



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

BEHAVIOUR-BASED RECRUITMENT

Toolkit – A guide for employers

City & Guilds Group



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Chief Executive: Amanda Mackenzie OBE

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Registered Office:
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
www.bitc.org.uk



Behaviour-based recruitment

A guide for employers

The problem

In our 2015 Youth Survey, **nearly 60% of young people** told us that their lack of experience had been a barrier to them applying for a role, the biggest barrier mentioned by respondents.

One reason for this is that many employers ask applicants for previous experience for entry-level roles, which by definition should not require any. As result, many employers are filtering out candidates without experience to save time on shortlisting at the cost of being able to identify the best young talent.

How behaviour-based recruitment can help employers

Behaviour-based recruitment is a model for assessing candidates' suitability for a role **based on the behaviours, attitudes and aspirations** they display during all stages of the recruitment process, rather than focusing on their previous work experience.

This enables recruiters to spot candidates with the potential to excel in a job role even when they have no previous direct experience and helps employers to identify people with the **attitudes and values that are the best cultural fit** for their company, which is not necessarily drawn out by discussing previous employment.

Reframing the focus of interview questions as well as using other types of assessments such as **situational judgement tests, group assessments and interactive sessions** all allow candidates to demonstrate how they would behave in real-life situations and interact with colleagues and clients.

Key things to consider:

- For entry level roles, what steps does your current recruitment process involve? Are candidates without previous experience automatically screened out, or ranked below other candidates with experience?
- What key behaviours, attitudes and motivations would your ideal candidates display?
- What recruitment format would best draw out these behaviours?
- What feedback are you providing to help them learn from the experience?

Step by step

1. Identify roles where behaviour-based recruitment would help you to identify young talent

In order to attract the best young talent, first you need identify which roles in your structure are suitable entry points for young people at the first stage in their career. Whether this is through structured traineeship and apprenticeship programmes or other entry level roles, the criteria for these jobs should not include previous experience or minimum qualifications that do not relate to the role.

Once you have identified which of your roles are suitable for young people, you can then consider how behaviour-based assessments can be used to identify the best candidates

2. Identify the key behaviours, attitudes and motivations your ideal candidate would display





What are your company's key values that all your employees should represent? These can be drawn from the aims outlined in your mission statement or the core values outlined in your corporate strategy, or be aimed specifically at identifying exemplary behaviour in young people. Each of these values can be linked to a specific behaviour that recruiters look out for during testing. You can also develop a scoring system against your values to ensure that assessment is consistent and methodical.

3. Choose assessment formats designed to draw out evidence of these behaviours

Behaviour-based interviewing

One of the simplest ways you can draw out these qualities in your recruitment process is to adapt your existing interview questions to move the focus away from previous experience to towards demonstrating behaviours. For example, **Barclays** have adapted their apprenticeship interview questions to focus less on work experience and more on life and extra-curricular experiences.

Assessment Centres

Assessment centres are a collection of tests, usually over the course of a day, which are designed to draw out a number of contrasting key behaviours from candidates. They typically include a range of both group and individual exercises which allow recruiters to observe how well candidates work in a team, their communication and leadership skills and specific functional skills including verbal and numerical reasoning.

For example, **Ricoh** has developed an assessment day that judges individuals on their attitude and aptitude above all else. The agenda consists of an overview of the business and how the role candidates are applying for fits into the department. Recruiters then conduct five assessments linked to the company's core values. At the end of the session the assessors review their findings and provide a rounded opinion of each candidate for the recruiting manager to make the best decision for their team.

Technical assessments

As part of their apprentice assessment process, **Jaguar Land Rover** and their recruitment partner **Manpower** include a dexterity assessment to see how good young people are at physical problem solving using different parts, which relates closely to the kind of tasks Apprentices would be undertaking on a day to day basis. **Ricoh** also include a technical assessment for all roles, both practical and IT for back office.

Situational Judgement Tests

A situational judgement test (SJT) is a type of multiple choice test that invites candidates to select the action they would be most likely to take when presented with a range of scenarios and challenges, such as interacting with a difficult customer, working on a difficult team task or having to prioritise a busy workload.

SJTs make candidates reveal the values and beliefs that underlie their behaviour in order to show how suitable they might be for a particular role.

