

Preface

Be honest: the first reaction to the word “interviewing” is what? Employee hiring. Yes, like the almost everybody in the world, we hear or read the word “interviewing” and we think “employment.”

Interviewing is simply getting information from another person. We all use this skill every day. In fact, most days you’ll be involved in at least 10 interviews a day—ones you initiate and ones initiated by others. Every time you work at getting information from customers about the problem they’re having, you’re interviewing. Every time you talk with a potential customer to learn his or her needs, you’re interviewing. In every performance appraisal conversation that includes gaining information from your employee, you’re interviewing. Every time you talk with your colleagues in other companies to learn how they do things, you’re interviewing. Every time you discuss with your coworkers while planning a project or determining the strategic plan for the company, you’re interviewing. And, of course, every time you gain information from potential employees and volunteers, you’re interviewing.

It’s a bit of a twist. This book focuses on interviewing skills—information-gaining skills—in every situation. If you’re in Customer Service, the steps and skills you’ll learn will help you gain information from customers. If you’re in Human Resources, Marketing, Sales, Volunteer Management, Operations, Finance, or IS, this book will help you make it easy and enjoyable for your direct employees, coworkers, customers, and colleagues to give you the information you need.

As I wrote, I struggled (no pity, please—it was great fun!) to

balance the “just the facts” style of Briefcase Books with the need to give you examples for all types of gaining information from others. No matter what managerial responsibilities you hold, I wanted you to see yourself and the type of information gaining you do as you read each step and worked on each skill. To do this, as you’ll see, I wrote examples for each person and situation in which you’d interview and/or I made the description of each step in the interviewing process so generic that you’d feel like this applied to you and the people you interview.

You’ll also notice that I know something about each of you—you’re incredibly busy and you’ll read just the chapters you feel you needed. Look at the table of contents. The chapters are the steps to successful interviewing, in order. Reading chapters here and there as you need them quite obviously will cause you to miss some of the steps you need to take to gain the information you need. So, each chapter is full of references to pages in the book where you’ll find those steps.

Every interviewing step and every example uses behavioral interviewing techniques, rather than interviewing with hypothetical questions. Why? Because you’ll get the information you need faster and it’ll be more accurate and more detailed. Why? Because behavioral interviewing leads you to talk with people about themselves! You’ll be talking with them about things that happened to them, things they’ve done and how they’ve done them.

Interviewing Techniques for Managers will help you plan and prepare for any interview, conduct the all-important opening and closing of any information-gaining session, and use the information you gain to make decisions. You’ll get methods for communicating with different people in a way that makes it easy for them to understand, creating questions, listening, taking notes, and dealing with people who seem bent on making it difficult to get the information from them. The book is full of ready-to-use forms, tools, and checklists to make it easy for you to gain information from anyone quickly, accurately, and in a way that makes them feel great about you and your organization.

Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous sidebars designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of these sidebars and how they're used in this book.

 <p>Smart Managing</p>	<p>Boxes with this icon are designed to give you tips and tactics that will help you more effectively implement the methods described in this book.</p>
	<p>These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong in planning and carrying out your interviews.</p>
	<p>These boxes highlight insider tips for taking advantage of the techniques described in this book.</p>
	<p>Every subject has some special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.</p>
	<p>It's always important to have examples of what others have done, either well or not so well. Find these stories in these boxes.</p>
	<p>This identifies boxes where you'll find specific procedures you can follow to take advantage of the book's advice.</p>
	<p>How can you make sure you won't make a mistake when managing? You can't, but these boxes will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.</p>