

## The ADVOCATE

# OperationsInc Returns to Interviewing

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Appeared on May 29, 2008

Today's job seekers might embellish a resume or exaggerate some facts in an interview, according to Stamford-based human resources consultant David Lewis.

So his company, OperationsInc., is promoting interview skills training services to help companies hire the best person for a job. The 7-year-old firm has relaunched the service because of the current challenging economic times, Lewis said.

"In a down economy, the job of selecting the right people becomes more difficult because the supply of candidates increases," said Lewis, OperationsInc.'s founder and chief executive officer. "Instead of five people applying for a job, you have 25 or 30."

Department heads and managers need to become more adept at screening applicants, checking backgrounds and asking more effective questions in interviews, Lewis said.

"Asking those stale old questions in the same way does not cut it," he said. "Instead of asking, 'What are your strengths and weaknesses?' a manager should say, 'Give me an example of a project you led' or 'Give me examples of skills you are better at today than you were a year ago.' "

Managers may hire the wrong people because they don't have adequate interviewing skills and don't dig deep enough to find out more about applicants, he said.

A job seeker might dress well, be physically attractive and "look the part" of the position for which they are applying, Lewis said. Those superficial qualities might prompt the interviewer to be less inquisitive and probing,

"It becomes love at first site. They let emotions get the best of them," he said.

A bad hire could cost a company thousands of dollars, Lewis said.

"What happens is the work is not being done. Other employees have to do the work. That causes low morale and people leave. Then you have to replace more than one position," he said.

Since January, six clients have received interview skills training from OperationsInc., said Lewis, who presented a seminar on the topic in Norwalk last month that 25 companies attended.

Interview skills training has been around for a while and is called "behavioral interviewing," said Joyce Gioia-Herman, president and chief executive officer of the Greensboro, N.C.-based Herman Group, a workplace issues consulting firm.

"Behavioral interviewing allows the hiring manager to be more discriminating in selecting the right candidate," Gioia-Herman said. "A question would be 'Tell me a time you faced this anger management issue and how you handled it.' "

An employer may hire the wrong person because the job has been vacant for a long time, she said.

"One of the biggest challenges companies face is not selecting carefully enough, especially when they really need somebody," Gioia-Herman said.

A lot of applicants don't have the skills for many of today's high-tech jobs, said Gioia-Herman, author of "Impending Crisis: Too Many Jobs, Too Few People."

"We have a huge retraining opportunity," she said. "Millions of jobs are going begging because millions of people don't have the necessary skills."