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Memories Bridal and Evening Wear Selection Process

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Memories Bridal and Evening Wear Sales Consultant Selection Process

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Abstract

This paper proposes a structured and researched approach to review and edit Memories Bridal and Evening Wear's Sales Consultant employee selection process in hopes of decreasing employee turnover and increasing new employee performance. Research suggests that hiring management and business professionals use six main steps to create the core components of job tasks and competencies to make up a job analysis. A realistic job preview should also be created to ensure a successful match between the candidate and the job position. In addition to creating new pieces, hiring management must edit the existing application to include only necessary information to filter through the minimum qualifications of the position. The committee must also agree on what to look for in resumes, and how to correctly and incorrectly evaluate a candidate by a resume. Structured interviews are proven to be more reliable and valid than unstructured interviews. The hiring management are to edit current interview questions, and create new interview questions into structured behavioral and situational type questions. In order to maintain a structured process, a nominal rating scale and qualitative screening instrument provide a multidimensional approach that provides details and overall summary of the candidate. Hiring management will learn how to use the new and improved evaluations skills, interview questions, rating scales, and screening instruments.

Keywords: job analysis, realistic job preview, interview

Introduction

There are many steps to hiring a new employee that need to be taken into consideration. Especially with a small family-owned business, every position offer and hire is significant to the sustainability and growth of the company. There are many hiring practices that have remained concrete and reliable over decades such as resumes and face-to-face interviewing, while other pieces of the process, such as behavioral and personality interviewing have become more popular and significant over recent years. As Memories Bridal and Evening Wear of Kalamazoo, Michigan is growing fast and looking to expand, their hiring process is becoming more important than ever in finding employees to support the local special occasion that is on the rise. Pieces of successful hiring processes including a job analysis, realistic job preview, methods in selecting external candidates, and interviewing techniques are due to be reviewed and re-vamped to keep up with the pace.

Job Analysis

Editing Memories Bridal and Evening Wear's selection process for the position of a Sales Consultant requires multiple steps and pieces. The very first question that has to be asked is "What is a Sales Consultant at Memories?" It has to be determined how the store defines this position and the responsibilities it entails. Formally, this is known as creating a job analysis. According to Morgeson and Campion (1997), a job analysis is "one of the most widely used organizational data collection techniques" (p. 627). A job analysis is the basis for all selection decisions and is crucial to fully understanding the nature of a job both for the company and the applicants. As the Office of Personal Management (n.d.) describes, a job analysis provides a means to gain this understanding of the position by examining "the tasks performed in a job, the competencies required to perform those tasks, and the connection between the tasks and competencies" (p. 5). A job analysis is not an evaluation of the employee doing the job, as people commonly misunderstand. Instead, the United States Office of Personnel Management states it is "a study of what workers do on the job, what competencies are necessary to do it, what resources are used in doing it, and the conditions under which it is done" (p. 5).

The commonly used behavioral, and reliable, approach to creating a job analysis is called competency modeling. "Competencies are more broadly defined components of a successful worker's repertoire of behavior needed to do the job well. Rather than mere job skills, they are the worker characteristics that underlie on-the-job success" (Phillips & Gully, 2012, p.111). A competency-based job description allows for flexibility in terms of frequency of updating the job description seeing as it describes how a job should be performed. For the same reasoning, the description becomes broader and prevents conflict of workers claiming that a new assigned task isn't in their job description (Phillips & Gully, 2012). This can become an issue for management when a more rigid job description is used.

Majority of hiring management and business professionals will agree that there are six main steps in utilizing competency modeling to create a job analysis. The first step involves deciding how gathered data is going to be used, seeing as this will determine what kind of data to collect and how to collect it. As stated by Lepak and Gowan (2008), human resource management utilizes job analyses for various reasons including but not limited to: recruitment and selection, compensation, performance appraisal, training, discovering unassigned duties, and EEO compliance. The second step involves collecting material to determine what responsibilities, skills and abilities most accurately make up the job position. This generally starts with reviewing any relevant existing material, such as job descriptions and organizational charts. Another way to determine job specifications is to use outside sources, such as O*NET or jobdescriptions.com (Lepak & Gowan, 2008). These sites can be used to search a general, yet relevant, job title and scroll through lists of competences defined for the position. The third step, more relevant in larger companies, is to select a representative group of employees in which to gather data from. It is too time consuming and costly (not to mention redundant) to interview hundreds of employees in the same position when a selected group of 10 can result in collecting the same data.