Many companies conduct these tests online through a partner testing company, and because test scores can be calculated instantly they are a quick and effective way to shortlist suitable





candidates. **Barclays** use video-based SJTs to make scenarios as real as possible, drawing a more genuine response and therefore the candidate's response as genuine as possible.

Work Clubs

Another way to observe candidates' behaviour is to arrange 'work club' insight days for young people to learn more about working in your business and the kinds of roles available. Last year, **ASDA** held 200 work clubs round the UK to help upskill young people, and through this initiative they also managed to identify young people with high potential who were then supported into roles at **ASDA** with the support of the Prince's Trust.

4. Supporting young people during and after the interview

Young people will perform at their best if they are given some guidance on recruitment processes, which they will have had less exposure to than more experienced candidates. This includes what to expect on the day, what kind of assessments they will face and practicalities around travel and dress code. You can also help to put candidates at ease by beginning with an informal chat and giving them a tour of the office.

For example, **Ricoh** get their existing apprentices to host recruitment days to support candidates. After the assessment, you can help candidates learn how to improve for future assessments by giving open, honest and constructive feedback. Don't wait for them to ask – in our 2015 Youth Survey, nearly a third of young people told us they hadn't received feedback for an interview, with some not knowing how to ask.

Case Study

[Read more about how Ricoh's assessment centres help to identify young talent](#)

Where to go next?

- Use CIPD'S sample interview questions to help draw out behaviour and attitude. You can find them at the bottom of the [Behaviour-based recruitment page on Future Proof](#).





Behavior-based recruitment

Sample interview questions

Here are some sample interview questions from p24 of CIPD's [Employing young people: A step-by-step guide for SMEs](#)

To get you started:

- How are you today? Was the journey here okay? How did you get here?
- We're glad you're interested in the role – what is it you like about it?
- I'm keen to hear more about you. What are your hobbies and interests? What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What subjects do you study?
- Why did you decide to do these?

Top tip!

To draw out commercial awareness instead of previous experience, Barclays changed the question “*Tell us about a time you delivered great customer service*” to “*Where have you experience great customer service?*” You can also ask candidate what they love about your brand.

To keep things going and help assess their potential:

- Tell me about a time when you've found something difficult – what did you do and how did you overcome it?
- Do you play any sports or are you a member of any teams? What skills did you need to use?
- Have you done any volunteering or take part in any social action? What did you do and do you think you gained skills you could use with us?
- Have you had a Saturday job or paper round? Tell me about what you did as part of this.
- Have you ever worked on a project or in a team with someone who you didn't get along with? When was it and how did you handle it?
- Can you tell me about a time you've won a prize or competition, or achieved something you've been proud of? What was it for?
- Tell me about a favourite project you've completed, either at school or outside, and what you enjoyed about it.
- What specific part did you play in the project?
- Have you ever organised an event, such as a fundraiser, play or sports match? Tell me about how you did it and what you had to do.
- Have you ever led a group of people? What did you enjoy most and what did you enjoy least?
- When you begin a school or college project, what do you struggle with the most? What tactics did you use to get over this challenge?





Uncovering young people's hidden digital skills

Sample application and interview questions

In our recent survey of 4,000 young people, we found that participants had a wide range of surprising and highly transferrable digital skills. From designing new apps and setting up online stores to creating viral videos and award winning podcasts, the wealth of digital skills and experience is impressive, however these are not always the sorts of things that employers find out about during a traditional recruitment process using standard application and interview questions.

So how can you uncover these digital skills in your young applicants?

Here's a list of questions you can include in your application forms and interviews which can help you to uncover the hidden digital skills your young applicants might have, and some real examples from our survey of some of the amazing digital skills on offer.

The skills you're looking for

What our survey respondents told us

Communications skills

Q: Have you ever created your own blog, Vlog (video blog) or podcast?

Thanks to social media and a constantly increasing range of online content platforms, many young people are producing their own engaging content using many different types of media. Bloggers, podcasters and video makers could be great candidates for your communications and marketing positions, and their work is readily available online for you to have a look at.

"I'm a three time award nominated podcaster."

"I've achieved 150,000 reads of one of my books online."

Marketing skills

Q: What social media platforms do you use? How do you make your content attractive and interesting to attract new followers and subscribers?

