



Hi Everyone-

For our information packet on the November 2021 VSys Voices webinar we've compiled a few articles and resources, some of which were mentioned during the webinar. In addition to the following pages we also suggest reviewing the interactive competencies dictionary published by the National Institute of Health [here](#) as well as Elisa's own blog "[How to Turn Away Volunteers and Still Have an OK Day.](#)"

Thank-you everyone! We really enjoyed being part of your day.

- The Voices Team



**Behavior-Based
Interviewing for Reliable,
Loyal Volunteers**

Elisa Kosarin, CVA

**Twenty
InatS**

1

We Will Cover

- Why Behavior-Based Interviewing is Valuable
- Process for Developing Behavior-Based Questions
- Interviewing Pointers
- Turning Away Unqualified Applicants

2

A Little Exercise



3

A Little Exercise



4

Fairfax CASA - Before

In Year One

- New volunteers never taking a case: 21%
- New volunteers dropping cases: 4%
- Volunteers assigned to cases: 135
- Children waiting: 53

(as of October 1 of that year)

5

Fairfax CASA - After

Two Years Later

- New volunteers never taking a case: 2%
- New volunteers dropping cases: 2%
- Volunteers assigned to cases: 157
- Children waiting: 6

(as of October 1 of that year)

6

After

Year One

Percentage of
volunteers remaining
five years or longer:
29%

Two Years Later

Percentage of
volunteers remaining
five years or longer:
48%

7

Behavior-based Interviewing Concept

Past behavior is the best
indicator of future
behavior/performance

8

You be the Judge



9

Rate the questions



1. Does not
possess the
competency



2. Partially
possesses
the
competency



3. Fully
possesses
the
competency

10

Process for Developing Questions

1. Identify the competencies needed, as based on the volunteer position description.
2. List all competencies required for the position.
3. Prioritize and pare down to the key competencies.
4. Develop questions that assess for each key competency.
5. Assess for competencies throughout the screening process.

11

Typical Phrasings

Questions should elicit specific examples of a skill

"Tell me about a time when..."

"Give me an example of a time when..."

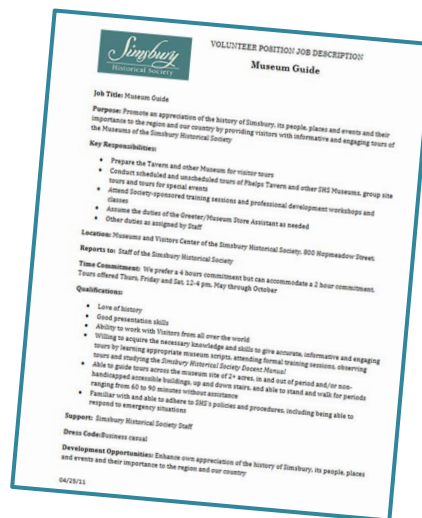
12

Don't ask hypotheticals

“What would you do if a parent refused to meet with

13

Identify the Competencies



14

Strongly Recommended Competencies

Reliability

Coachability

15

Questions?



16

Create An Interview Question



17

“Sandwich” Method



1. Explain the context.
2. Then ask either “Tell me about a time” or “Give me an example of”
3. Then ask, “What was the situation and what did you do?”

18

Other Acceptable Questions

- Yes/No
- What do you know about our organization?
- What interests you about this position?

19

Remember:
Don't ask hypotheticals

“What would you do if a parent refused to meet with

20

Conducting the Interview



21

Pointers for Interviewing

- Prepare
 - Review application form and questions.
- Tell candidates in advance that the position is highly selective and not all applicants are selected.
- Remain objective.
- Probe
 - Get specifics
 - Ask for additional examples
 - Use follow-up questions

22

More Interviewing Pointers

- Don't let yourself get sidetracked by too much small talk.
- Avoid getting overly enthusiastic or over-selling the position.

23

Watch Out For



- Scheduling difficulties
- Inappropriate sharing/boundaries
- Questioning or defensive of application/interview process
- Concerning body language

24

Assessing Applicants



25

Sample Question & Scoring

A court report deadline might coincide with a planned vacation, but it must still be turned in on time.

Tell me about a time when you needed to meet a deadline and it was inconvenient for you.

What was the situation and how did you handle it?

1 2 3

Competency: Reliability

26

Recommended

Whenever possible,
make candidate
decisions as a team

27

Turning Down Candidates

- Prepare candidates early in the application process
- Describe the outcome from *their* point of view
- Don't give reasons
- Be compassionate
- Make sure your supervisor has your back

28

Turning Down Candidates



29

Questions?



30

Scoring the Interview Questions

Competency: Good Presentation Skills

	1 Does not possess competency	2 Somewhat possesses competency	3 Fully possesses competency
Traditional Question			
Behavior-Based Question			

Competency: Reliability

	1 Does not possess competency	2 Somewhat possesses competency	3 Fully possesses competency
Traditional Question			
Behavior-Based Question			

Total Average Scores

	Customer Service	Reliability
Traditional Questions		
Behavior-Based Questions		



VOLUNTEER POSITION JOB DESCRIPTION

Museum Guide

Job Title: Museum Guide

Purpose: Promote an appreciation of the history of Simsbury, its people, places and events and their importance to the region and our country by providing visitors with informative and engaging tours of the Museums of the Simsbury Historical Society

Key Responsibilities:

- Prepare the Tavern and other Museum for visitor tours
- Conduct scheduled and unscheduled tours of Phelps Tavern and other SHS Museums, group site tours and tours for special events
- Attend Society-sponsored training sessions and professional development workshops and classes
- Assume the duties of the Greeter/Museum Store Assistant as needed
- Other duties as assigned by Staff

Location: Museums and Visitors Center of the Simsbury Historical Society, 800 Hopmeadow Street.