The fourth step is when the actual analyzing comes into play. According to Lepak and Gowan (2008), this can be done by “collecting data on job activities, required employee behaviors, working conditions, and human traits and abilities needed to perform the job” (p. 62). Reliable analyzing is done through a task analysis, completed by a task committee. The team will use task questionnaires to determine the job position specifications and the competencies needed to fulfill them.

The tasks of the position being filled must first be defined. According to businessdictionary.com, a task analysis is defined as a “systematic identification of the fundamental elements of a job, and examination of knowledge and skills required for the job’s performance”. Before the desirable behaviors of a candidate can be defined, the tasks for which the behaviors are to be enacted on is a valuable piece to define. Tasks can be determined through various techniques, two of which being a task committee or force and a task questionnaire.

The task force often consists of experts in the job position including managers, employees, and human resource representatives. Task force members partake in multiple activities to gather information for a task analysis including but not limited to: writing their own task statements then grouping them by dimensions and importance; interviewing people in the job position and managers; and reviewing information that exists and gathering sample job descriptions (Heneman & Judge, 2008). This method of task analysis works well with small companies or management teams.

A task questionnaire generally consists of a long list of task statements related to multiple different job titles, and is administered to all of the related job positions. For each task listed, the employee must indicate 1) whether the task applies to the respondent's job and 2) task importance (Heneman & Judge, 2008). Some advantages of questionnaires include: standardized content and format; economical; can obtain large quantities of data; and anonymous respondents improves participation and honesty in answers. There are also multiple limitations to task questionnaires as well, including but not limited to: considerable time and research is required to ensure that the statements are not biased; potential negative respondent reactions to the questionnaire; and the assumption that respondents are experienced in their job.

Once a task analysis has occurred and specific job tasks are written, the task force must determine what competencies are necessary to perform the specified tasks and duties of the job. They can ask themselves "what does it take to do this job well?" From there education descriptions, qualities, training, and intelligence features may be rattled off from personal experience. Some examples of retail sales consultant tasks according to O*NET (n.d.) may be "greet customers and ascertain what each customer wants or needs" or to "recommend, select, and help locate or obtain merchandise based on customer needs and desires". Competencies based on these tasks could be work styles such as attention to detail, abilities like oral comprehension, or skills such as service orientation.

The main components of job tasks/duties and competencies make up a completed job analysis. Depending on the depth and size of the company and job position, managers may decide to include other sections to the job description such as education, interests, credentials, or tools and technology. Now the hiring manager is ready to find candidates to fit the completed job analysis.

The fifth step is to verify the job analysis with the person performing the role, and his or her immediate supervisor (Lepak & Gowan, 2008). This will help confirm that the information gathered is accurate to the position, its responsibilities, and its performer. The sixth and final step to a job analysis is to develop a job description, and in some cases a job specification. A job description describes the duties and responsibilities of a position, and other important factors such as safety, work environment, and other contributions from the job. Although there is no specific standard for writing a job description, most descriptions contain sections that cover job identification, job summary, responsibilities and duties, authority of incumbent, performance standards, working conditions, and job specifications (Lepak & Gowan, 2008). A job specification can be built determining what human traits, qualities, and experiences the job performer needs in order to fulfill the needs of the job description. Some job descriptions will also include a “Relationship” section that defines who the applicant can plan on reporting to, working side-by-side with, within the company and, at times, externally. Many job descriptions are still written by the employers themselves, although online and external sources are being utilized in more recent times.

Realistic job preview

As part of the recruitment process, finding an individual with qualifications to fit the job analysis is the first piece a hiring manager jumps to. In reality, that is only half the battle. Although a hiring manager is aware of what he or she is searching for, applicants may know little about the job for which they are applying for. This is an easy mistake to make since it requires conscious and extra effort to put yourself in the candidate’s shoes. It is just as important to match the candidate's needs with the organization's culture and the job's requirements as it is for the employer to match job requirements to the individual's qualifications. Succeeding in this two-way match can decrease post hire turnover rates and enhance new hire commitment.

A common tool used by organizations in the recruitment process to acquire a successful two-way match is a realistic job preview (RJP). A realistic job preview is a recruiting approach used by an organization to communicate the important aspects of the job prior to the offer of the position. An RJP communicates both the positive and negative aspects of a job to a potential employee, essentially so that the candidate is aware of what he or she is getting into. This gives potential employees the opportunity to self-select out of the selection process. Although this is usually seen as a weakness of an RJP, it actually works in favor for the organization because the employee was most likely not the best match and would have lower satisfaction in the position, and in turn would not be as strong of an asset to the company.

Many studies have proven RJPs to be of benefit to companies, and in turn many significant companies use them as a part of their recruiting process. For example, Phillips and Gully (2012) explain that RJP recipients were more likely to turn down a job offer, perceive the organization as being honest with them, be able to cope with the job demands, be satisfied with their jobs, and remain in their jobs in comparison to individuals not receiving RJPs.

