

Dysfunctional Interviews

Prof. Dr. M. Amr Sadik, Professor IPE Management School, Paris

I am sorry to hear that you have had a dysfunctional interview. Yes, I hear that, read that, and see that frequently and got disappointed. Interviewers, sometimes and regardless if they are recruiters or recruitment employees in an organization, have serious lack of judgement or imperfect selection process. Job interviews are typically important opportunities for both employers and employees to assess each other's suitability for a position.

There are three main reasons why candidates fail at interview;

- They simply aren't good enough! This maybe they just don't have 'enough' skills, knowledge of experience for the role in question. Or it could be that they don't have the 'right' skills, knowledge and experience for that job.
- Fault emerges in the selection process by employer. In some cases, really good candidates will fail to get through only because the parameters for selection just won't recognize them.
- It's not enough to have great skills, knowledge and experience, you have to make them obvious to the employer with examples.

Social constructionists consider interviews as mutually co-constructing meaning. But what if the interlocutors do not seem to agree on what they construct? The employment interview is a social interaction where the interviewer and applicant exchange and process the information gathered from each other.

Human Resource Department or specifically the recruitment unit plays an essential role in the productivity of an organization. This department is the first screening unit to the source, attract, identify and retain talents in the organization. The competencies of the HR practitioners contribute to the productivity of the organization because the quality of the employees is highly influenced by the recruitment of the employees into the organization.

Candidates like to feel comfortable when they are in the interview. Their career at a stake!

Employee interviews play a critical role in the hiring process, as they provide employers with the opportunity to assess candidates' skills, experience, and cultural fit. However, when interviews are dysfunctional, they can lead to poor hiring decisions, employee dissatisfaction, and potential legal issues. Dysfunctional employee interviews are those that do not serve the intended purpose of evaluating a candidate's fit for a position. These can manifest in various ways, such as inappropriate questions, biases, lack of structure, and a failure to assess relevant

qualifications. Understanding the signs and consequences of dysfunctional interviews can help organizations improve their hiring processes and avoid costly mistakes.

One of the key aspects of dysfunctional interviews is the presence of inappropriate questions. Interviewers should avoid asking questions that are irrelevant to the job role or personal questions about a candidate's age, race, religion, gender, or family status. Such questions can lead to discrimination claims and damage an organization's reputation. For example, asking a candidate about their plans for starting a family could be seen as discriminatory and a violation of equal employment opportunity laws.

Another sign of a dysfunctional interview is the presence of bias. Interviewers may unconsciously favor candidates who share similar backgrounds or perspectives, which can lead to a lack of diversity in the workplace. Additionally, bias can influence the interviewer's perception of a candidate's responses, leading to unfair evaluations. To counteract this, organizations should provide training on recognizing and mitigating bias in the hiring process. A lack of structure in the interview process can also result in dysfunction. Without a clear agenda and set of questions, interviewers may struggle to gather the information they need to make informed decisions. This can lead to wasted time and effort, as well as inconsistency in evaluating candidates. Structured interviews, where interviewers follow a standardized set of questions for each candidate, help ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly and consistently.

In addition to these issues, dysfunctional interviews may fail to assess relevant qualifications. Interviewers should focus on evaluating a candidate's skills, experience, and fit for the position. However, they may become distracted by other factors such as appearance or charisma, which can lead to overlooking important qualifications. This can result in hiring candidates who lack the necessary skills for the job, leading to poor job performance and turnover.

The consequences of dysfunctional employee interviews can be far-reaching. Poor hiring decisions can lead to increased employee turnover, reduced productivity, and damage to workplace culture. In addition, organizations may face legal issues if candidates file discrimination complaints based on inappropriate interview questions. This can lead to costly legal fees and settlements, as well as reputational damage.

To avoid dysfunctional interviews, organizations should implement best practices in their hiring processes. This includes providing training for interviewers on appropriate questioning techniques and bias mitigation. Additionally, using structured interviews with standardized questions can help ensure fairness and consistency in evaluating candidates. Employers should



also focus on assessing relevant qualifications and fit for the position to make informed hiring decisions.

So, let me give you a little hint to have proper interview.

It is all about “**Feng Shui**”.

