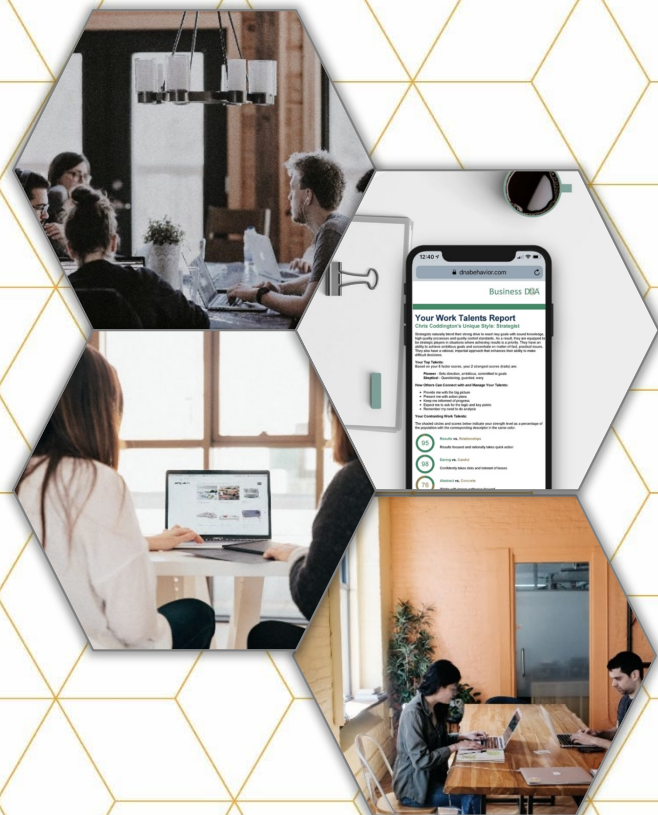


# A Guide to Mitigating Behavioral Variability in Hiring



## Mitigating Behavioral Variability in Hiring

1. The ability to determine which candidates will succeed in a job and which will fail is very low when the interviews are unstructured (as opposed to structured). The correlation is .28, which is not a high predictor of success. This equates to a 56% chance that the candidate will perform in the role.
2. Why is there so much Behavioral Variability in interviewing candidates producing errors in the likelihood of job performance?
  - a) Objective ignorance – there are unrevealed facts you could not possibly know, which may impact a candidate's performance ability.
  - b) Life events that occur could affect performance expectations.
  - c) Psychological biases of the interviewer impact who they choose. Please refer to point 5 below for a complete list.
  - d) Different interviewers responding differently to each candidate. After interviewing the same candidate, there can be a correlation of 62-65% (Variability of 35% to 38%).
3. Most of the Behavioral Variability is Noise, and in particular Pattern Noise which reflects the idiosyncratic reactions to a given candidate. However, there is also Occasion Noise caused by random impressions formed in the informal rapport-building phase of interviews (first 2 or 3 minutes). So, first impressions count.
  - a) Interviewers will then steer the interview.
  - b) Prior attitudes color the factual judgment about the candidate.
  - c) Too much weight can be given to the interview and too little to attributable data.
4. The next issue is solving the problem with an upgraded hiring process that is far more structured providing space for cognitive reflection.
  - a) The initial screening process before formal interviews takes place needs to be designed with an objective framework so that it also has behavioral variability eliminated as far as possible. This would include a review of the application, background checking and fit for role (behavioral talent, skills and experience), including against role benchmarks.
  - b) An expert hiring panel should be formed to conduct the in-person interviews and make the decision (judgment on whether to hire).
  - c) Ideally, the expert hiring panel should have 5 experts who are capable of rating the candidates short-listed for the role after an initial screening process. The experts would be the best persons at evaluating the specific competencies required for the role:
    - i. Cultural Fit
    - ii. Behavioral Fit
    - iii. Cognitive Fit
    - iv. Competence (Technical Fit)
    - v. Background Fit