The large 55,000 employee company of Disney is known to use RJPs in their hiring process. The use of RJPs has resulted in 10% of candidates self-selecting out of the selection process. Yet, as discussed by Phillips and Gully (2012), Disney views this as a good thing because those who do not go through with the selection process were more than likely not a good fit for the organization anyway. If RJPs are used correctly, they can be very beneficial to a company. Timing and format are crucial to the application of RJPs. "RJPs presented very early in the recruitment process are less effective in reducing post hire turnover than those presented just before or after hiring" (p. 236). Regarding format, RJPs can be presented in multiple ways but verbal RJPs tend to reduce turnover more than written or videotaped RJPs (Heneman & Judge, 2008). An RJP proves to be effective when tone of voice portrays the importance of the topics, and when the employee is in the selection process long enough to be interested, yet still has the opportunity to self-select in or out of the position.

An RJP does not have to be a long, expensive, and difficult process to create. Pieces of the job descriptions and other obvious parts of the position do not have to be repeated, but instead bringing to light the aspects that are not seen by an outside candidate. This can simply be done by surveying current employees and asking for honest feedback on what they like, such as commission and flexible hours, and dislike about their position such as a fast-paced work environment or pressures of high performance expectations (Phillips & Gully, 2012). An RJP should be provided to all applicants and potential candidates. More thoroughly, it should be a discussed topic between the hiring manager and candidate before the job is offered and taken.

External candidates and selection

Resumes. The first look an organization gets of an applicant is often through a cover letter and resume. The content of a resume is decided solely by the applicant. Due to this, resumes should always be verified with other predictors to ensure that the information provided on the resume is accurate. Resumes serve as an overview for the employer to get a look into the applicant's experiences and qualifications. A downfall of using resumes as a selection tool is the abundance that must be sorted through (luckily memories is small company and this is not a big issue).

Another significant issue with resumes includes dealing with fabrications/distortions. As Phillips and Gully (2012) state, “because resumes are prepared by applicants and follow no set-in-stone form, and because there are incentives for applicants to present themselves in a favorable light, distortions are a significant problem” (p. 372). Due to this pressure, resume inaccuracies are common and something employers need to take action to prevent. ResumeDoctor, an online company that assists applicants in prepping resumes, found that 42.7% of the resumes posted on the site had “significant inaccuracies”. The three most common areas of distortion are “inflated titles, inaccurate dates to cover up job hopping of employment gaps, and half-finished degrees, inflated education, or ‘purchased degrees’.” Background checks are the best way to prevent being a victim of resume falsehood and ensuring the honesty of applicants.

An additional downfall to using resumes as a screening assessment method is that since applicants do not use the same format or include the same information in their resumes, it can be difficult to compare applicants to one another (Phillips & Gully, 2012). There is little research on the validity or impact of using resumes, and therefore should not be used as the sole source for decision making in hiring. But resumes are a great source as an overview for an applicant and first step to the screening process. Despite the lack of research, Phillips and Gully (2012) mention that “resumes and cover letters have historically been a core part of the hiring process” (p.252) and still are.

Applications. Job applications are generally in the same step of the screening process as collecting resumes, or directly after. Phillips and Gully (2012) state “job applications require applicants to provide written information about their skills and education, job experiences, and other job relevant information” (p.253). Although job applications may replicate some information provided on a resume, they serve as a good tool to validate the information on the resume. As long as the job application is required (and they usually are across all jobs in a company) it serves as a common tool to compare candidates seeing as resumes can vary so greatly.

Job applications are a good filtering tool, but in the same sense it does not need to be too in-depth. An application will generally cover personal contact and identification information, availability, education, work or relative experience, and references (Phillips & Gully, 2012). The application does not need to ask everything, just enough to filter through the minimum qualifications of the position. Both resumes and applications are used to screen out applicants who are not minimally qualified for the position, based on the job analysis, before an in-person interview where personally getting to know the candidate comes into play.

Interview. Once the received resumes and applications have been filtered through, candidates should be contacted for an interview. The methods and types of interviews used throughout businesses is vastly diverse. There are phone interviews, video chat interviews, in-person interviews, and group interviews that can take form as unstructured, structured, behavioral, and situational. Interviews provide the opportunity to expand and validate on information found in resumes and applications, but also assess a variety of skills, abilities, and styles, including people’s communication skills, interpersonal skills, and leadership style (Phillips & Gully, 2012).

