

## **LEADERSHIP TRAINING BULLETIN 97-02 INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES**

April 17, 1997

### **PURPOSE:**

This bulletin provides GWRRA leaders with a set of general guidelines to use in conducting effective interviews in connection with their various responsibilities. It will also assist leaders in establishing and maintaining effective lines of communications with people they work with in the course of serving the members and meeting their various leadership responsibilities. Finally it will help leaders assist others in establishing and achieving effective goals in support of their continuing efforts to provide quality services to the members.

The purpose of these guidelines is specifically NOT to provide a “script” for leaders to use in conducting interviews. These guidelines are intended solely as a training tool and a general “road-map” to use in creating and maintaining effective and focused individualized and tailored interviews by and for the individuals involved.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

To be effective leaders in any organization one must be able to conduct effective interpersonal interviews for a variety of purposes. While the reasons and purposes for conducting interviews vary, a number of general characteristics and processes are found to be common between all types of interviews.

This bulletin outlines these general characteristics and processes, recommend some proven techniques, and provide some guidance for the specific types of interviews most commonly conducted in GWRRA.

It is important to understand that, in every case, each of the parties involved in the interview bring their own agenda to the process. For example, leaders typically interview to gather information, evaluate, train/coach, or address a problem. On the other hand, people being interviewed generally are trying to “sell” themselves for some purpose such as getting a new

position, a promotion, a desired assignment, or perhaps defend or promote their position with respect to decisions or actions. These purposes generally hold true in GWRRA.

#### COMMON TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- Training
- Rewarding
- Evaluating For Selection (...to position or assignment)
- Evaluating For Accomplishment (...Progress Reviews, etc.)
- Information Gathering
- Problem Solving
- Promotion of Self or Idea

#### The Interview Process

The interview process varies somewhat depending on the purpose of the interview, but generally uses a common structure and approach. Areas of emphasis will generally be what changes the most between types of interviews. One important concept to remember is that in any given interview a lot of things are happening at the same time. One person is trying to evaluate and/or gather information, the other may be trying to report accomplishments, make a sale, promote an idea, or make a favorable impression. Add to this the distinct possibility that both parties are trying to “size-up” the other, and thus will generally use information as the “currency” of the interview, withholding or releasing information when it serves their purposes. Finally, the basic concepts and techniques involved in other aspects of interpersonal communications apply to conducting interviews. In general terms the following steps occur in an interview:

1. Pre-Contact Preparation:
  - The person doing the interview reviews background information, forms, applications, etc. They should also develop a general interview guide tailored for the purpose for which the interview is being conducted. They should also include any notes regarding special questions and prepare the interview setting as needed.
  - The person being interviewed reviews background information on the organization or issues to be discussed, arranges transportation to the interview site, and announces his/her arrival.
2. Greeting and Rapport:
  - The interviewer stands and greets the interviewee with a handshake, directs the person to their seat, and “makes small talk” to establish a relaxed atmosphere.
  - The person being interviewed shakes hands, establishes eye contact, takes a seat as directed, and takes an active part in the conversation.
3. Questions and Answers:
  - The interviewer should begin with general questions related to the purpose of the interview, gradually focusing in on more specific questions as the interview

progresses. Questions should be such that they are open-ended and require more than a “yes” or “no” response. For position selection interviews, the candidate’s education, experience, skills, abilities, motivation and attitudes should be explored, in addition to any specifics in which they are interested. The interviewer looks for responses given in terms of “things accomplished” as opposed to plans and ideas although these too are often important.

- The interviewee responds to the questions posed, and is invited to provide input, report, or ask questions.

#### 4. Interview/Meeting Closure:

- When the interviewer gathers sufficient information, discusses the next step, they should stand up to signal an end to the meeting, shake hands, and escort the other person out.
- The person being interviewed asks any pertinent questions about next steps or follow-up activities, stands up, shakes hands and leaves.

#### The Interview - Rules For Success

- Be Prepared - Anticipate needs and issues
- Be On Time
- Be Respectful
- Be Genuine - Be Yourself
- Be Organized
- Be Clear

Location - The interview site should be as convenient as possible and comfortable for both parties.

Time - The time of the interview should be agreeable to both parties.

Information Flow - All interviews should always be bi-directional. Both parties should have ample opportunity to participate in the process by actively listening, posing question, responding to questions and sharing other information as appropriate.

#### Preparing For The Interview

- Do your homework!
- Find out about the other person
- Have any reference material available
- Study relevant background material
- Write down key points, issues, or questions to be discussed
- Decide what you want to accomplish in the interview

## Interviewing Do's And Don'ts

### DON'TS

1. DON'T Use The Words...
  - "Calm Down" in a verbal dispute. This comes across as "you are the one out of control."
  - "I'll be honest with you". This sends the message that maybe you haven't been honest with them in the past.
  - "What's Your Problem?" This loads everything on them. Its no longer A problem, its THEIR problem.
2. Don't Rush (or Drag Out) Interviews. Plan the interview so that you use only the amount of time needed.
3. Don't let your emotions interfere, be as objective and in control as possible.