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- d) Further, the expert hiring panel should be moderated by a Decision Moderator who is not a member of the expert hiring panel. The Decision Moderator is to ensure the correct processes are followed, including the mitigation of Bias and Noise.
- e) Aggregation is an important step – an ideal number of interviews (beyond the initial telephone screening interview) should be limited to four rounds (not 25 interviews like Google once did).
- f) The interviewers rate the candidate separately before they communicate with one another to ensure the judgments are independent.
- g) The "Gene Decision Method" should be used, characterized by decomposition, independence and delayed holistic judgment (delay of intuition).
- h) The decomposition involves breaking down the decision into "mediating assessments" (see below). This involves creating sub judgments with guidelines so that the judges on the expert panel are focused on important cues. The decomposition helps provide a roadmap for what data is needed.
- i) Consider four assessments involving sub-judgments (similarly as Google utilizes) to match the required 4 competencies:
  - i. Cultural Fit
  - ii. Behavioral Fit for role using the Business DNA Natural Behavior Discovery to measure talents against role benchmarks, communication style and leadership
  - iii. General cognitive ability
  - iv. Role-related technical knowledge (competence)
- j) The various inputs of the other non-interview data need to be combined into an overall judgment using a mechanical aggregation.
- k) Care needs to be taken to define the competencies required – spend time on a detailed job description agreed by the decision-makers. It must be specific and not vague.
- l) Information on each judgment must be collected independently. This is where the key elements of the job description must be split out into each assessment so that the interviewer does not resort to looking for their 4 or 5 preferred characteristics and thereby use their intuition early, resulting in a Noisy judgment.
- m) The approach is to use "structured behavioral interviews" involving:
  - i. The use of pre-defined questions about the candidate's behaviors in prior situations.
  - ii. The recruiting team then record the answers and score them against a predetermined rating scale against a unified rubric.
  - iii. The rubric will show examples of what a good, average or great answer looks like.
  - iv. **The DNA Hiring Performance Book**, which outlines the DNA behavioral interviewing hiring process and behavioral interview questions customized to the dominant DNA traits, can assist this process.

- n) The research shows that structured interviews will give you a 65% to 69% chance of predicting job success versus unstructured interviews at 56% to 61%.
  - o) To test job-related knowledge, it relies partly on "on work" sample tests e.g. if the candidate is being hired for programming, they should be asked to write some code.
  - p) The final hiring decision is made collegially as a group by the expert hiring panel which is when intuition can be used.
  - q) This approach allows the final hiring decision to be anchored on the average score assigned by the five interviewers. Decisions are based on the underlying evidence in each discrete area being evaluated before intuition is applied.
  - r) In addition, the interviewing panel can consult with a "digital twin" that clones the hiring decisions of the best experts whether inside the company or outside.
5. In designing the hiring (and employee management) process there should be awareness of the following biases which may undermine the quality of decisions made:
- a) Affinity Bias – Tendency to gravitate toward people similar to us, which results in hiring or promoting someone who shares the same race, gender, age or educational background.
  - b) Ageism – Tendency to discriminate against someone based on their age.
  - c) Attribution Bias – Tendency to undervalue a person's accomplishments and over value their mistakes based on gender.
  - d) Beauty Bias – Tendency to judge people based on how attractive you think they are rather than on their work.
  - e) Confirmation Bias – Tendency to look for or favor information that confirms beliefs we already hold.
  - f) Conformity Bias – Tendency in group settings to allow your views to be swayed or influenced by the views of others.
  - g) Contrast Effect – Tendency to evaluate the performance of one person in contrast to another because you experienced the individuals either simultaneously or in close succession.
  - h) Gender Bias – Tendency to prefer one gender over another or assuming that one gender is better for the job.
  - i) Halo Effect – Tendency to put someone on a pedestal or think more highly of them after learning something impressive about them, or conversely, perceiving someone negatively after learning something unfavorable about them.
  - j) Name Bias – Tendency to judge someone based on their name and perceived background. This is especially important when reviewing resumes.
  - k) Weight Bias – Judging a person negatively because they are larger or heavier than average.

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To learn more about DNA Behavior International and the solutions we offer, please visit:

[www.dnabehavior.com](http://www.dnabehavior.com)

If you have any questions or would like to discuss with an executive on our team, please email us at:

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