Interviews can be conducted in a structured or unstructured manner. Unstructured interviews ask questions that can vary from person to person depending on the flow of conversation, resume, etc. Unstructured interviews generally do not have scoring standards and are often casual versus professionally job-related. The interviewer of unstructured interviews typically relies on his or her own ideas of what a good interview and employee is to conduct the conversation. The problem with this is lack of reliability. One interviewer may focus on the personal appearance of an interviewee, while the other may be focusing on his or her body language, and another interviewer is solely concerned on work experience. Cognitive biases such as the "similar-to-me effect" and the "halo effect" are more prevalent when unstructured methods are used. Since the questions and structure are inconsistent, the reliability of them can be low which also reduces their validity. Yet many managers still use this method in belief that they are good judges of character or have good intuition. As Phillips and Gully (2012) state, "given their expense and the legal risks associated with asking nonstandardized questions that have not been validated or shown to be related to job success, it is hard to recommend unstructured interviews over structured interviews" (p. 264).

On the other hand, structured interviews tend to be both reliable and valid due to their consistency between all candidates. The questions are predetermined, job-related, and most importantly all the same questions are asked for each interviewee. Question consistency can also help to reduce interviewer biases mentioned before as well as distortions such as a candidate's physical attractiveness, sex or race, or clothes. Two types of structured interviews are behavioral and situational. As Phillips and Gully (2012) thoroughly explain,

> The choice of behavioral or situational interview questions depends on the level of the prior work experience of candidates. When interviewing people with limited work experience, situational questions ("what would you do if…") are likely to generate more insightful answers than behavioral questions ("what did you do when…") (p. 264).

No matter which type of structured interview is used, the goal is to base structured interview questions on the job analysis. Candidates' answers to the interview questions should provide insight on if their knowledge, skills, and abilities match up with those that were listed as necessary or preferred on the job analysis.

Behavioral interviews are useful when the candidate has necessary work experience because it is based on the idea that what applicants have done in the past is a better indicator of his or her future job success than what they believe, feel, think, or know (Phillips & Gully, 2012). A behavioral question is set up for the interviewee to explain a situation that he or she has experienced. The question should be geared towards highlighting a competency identified in the job analysis. The interviewee responds with a specific example of what was going on, how he or she handled it, and what the result of his or her actions were. Many significant qualities of the candidate can be determined through behavioral interviewing, including but not limited to work ethic, temperament, values, and compatibility with the organization.

For those candidates who have less work experience, situational interviews are a practical option. Instead of asking about a specific past experience like in behavioral interviewing, situational questions ask the candidate how they would react to a hypothetical situation. Again, this is with the goal in mind that their said reaction to these hypothetical situations will highlight the candidate’s competencies to compare back to the job analysis. Although hypothetical, answers can help predict probable success, difficulty, or failure in the job position. Situational interviews also have high validities, especially compared to unstructured interviews.

One caution of behavioral and situational interviews is to spot fabricated stories. If a candidate is fairly experienced in interviewing, he or she may have a fake situation up their sleeve in anticipation of the types of situational questions the interviewer will ask. Employers need to learn to spot these stories to improve behavioral interviewing. They can do so by asking further questions after the candidate’s answer- asking them for more specifics about the situation, what he or she was feeling at the time, and asking what the candidate learned from the experience (Phillips & Gully, 2012).

Decision Making

Rating candidates ensures a degree of fairness in the selection process as well as a good tool for reference during the decision making phase of hiring. Rating evaluates candidates against a defined standard, which is ideally based on the job analysis or description. Both the applicant's written material and interview should be rated by the committee.

When selecting which applicants to interview and hire, there are a series of screening tools that can be used to assist in evaluating applicants. A screening checklist generally consists of a list of required and/or preferred qualifications, along with simple yes or no check boxes. This is a straight-forward method to determine if, or to what extent, the applicant meets the minimum qualifications to be considered for the job. A screening matrix not only measures applicants to a standard like a screening checklist, but also compares the applicant to other candidates. This method can simplify the process of deciding who to move forward, as well as spot trends among the applicants. A qualitative screening instrument is a more multidimensional approach that provides individual details and an overall summary of the candidate as a whole, typically analyzing strengths and weaknesses. A quantitative device uses a scale of numbers to rate candidates in defined areas such as experience, education, or skills. Although it is a number scale, evaluators will have slightly different definitions of “average” compared to “good” compared to “great”. But this device does provide a common framework and vocabulary for comparing candidates (Lee, 2014).