The responses from our Youth Survey showed that young people often have thousands of followers on social media. A young person who has perfected their 'personal brand' on social media may be the best person to help grow the online brand of your business.

"My YouTube channel has now grown to over 9300 subscribers, and I'm looking forward to seeing it grow even further and start earning me money."





Commercial awareness and sales skills

Q: Have you ever sold anything online?

A surprising number of young people sell things online and even set up their own online shops, demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit and commercial awareness. A good knowledge of online marketplaces could be useful to many small businesses as more transactions move online.

"I've set up my own online shop."

"I own my own online business."

"I'm a top Amazon reviewer."

Organisation and planning skills

Q: Have you ever organised an event or activity online? How did you plan the logistics?

From Facebook events to websites such as Eventbrite and Meetup, young people are used to bringing people together using online tools. If your organisation runs events or needs people who are good at planning logistics, young people often have experience of making complex plans online.

"I'm an event organiser and I had a meetup with 500 Tumblr users."

"I organised and took part in back-packing around Europe."

Research skills

Q: When you research an issue or prepare for something online, what resources do you use? Where would you start?

Asking this question will reveal the thought process that young people go through when researching something, and the internet is increasingly the place that they will start. Navigating the infinite amount of information available on the internet is a skill in itself, and many young people are increasing undertaking online learning as well, using online tools as an essential resource for studying.

"I'm a parent so I study online."

"I'm studying digital tech through the Open University."

Niche software skills

Q: What software and apps do you like to use, and what do you use them for? How did you learn to use them? Was it hard?

A surprising amount of young people in our survey had taught themselves how to use many different types of software. By asking this question, you may be surprised by the extent and flexibility of their digital skills and how these can easily be applied to your company and add value to a job. Adding a

"I taught myself how to use video and photo editing software."

"I achieved the highest scores in Microsoft Certification throughout the country."





question to your application form on which software young people have taught themselves to use is a great way to uncover skills.

“I’ve learnt to create models with software like Maya, 3DS Max and Unreal Engine.”

Computing, programming and design skills

Q: Have you ever designed an app, a piece of software or a device?

In addition to learning to use existing software and devices, some young people have a very impressive set of skills for designing and creating new resources, and are often self-taught. From designing apps, games and coding to building computers and robotics, young people are increasingly taking the lead in designing new tech to solve problems and improve what’s already on offer.

“A game that I wrote won second in a competition.”

“I built my own PC.”

“I wrote my own app and got it published.”

Looking to find the unexpected?

Q: What achievements are you most proud of?

All the examples above were answers to the question in our survey, ‘What are you most proud of?’ – clearly, young people are using their digital skills to achieve amazing things and are very important to them. Asking this question at interview, even if the role isn’t specifically IT-based, can help to unearth the hidden digital skills that your business needs and other skills that young people can bring to your business to add value to the day-to-day tasks they will be undertaking.

This resource was also published as a blog on the Future Proof website in April 2017. Read the full article here: [Do outdated interview questions mean you’re missing out on the next generation’s hidden digital skills?](#)





Unlocking the value of social action

A checklist for employers

Many young people participate in social action and volunteering activities outside of their education and employment which enables them to develop a wealth of skills that are hugely valuable to employers. By using this practical checklist, you can put steps in place to identify the value of this experience during your recruitment processes and learning and development programmes.

This checklist is adapted from CIPD and Step Up To Serve's [guide to unlocking the value of social action in recruitment](#). Step Up To Serve runs the national #iwill campaign, which aims to make social action part of life for as many 10 to 20 year-olds as possible by the year 2020.

Advertising opportunities

- Include references to your own social action activities on your website
- Highlight that social action experience is of interest to you in your job adverts
- Mention that social action is something you look for in your guidance to applicants

Application process

- Include a question in your application form that allows applicants to demonstrate their social action experience
- Introduce flexible shortlisting criteria that give equal weighting to social action as previous employment experience

Interview process

- Include interview questions that draw out experience of social action
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and point them to where they can gain relevant experience through social action

Promoting social action to existing young employees

- Integrate social action activities into young employees' training programmes
- Build social action into your organisation's values and culture
- Recognise social action into employee appraisals and development plans