### DO

1. FIND a way to put the person at ease at the beginning of the interview.
2. FOCUS on the problem or result, not the person, people, or emotions involved.
3. BE AWARE that you can't control the outcome of a decision. All you can do is control the decision making process.
4. START process by identifying your wants and needs. This forms a baseline from which to talk.
5. RANK the things you want to talk about.
6. GATHER all the information necessary prior to the interview.

## Interviewing Methods

- Unstructured Interviewing
  - Questions come from the brow of Zeus (the Interviewer)
  - Different questions for each candidate
  - May Emphasize some Eccentric Criteria
  - Produces the "halo effect" (Just like me)
- Structured Interviewing
  - Interview questions planned in advance
  - Method of interview pre-planned
  - Same interview method and questions to all candidates for position
  - Avoids canned answers
- Reality Interviewing

- Three simple rules
  - Ask applicant to describe their realities – what they did do or are doing
  - Probe the applicant’s past and present realities in direct relation to their future responsibilities with GWRRA
  - Pose situational questions in addition to past experience questions

### Interviewing Techniques

- Avoid questions that can be answered with a “Yes” or “No” (closed) answer.
- Use open-ended Questions Whenever Possible - Get Them to Talk To You.
  - What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses to be?
  - What have you done most recently to improve yourself?

### SOME Suggested General Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about GWRRA (the position, etc.)?
3. Why should I select you?
4. What can you do for this Region/District/Chapter?
5. Did you play any sports while in school?
6. Have you ever failed? What did you learn from it?
7. What are you looking for from this experience?
8. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
9. Tell me about your employment.
10. Tell me about your current supervisor.
11. In 12 months ( 2 years, 5 years) where would you like to be in this organization?
12. Why do you think you will be successful in what you are trying to do?
13. Can you operate under pressure?
14. What kind of time commitments do you have elsewhere?
15. What is your preferred management style?
16. What do you expect of me?
17. Did you enjoy your last position?
18. Can I meet others on the staff?
19. How long do you plan to be here?
20. Why is this position open?

### SOME Suggested Questions For GWRRA Position Interviews

1. Why do you want to be a \_\_\_\_\_ (C/D, D/D, etc.)?
2. How do you plan to lead by example?
3. Do you think being sensitive to the needs and desires of the members is important?  
How would you go about identifying and addressing these?
4. What talents, skills, etc. can you bring to the position to enhance it?
5. What goals do you have for the position?

6. What changes are you planning or do you foresee?
7. Have you read the “Standards of Conduct”?
8. Do you have any questions or areas of concern that we can address at this time?
9. What do you need from me to achieve your goals
10. ?????

#### SOME Situational Questions

1. What would you say to the statement, “GWRRA is just another motorcycle club?”
2. How would you respond to the statement, “Folks in Phoenix are just getting rich off of us?”
3. How would you recruit a Gold Wing Rider you just met at a rest stop?
4. As a Chapter Director how would you get people involved in the COY program?
5. What would you say to the potential COY who said they would not compete at District?
6. How would you handle a small group of Chapter participants that wear a name tag that states, “Misfits, Outsiders, etc.”?
7. As a CD how would you deal with a small group of disruptive people at the Chapter Meeting?
8. How would you deal with the Staff member that says, “I don’t think that’s a good idea”?

#### Common Interview Mistakes

1. Poor personal appearance
2. Underestimating the other person
3. Acting overly aggressive or combative
4. Not listen
5. Letting one’s guard down
6. Has not researched the organization/situation etc.
7. Inflexibility
8. Appearing nervous or disinterested
9. Not asking questions
10. Not articulate answers to questions

#### Conducting Performance Reviews

1. When communicating with people about performance the following items are useful to keep in mind:
  - Does the person know and understand fully what the problem is?
  - Does the person REALLY understand what is expected?
  - Does the other person fully understand what will happen if things do not get done?
  - Do you have all the facts?

2. When - FIX IT or FORGET IT! Don't delay, while exceptions may be made if a cooling off period is needed, moving quickly to address performance problems is always the best approach.
3. Where - PRIVACY is always preferable. Choose a neutral location where interruptions and distractions can be minimized, and where both parties can be relaxed and comfortable.
4. How - Relaxed and informal, but with a structure approach. Lay out the problem and secure agreement from the person that it has been accurately described. This gives you a common framework with which to discuss the problem.
5. Tact vs Honesty - By thinking through what you need to say you can plan the conversation in such a way that you can be honest with the person, but in a tactful, caring way that does not appear to be a personal attack on them.
6. Allow time for two-way conversation. This means giving the other person time to respond while you are quiet and listening.
7. Focus on the goals set and the results achieved – what was accomplished and why.
8. Interviews are best done in person, but can be done over the telephone if absolutely necessary.
9. Performance Review Interviews can be delegated to an Assistant or Senior Officer as necessary.
10. During the interview look for areas of activity where training and/or developmental assignments would be helpful to the person being interviewed.
11. Discuss what you need to get done and why, and how the other person can help you accomplish what is needed.
12. Discuss what the other person's goals are objectives are and how you can help them achieve their goals.
13. In activities or areas where goals were not achieved or the person fell short of expectations, ask them what they would do differently if they had it to do over.
14. When setting goals and establishing expectations and standards of performance be sure to be clear. You need to be certain that the other person understands what is expected.
15. Always begin and end the interview on a positive note.