Any of the common screening methods are valuable to utilize while evaluating written applicant material as well as verbal interviews. A screening matrix is a good method when evaluating resumes and applications. According to Lee (2014), “a best practice approach to evaluating the written materials by individual committee members is assigning each applicant a nominal rating of Yes, No, or Maybe. This three-tier approach allows the committee chair to tabulate members’ responses and share a matrix of scores with the committee” (p.92). More quantitative and/or qualitative methods fit in evaluating the verbal interviews. Screening results and scores are good sources of information to look back on while narrowing down candidates or making a hiring decision. Good documentation and note taking by the interviewers promotes more effective recollection and organization later in the process.

Method

Setting

Research and proposal of an improved selection process was generated for the small family-owned business Memories Bridal and Evening Wear of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Memories is a bridal and special occasion store that carries designer clothing including but not limited to: bridal gowns, bridesmaids’ gowns, prom dresses and tuxedos, as well as accessories. Designers that the store carries are considered to be mid to high end. The company has one main location, but had a seasonal location in Grand Rapids, Michigan from February 2015 to April 2015 that focused on prom apparel only. Memories keeps a fairly small staff consisting of two owners, one store manager, typically two Manager on Duty staff, and generally seven to ten Sales Consultants.

Materials

Materials for the research and proposal were minimal. The current job application, interview question sheet, position contract and rating scale were collected as a starting basis. Along the way, Memories’ job postings from Bronco Jobs and Indeed were gathered. Books, articles, interviews, and online sources were used to collect information on selection processes.

Procedure

Identifying the Problem

The topic for this proposal presented itself in an informal discussion one day when reminiscing about how other consultants and I were hired into the store. Some girls were hired on the reasoning that they had a good resume and experience, others because of their fashion major, some through word of mouth reference, and multiple others simply because there was “a good feeling” about her. I also casually stated that the interview itself was predictable seeing as I have worked in retail for years prior to my hire at Memories. After further thought of the harmless discussion at work, I concluded that the hiring process was predictable and inconsistent.

After expressing my thoughts/concerns, the Store Manager Chelsea Hull and myself (as a Sales Consultant and Manager on Duty) had a meeting to discuss what could be improved in regards to staffing for Memories’ Sales Consultants and what we would like to see change as a result of this project. The main problems identified were the high staff turnover rate in the first three months of hire (which is majority training), and that the selection process was not directly related to the job. The narrowed areas of focus became the selection process. Taking a closer look at the time when employees are brought on board covered both the short-term and interview problem. The training materials for entering Sales Consultants had just recently been re-evaluated and rebuilt, so looking at the process a step back from training - the selection process - was the decided approach.

Research

To begin research for this proposal, existing materials had to be collected: current application, interview question sheet, job descriptions from job postings, rating scale, and Sales

Consultant position contract. I also had a meeting/interview with the Store Manager to assess exactly what steps are taken in the selection process currently. Once the Memories' selection process was pieced together, further research on effective hiring and selection began. This involved searching for general and effective steps on hiring such as recruiting, the application, interviewing, and selecting candidates. Research for each of these sections went more in depth in learning about what an application should entail, how to and not to evaluate a resume, what kind of interview questions work best, and using rating scales to score candidates.

Proposal

The end goal of the research is to edit and reconstruct Memories Bridal and Evening Wear's employee selection process in attempt to decrease the rate of employee turnover and increase new employee performance. In turn, hiring great employees will save the company money in time spent in training. This would start by creating a job analysis for the Sales Consultant position. A committee of management and senior Sales Consultants need to answer the question "What is a Memories Sales Consultant?" This should be done by interviewing management and Sales Consultants, as well as collecting job descriptions and the position contract (See Figure 1). The completed job analysis should include a thorough job description, the tasks and responsibilities of a Sales Consultant, and the competencies a Sales Consultant should have in order to fulfill their job duties.

Based on the completed job analysis a realistic job preview should be created as a tool to help recruit candidates who are not only a good fit for Memories, but those who Memories is a good fit for as well. The RJP should highlight both the positive and negative aspects of the Sales Consultant position. For example, there is high emotional reward when helping a bride find her perfect wedding gown, but because of the high emotions of important events there are customer feelings and issues to deal with as well. This does not mean the job description has to be repeated though. Instead, the committee should focus on pointing out the aspects of the job that are not typically seen by an outsider such as the high expectation to complete paperwork thoroughly, accurately and independently 100% of the time. Interviewers will plan to present the RJP with every Sales Consultant candidate. When candidates have a true understanding of all of the aspects of the position, they are better prepared for what they are walking into. In turn, these more accurate expectations can decrease hidden surprises as new hires go through training and decrease employee turnover and increase performance.