Reports to: Staff of the Simsbury Historical Society

Time Commitment: We prefer a 4 hours commitment but can accommodate a 2 hour commitment. Tours offered Thurs, Friday and Sat, 12-4 pm, May through October

Qualifications:

- Love of history
- Good presentation skills
- Ability to work with Visitors from all over the world
- Willing to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to give accurate, informative and engaging tours by learning appropriate museum scripts, attending formal training sessions, observing tours and studying the *Simsbury Historical Society Docent Manual*
- Able to guide tours across the museum site of 2+ acres, in and out of period and/or non-handicapped accessible buildings, up and down stairs, and able to stand and walk for periods ranging from 60 to 90 minutes without assistance
- Familiar with and able to adhere to SHS's policies and procedures, including being able to respond to emergency situations

Support: Simsbury Historical Society Staff

Dress Code: Business casual

Development Opportunities: Enhance own appreciation of the history of Simsbury, its people, places and events and their importance to the region and our country

How to Turn Away Volunteers and Still Have an OK Day

by [Elisa Kosarin](#) | Aug 16, 2017



What's the absolute, no doubt about it, worst part of managing volunteers? For me, it's turning away the ones that are just not a good fit – the ones that won't work out in any of the roles that your program offers. After all, volunteers are donating their time and talents to support your cause. It's hard to reject something given so freely.

I have had to reject hundreds of volunteers over the years. At first, the process was wrenching. I could feel my blood pressure rising every time I picked up the phone, knowing I was about to share news that was sure to disappoint. A conversation with an upset

rejected volunteer had the potential to ruin my day.

I've got some guidelines

Over time and through trial and error, though, I came up with some guidelines for turning away volunteers that bolstered my confidence and allowed the applicant some space to process the bad news.

If turning away volunteers gives you heart palpitations, here are my basics for making the experience manageable.

1. **Don't avoid:** Putting off the phone call will probably heighten your anxiety and make it more difficult to deliver your message.
2. **CALL the volunteer:** Your applicants deserve the consideration of a phone call. Don't shirk your responsibility by resorting to an email or letter.
3. **Frame the conversation from the applicant's point of view:** Explain that, from your experience, the applicant will feel frustrated or unfulfilled in this position rather than rewarded.
4. **Don't give reasons:** Don't share all the reasons why the applicant was turned away. Once you give a reason, the applicant has the opportunity to refute your assessment, leaving you in the position of defending yourself. You will leave the call feeling flustered and the applicant will feel more upset than ever.
5. **Show compassion:** It is possible to deliver bad news in a caring way. Let the applicant know that you are sorry to share this information.
6. **Give your boss a heads up:** Some applicants are going to take their displeasure up the chain of command. Make sure your supervisor is aware of the situation so that she can back you up.

7. **Vent after the call:** These calls are difficult. Find a trusted co-worker and debrief after a tough conversation. You need the validation that you did something tough but essential.

Not fun – but important

Turning away volunteers is never fun. But turning away unqualified volunteers is the flip side of the management coin. It's a signal that you are clear on who works for your program and who doesn't. It means you see how an unqualified volunteer strains capacity when you are committed to keeping your program strong.



Volunteer managers – ramp up your influencing skills and ease those difficult conversations. My Six Principles of Buy-In will help you boost your influencing skills. [Email me](#) for the handout and worksheet, and I'll add you to the Twenty Hats mailing list. – *Eli*

Three awesome behavior-based questions for emotional intelligence (EQ)

[Fairfax CASA](#) supervisor Priscilla Jahanian has used behavior-based interviewing for many years to screen prospective CASA volunteers. She finds the method especially helpful for pinpointing a candidate's interpersonal skills, or emotional intelligence (EQ).

Here are Priscilla's top three behavior-based questions for EQ and the reasons why she finds them so helpful:

1. "Tell me about a time you received feedback that was less than positive. How did you respond, and what course corrective actions did you take?"
 - As the applicant shares an example, note if she accepted feedback or became defensive. Was the applicant willing to look at her role in the situation? Was she willing to make changes to improve performance in the future?
 - After receiving "less than positive" feedback, did the relationship improve or did the applicant avoid the person sharing the feedback – or even leave the position? Avoidant applicants may bail on their volunteer commitments when supervisors need to share negative feedback.
2. "Describe the most difficult working relationship you've had with an individual. What specific action did you take to improve the relationship? What was the outcome?"
 - Pause after asking this question and give the applicant time to reflect.
 - The responses reveal how applicants work through conflict, how avoidant they are, their level of professionalism, and their ability to be supervised.
3. "Tell me about your most and least gratifying volunteer experiences and why."
 - Look at how the applicant's responses match up to the competencies needed for the volunteer position.
 - For example, is there evidence that the applicant can work independently and enjoys working independently? Or was it difficult for the volunteer to sustain his commitment?
 - Also look at how the applicant describes other volunteer organizations. Was he respectful or did he put down the organization?

