significant input and support from HR Business Partners (HRBPs). TA is generally responsible for creating a bank of validated interview questions to assess key competencies, developing a method for scoring the interviews, and delivering training on how to conduct effective interviews. The HRBPs play a critical role in customizing the interview process as necessary for different units and roles. For example, both the interview questions and format may look quite different for salespeople versus actuaries versus computer programmers. The HRBPs provide input to TA in terms of letting them know what the business wants to evaluate, while working with the business to make sure they follow the guidance provided by TA.

Training and Evaluation

There was much discussion about advanced in training and evaluating. Several companies noted that they require anyone who will interview a candidate to participate in a training session prior to being allowed to interact with candidates. These trainings are typically delivered asynchronously and the major emphasis is on explaining the “why” behind the process. Participants agreed that simply telling interviewers what to do and what not to do was largely ineffective, but if they understood why the company wanted them to approach things a certain way and avoid potential pitfalls, interviewers were likely to follow the guidelines to a “T”. One change is that these trainings now tend to emphasize how structured interviews improve accuracy in evaluating candidates more so than reducing bias, though the impression is that this accomplishes the same goal.

There was a robust discussion around evaluating the interview process in order to improve quality of hires. From an accuracy perspective, organizations have adopted processes to evaluate whether certain interviewers are consistently too lenient or too harsh, whether scores are consistent across interview teams for each candidate, if certain individuals are systematically better at evaluating candidates, and how much weight should be placed on interview scores versus other assessments. One company noted that decision makers advocated for giving technical assessments more weight than interview scores, but when they looked at which predicted job performance and turnover, it turned out the interview scores mattered a lot more. Participants did note that isolating the effect of interview scores on job performance can be challenging because a lot of success can also be attributed to onboarding efforts.

Candidate Experience

Participants also mentioned the importance of designing an interview process that delivered an exceptional candidate experience. In fact, one participant clearly explained that recent changes to their interview process were driven by the fact they now place a dual emphasis on accurate evaluations *and* a good candidate experience. Surveys are a key driver

of measuring the success of these efforts. Most companies survey new hires about their interview experience, though others also ask unsuccessful candidates for their feedback. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a common measure.

There was a robust discussion around the relatively new practice of providing candidates with interview questions in advance. Companies that have been experimenting with this process report that candidates appreciate being able to come to the interview better prepared and hiring managers report that this has helped them to better evaluate candidates. There was some skepticism around whether this approach is viable across roles and organizations. Companies supplying questions in advance noted that they usually did this for high-volume roles with repeated hiring, and did not always provide candidate with a full list of questions, but rather the list of most frequently asked questions. This has been especially useful in keeping neurodiverse individuals in the pipeline.

Small talk

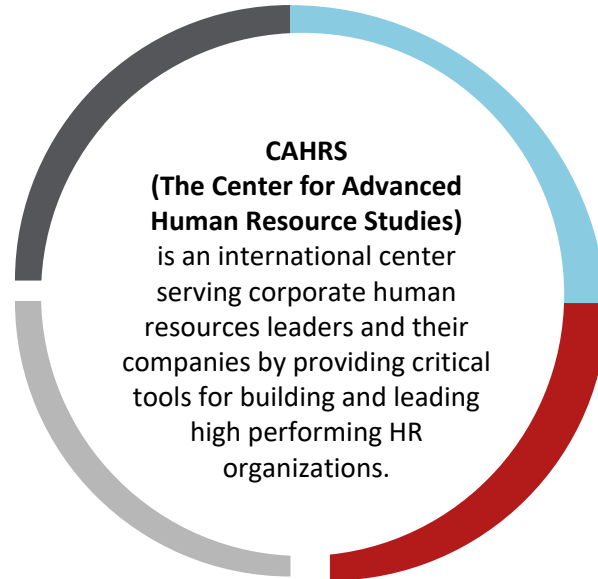
We had a robust discussion around the role of small talk in an interview. Most participants agreed that starting the interview with small talk was important for putting the candidate at ease. However, they also noted that small talk can be treacherous territory because it can end up soliciting irrelevant information that may bias evaluation.

One company helps managers with this tactic by reminding them that interviews are hard and stressful for everyone. They encourage managers to first lay out how the entire conversation is going to and letting the candidate know why they are going to ask the questions we are going to ask. This framework sets an open, positive tone and helps everyone (interviewer and interviewee) to take a breath. Most companies suggest interviews use a version of the question – what do you know about the company and role – to get things started. All participants note that their training emphasizes avoiding out-of-the-office questions (e.g., family, social life, etc.), even those that are not illegal, in order to keep the focus on evaluating job competencies. There was also a consensus around the importance of coaching interviews to make what one participant called the “five-minute pivot”, making sure that small talk doesn’t take away from meat of the interview.

Technology

Many companies host a bank of validated interview questions on their Human Resource Information System (HRIS) or TA platform. This list allows managers and/or HRBPs to easily pull questions relevant to the role being filled. The companies that consistently used scoring rubrics were able to do so because this feature was built into their current HR Tech stack. Most of the time it involves filling out a form in Qualtrics or Workday (at least among this group) immediately after the interview was completed.

The biggest concern raised by participants was actually around the technology candidates are using during video interviews. Several companies reported instances of candidates inviting “artificial intelligence (AI) bots” to their interviews without permission. A key concern here is that these bots are translating questions and generating answers in real time. Others expressed concerns around candidate using AI technologies “on the side” during video interviews to help them craft answers. We did not come up with any clear solutions to this outside of kicking AI bots out of meetings!



The Center is part of Cornell's **Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) School** As the preeminent educational institution in the world focused on work, employment and labor, the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) generates and shares knowledge that improves the lives of workers and transforms the future of work.

CAHRS Advisory Board Members 2024

Ashley Goldsmith: Chair
Chief People Officer
Workday

Bradford Bell
William J. Conaty Professor
of Strategic Human
Resources and Academic
Director CAHRS

Diane Burton
ILR Joseph R. Rich '80
Professor and ICS Director
Cornell University

Heidi Capozzi
Executive Vice President and
Global Chief People Officer
CVS Health

Jennifer Christie
Chief People Officer DocuSign

Chris Collins
Professor, Human Resource
Studies and Graduate
Programs Director
Cornell University

Beth Flynn-Ferry
Executive Director CAHRS

Kim Hauer
Executive Vice President and
Chief Human Resources Officer
SC Johnson

John Hausknecht
Professor, Human Resource
Studies
Cornell University

Rebecca Kehoe
Professor, Human Resource
Studies
Cornell University

JR Keller
Associate Professor, Human
Resource Studies
Cornell University

Pam Kimmet
Chief Human Resources
Officer Manulife

Nickle LaMoreaux
Chief Human Resources Officer
IBM

Abbe Luersman
Chief People Officer
Otis

Ernest Marshall
Executive Vice President and
CHRO
Eaton

Sally Massey
Chief Human Resources Officer
Colgate-Palmolive

Michael O'Hare
Executive Vice President, Global
Human Resources Estée Lauder

Christy Pambianchi Executive
Vice President and Chief People
Officer Intel

Bala Purushothaman Chief
Human Resources Officer
Procter & Gamble

Cindy Ryan
Head of Human Resources
MassMutual

Chris Scalia
Chief Transformation Officer &
Chief Human Resources Officer
Hershey

Marlon Sullivan
Chief Human Resources Officer
Johnson Controls