We must, as a group, define what we consider the minimum qualifications to be for an applicant whether it be customer service experience or high school education. In addition to minimum qualifications, preferred qualifications should also be defined such as retail experience and knowledge with Point of Sale systems (See Figure 2). These qualifications are not necessary upon hire, but it saves time (and money) in training if a candidate meets them. After minimum and preferred qualifications are defined, the paper application should be edited to focus on basic and necessary information needed to weed through a first round of applicants. Necessary information generally includes personal contact information, employment history, availability, and a minimum amount of questions that would determine a minimum qualification for the position. All other unrelated questions/sections such as “Why do you want to work here?” should be deleted. Most questions can be asked in the interview instead of being redundant and too time consuming for the applicants. As for resumes, the committee needs to agree on what exactly we are looking for on a resume. The goals of the application and resume should not be too redundant. The application will include questions that are essential for the position, while resumes serve as a secondary form of reference for unmentioned skills and experiences (See

Figure 3). After considering all applications and resumes, applicants will be divided into yes, maybe, and no categories for consideration of moving onto the in-person interview based on whether or not they meet minimum and preferred qualifications.

As for the in-person interviews, more behavioral and situational interview questions are to be created/selected based on the new job analysis (See Figure 4). This will involve the committee to determine which existing interview questions are still valuable, which could be changed to a situational or behavioral context, and creating new questions. The goal is that answers to the interview questions will allow the interviewer to appropriately score the candidate's competencies for the position. In turn, the rating scale is to be edited to account for the desired competencies identified in the job analysis (See Figure 5).

The Owners, Store Manager, and Manager on Duty employees should be trained on how to evaluate applications and resumes, interview with the behavioral and situational questions (See Figure 6), and to use the rating scale. This same group of people should meet to decide on the number and steps of interviewing required for Sales Consultant candidates (i.e. group, one-on-one, phone).

Discussion

The expectations of this proposal are high. This requires time, effort, and multiple meetings between management and myself to create the appropriate paperwork and training. This will require a lot of self-discipline from management during interviewing considering Memories does not have a human resources department or trainers to oversee the process. Each interviewer is responsible for sticking to the new guidelines and expectations. This is a more structured process than we are used to, but will pay off in the long run if followed accordingly. With taking the time to step back, evaluate, and re-create the selection process, new Memories' employees should come in with qualities pertaining to the position, a better expectation of the job which in hopes will lead to higher job satisfaction and result in lower turnover rates.

In contrast, if the process is not strictly followed by each interviewer the results may not be as effective. If each person has their own way of interviewing and their own way of interpreting applicants, this is a threat to the new system. This is, again, why the process needs to be discussed and agreed upon by a group but each person must stick to the standards that are agreed on. It can be easy to fall under the halo or like-me fallacies. These fallacies are difficult to avoid completely, seeing as majority of the time they are happening subconsciously. Small bias is nearly impossible to avoid, but in the end two different interviewers should be able to get similar rating scale results and competencies on a candidate.

Another possible complication of re-vamping the selection process is other issues arising as a result of evaluating the current process. While interviewing for and creating a job analysis, there is the possibility of coming across unassigned duties. For instance, we may find that a Sales Consultant is not being trained on items that are in the description, or that they are being trained on items not in the description. This may lead to having to re-evaluate responsibilities between positions at the store and possibly small tweaks to the training manual. This is not a huge complication, but will require extra work for management to fix the gaps.

I expect this process to be re-evaluated, tweaked, and changed overtime. This proposal provides promising guidelines, but there are pieces such as interview questions that can vary greatly from company to company and position to position. If after multiple interviews, management finds that the interview questions are not generating the type of answers that we are looking for according to competencies, they will need to be re-evaluated and potentially re-written accordingly. On a positive note, changing around interview questions will not greatly affect the entire process or complicate past interviews in any way. Another area for flexibility to change is the type and order of interviews that the store uses. For instance, experimenting with keeping the group interview versus not doing the group interview, the number of interviews, or the number of interviewers throughout the process.

The store will have some work ahead of them to solidify a great selection process, but even basic structural changes based on this proposal will make a big difference in our hiring reliability and validity. My goal is to stick with this project over the next year regardless if I am an employee of Memories Bridal and Evening Wear still or not. In the summer of 2016 I would like to compare our turnover rates from the past two years and figure if this update has decreased the employee turnover rate at all. I would also like metrics to be saved for new hires' first five months in the Sales Consultant position to determine if upward trends in new hire performance can be seen. In more futuristic terms, my hope is that a decrease in employee turnover and increase in performance will bring costs in interviewing and training for the store down significantly. Memories has big changes and hopeful expansion in their future, and needs a structured selection process to support it.

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Appendices

Figure 1. Memories Bridal and Even Wear's Sales Consultant position contract signed by new hire upon completion of training. Reprinted with permission.

MEMORIES
BRIDAL & EVENING WEAR

Position Contract for: ____________________ **Position Title: Sales Consultant**

Date: __________ **Manager's Position: Sales Manager**

Result Statement: (THIS POSITION IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR PRODUCING THE FOLLOWING RESULT): To convert customers and leads into sales through the execution of our orchestrated sales process and to acquire long term, quality, clients for the company.

Work Listing

Tactical Work:

1. Converting leads into sales through the execution of our orchestrated sales process.
2. Maintaining positive customer interactions and upbeat atmosphere of the store.
3. Ensuring customer satisfaction at all times.
4. Scheduling bridal appointments and following up with customers in a timely and effective manner according to established procedures in order to convert more leads into sales.
5. Writing orders, rosters and sales receipts for customers accurately, completely and efficiently.
6. Measuring customers and accurately assisting in size selection following documented procedures.
7. Developing and improving personal sales techniques through education and practice (both employer driven and self-initiated education).
8. Maintaining a working knowledge of company's standards, procedures, sales techniques and product knowledge.
9. Scheduling and following up with bridal appointments.
10. Maintaining accurate and complete customer records.
11. Maintaining positive presentation of store at all times (sales floor, displays, entrance ways, and sidewalks).
12. Monitoring and reporting when applicable shoplifting violations.
13. Completing daily opening and closing duties as assigned.

Standards

Position Specific:

1. Monthly bridal closing ratios for sales staff must exceed a minimum of 50% in order to remain employed (60% or higher closing ratio preferred).
2. Individual sales will meet or exceed the monthly sales goals as defined by management.
3. Order accuracy will be maintained at all times and all orders must be confirmed with the customer. Inaccurate or incomplete orders will result in loss of commission.
4. Follow-ups will be completed for all customers following documented standards and procedures.
5. All customer records will be kept accurate and up to date including a communication log of follow up contacts.
6. All customer information including gowns selected will be kept confidential and is not to be shared with a third party without the expressed permission of the customer.
7. All errors affecting customer orders and or customer satisfaction will be reported to management immediately upon discovery.
8. All measurements will be done accurately and with great customer care.
9. Cash drawer will be kept accurate to the penny each day.

Companywide:

1. All work will be performed in accordance with all government laws, regulations, ordinances, and court rulings in those jurisdictions in which the company operates.
2. All telephone calls or email inquiries will be returned within one business day and within two hours whenever possible.
3. All company financial, sales, and pricing shall be kept confidential at all times and not to be shared with others outside of the company or with unauthorized employees.
4. All routine work will be documented in an operations manual. The information in the operations manual is proprietary.
5. All work will be performed to company policies and standards inherent in all position contracts, employee manuals and ongoing policy memoranda.
6. All customer concerns / complaints will be handled according to documented company procedures in a timely manner.
7. Customer satisfaction levels must meet or exceed established thresholds at all times.
8. Client and company information will be held as strictly confidential outside of the company.
9. Supervising manager will be notified using the proper reporting procedures of any issues to be resolved (customer and/or internal issues).
10. Problems with any system must be brought to the attention of the manager using the proper reporting procedures so that the system can be improved, within the structure of the operations manual.
11. All policy memoranda indicating changes in policy and or procedure will be stored in each employees operations manual, until an updated procedure is provided.
12. All employees will present the company in a professional and positive light outside of normal business hours.
13. Employees will provide staff assistance as requested; each employee may be asked from time to time to cover other areas of accountability and/or departments.
14. All business communications, whether verbal, visual, or written, whether for internal or external use, will be professional in tone and content and in accordance with applicable and existing company policies and standards.
15. Employees will respect each other's time, space, and need for concentration. Socializing and interruptions must not impede work flow.
16. Employees will have regularly scheduled mandatory meetings with their manager (both group and individual meetings).
17. Employees are encouraged to recommend ideas for the improvement of their department and position that are consistent with the company's strategic objective.

Figure 2. Sample of screening checklist and minimum and preferred qualifications for Memories' Sales Consultant position.

Candidate's Name:

Rated By: Date:

Required Qualifications	**Yes**	**No**
High school education		
Customer service experience		
Preferred Qualifications		
Retail experience		
Knowledge of Point of Sale systems		
List candidate's other characteristics (additional work experience, special skills, etc.):		
Comments/Notes:		
Consider further? **Yes** **No** **Maybe**		

Figure 3. Memories Bridal and Evening Wear's application edited to remove unnecessary information.

Application for Employment

We consider applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, heights, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Name:____

Address:__________________ **City:**____________ **State:**_______ **Zip:**_______

Phone:_______________ **Mobile:**_______________ **Email:**_______________

Are you 18 years or older? ______________ **Are you legally authorized to work in the U.S.?**_____

Position Desired:_______________ **I am applying for: Full-Time Work Part-Time Work**

Education

Name of High School:______________________________ **Year of Graduation:**_______

Special areas of Study:____

Activities (please note any leadership positions held):___________________________

____

Name of College/Trade School:____________________________________

Highest Level Completed:______________________________ **Year Completed:** ________

Special areas of Study:____

Activities (please note any leadership positions held):___________________________

____

Other Relevant Education:______________________________________

____

Employment

If you are currently employed, why do you want to change jobs?______________________________

Have you ever been terminated or asked to resign from a position? Y N

If yes, please explain: ____

Please list your last three jobs, most recent first:

Employer:__________________________________ Position Held:____________________

Responsibilities:____

____

Supervisor w/ title:_______________________________ Phone:_____________________

Dates of Employment:_______________________________ Pay:______________________

Reason for Leaving:____

Employer:__________________________________ Position Held:____________________

Responsibilities:____

____

Supervisor w/ title:_______________________________ Phone:_____________________

Dates of Employment:_______________________________ Pay:______________________

Reason for Leaving:____

Employer:__________________________________ Position Held:____________________

Responsibilities:____

____

Supervisor w/ title:_______________________________ Phone:_____________________

Dates of Employment:_______________________________ Pay:______________________

Reason for Leaving:____

I hereby give my permission to contact my listed employers regarding my dates of employment, job duties, rates of pay, and work performance.

Signed: ____ Date: ____________________

Application for Employment
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Short Answer

What makes you an ideal employee for Memories Bridal & Evening Wear?

Describe a recent experience that best shows your ability to deal effectively with people.

Describe any sewing/alterations experience you may have.

Describe a recent project that you put extra energy into because you felt that it was necessary to go beyond what you were told to do.

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

If you were hired, how long would you like to work at Memories? ________________________________

Date available to start work: ____

How did you learn about us? **WMU Job Board** **Friend** **Radio** **Current Customer**

Walk In **Other _________________________________**

Please mark in each box the following:

Indicate desired hours with a dash "—"
Indicate unavailable hours with an "X"
An empty box indicates that you may be available, but it is not your first choice.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am – 10am							
10am – 11am							
11am -12pm							
12pm – 1pm							
1pm – 2pm							
2pm – 3pm							
3pm – 4pm							
4pm – 5pm							
5pm – 6pm							
6pm – 7pm							
7pm – 8pm							

Do you have commitments to another employer or school that may affect your employment with us? Y N

If yes, please elaborate (team sports, other employment, class schedules, etc.):

____

____

____

Figure 4. Sample behavioral and situational interview questions for Memories' Sales Consultant position.

Sample Interview Questions

You're working alone on the floor. You have one customer in the store, the phone rings, and two other customers walk in. How do you handle it?

Tell me about a time you overcame an objection and closed the sale.

Describe the duties of your current job and your current reporting relationship to others.

What unique skill sets would you bring to this position?

Figure 5. Sample Rating Scale/ Evaluation Grid for Memories' Sales Consultant position.

Candidate's Name:

Rated By: Date:

Decision Making	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Analytic Thinking	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Prioritization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Self-Management	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Other observations:					

Total Points:

Figure 6. Tips for Interviewing acquired from Phillips and Gully's *Strategic Staffing* (2012).

Before the Interview
- Reserve an appropriate meeting room.
- Review the job description, advertisement, and *charge*.
- Draft and agree upon the interview questions to be asked.
- Review the candidate's résumé/CV and application materials.
- Agree on the format for the interview.
- Ensure that you know and can identify the quality indicators of candidates' ability to perform the job.

During the Interview
- Introduce committee members.
- Attempt to establish rapport with the candidate with a minute or two of small talk.
- Describe the format of the interview.
- Ask open-ended informational, situational, and behavioral questions.
- Let the applicant do most of the talking.
- Keep the interview on track.
- Observe nonverbal behavior.
- Take notes.
- Leave time for the candidate to ask questions at the end.
- Describe the remainder of the search process and the time frame.
- Ask if you can check references and pursue references not listed on the résumé.
- Give the candidate a point of contact in case he or she has future questions.
- Thank the candidate for his or her time.

After the Interview
- Review notes and complete the evaluation of the candidate on a screening instrument.
- Document any other pertinent matters related to the interview.
- As a committee, discuss the candidate and summarize his or her strengths and weaknesses.