Feng Shui is rooted in a holistic worldview. It sees all things and creatures as part of a natural order, a vast environment that’s, alive and in flux, ever moving and changing. All things in this natural order are equally alive and possess an energetic value or component.

Everything — plants, animals, people, and things —

exists in a vast landscape that swirls with vital energy.

Can the environments in which you spend your time have massive and pervasive effects on your thoughts, feelings, actions, and life results? My answer is an emphatic yes!

Feng Shui is simply a stress-free environment. It can be considered to be the art of placement, linking us to our environment.

However, sometimes things don't go as smoothly as we'd hope. It needs advance preparation and planning.

Here are a few steps you can take if you've experienced a dysfunctional employment interview:

- Assess the situation:
 - Reflect on what specifically went wrong during the interview. Was it the interviewer's behavior, the questions asked, or the overall atmosphere? Understanding the root cause will help you determine your next steps.
- Stay professional:
 - Regardless of how the interview went, it's crucial to maintain a professional demeanor throughout the process. Avoid responding emotionally or burning any bridges. Your behavior and professionalism will leave a lasting impression, even if the interview didn't go well.
- Seek feedback:
 - If possible, reach out to the interviewer or the HR department to ask for feedback on the interview. Politely inquire about areas where you could improve or gain insight into why the interview seemed dysfunctional. Constructive feedback can be valuable for future interviews.
- Learn from the experience:

- Treat this dysfunctional interview as a learning opportunity. Assess your own performance and think about how you could better prepare for future interviews. Consider practicing common interview questions, researching the company thoroughly, and improving your communication skills.

- Move on and keep searching:

- Sometimes interviews don't work out, and it's important to remember that it's not a reflection of your worth or abilities. Use the experience to motivate yourself to find other job opportunities and continue your job search.

Remember, not every interview will be perfect, and occasional setbacks are normal. By learning from the experience and staying focused on your goals, you'll increase your chances of finding the right employment opportunity in the future.

In conclusion, dysfunctional employee interviews can have serious consequences for organizations, including poor hiring decisions, legal issues, and damage to reputation. By recognizing the signs of dysfunction and implementing best practices, employers can improve their hiring processes and select candidates who are the best fit for their organization. Ultimately, a well-structured interview process leads to better hiring outcomes and contributes to a positive workplace culture.

About Author



Prof. Dr. M. Amr Sadik, is a Co-founder & Vice President of Educators, VP Dimensions Consulting Ltd. UK, based in Cairo, Egypt. An HBR Advisory Council Member, Adjunct HR & Strategy Management Professor IPE Management School, Paris, Middle East Programs for, Victoria University, School of Management, Switzerland and HR Collegiate Council & HR Professor at GUST, Latvia. Ranked by Thinkers360 as Top 50 Thought HR Leader in 2024.

A veteran, Practical-academic, seasoned and accomplished HR and Management senior executive with almost 40 years with local, regional and global companies in different industries coupled with more than 15 international awards and recognitions. **A MEMBER OF THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ADVISORY COUNCIL, AN OPT-IN RESEARCH COMMUNITY OF BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS**, and a Fellow member of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in UK.

Prof. Sadik is the Co-founder, Vice President, Educators Learning Solutions Ltd, (Educators) UK, and holds different positions such as Regional Director-North Africa for International Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, USA, Collegiate Council Member & Professor of HR Management, Global University of Science & Technology, Latvia, Executive Member, Ajeenkya D Y Patil University, International Academic Council (IAC), India, Professor of Management, The George Washington University of Peace, USA, Regional Director-Egypt, Chartered Institute of Management & Leadership, USA, Vice President of Chartered Institute of Leadership & Governance, USA, and last but not least Board & Advisory Committee Member at Arab Trainers Union, Jordan.

In 1998, he was nominated for Professional Excellence Award in HR from "SHRM" in USA, and in 2006 for Sheikh Rashid Bin Maktoum Award in the United Arab Emirates as the Best Arab Manager. The Stevies Award laureate in 2007 as first Egyptian/Arab winner, and who was ranked among the top 20 HR Most International Influential Thinkers in 2014 from UK, 2015

Peter F. Drucker in Management, UOSF, Panama.

As writer, he is a regular international contributor at HR-Future magazine in South Africa, and published 3 books in India and Germany. He frequently called in HR conferences and summits to opine in current practices and provide his insights. He is associated as adjunct professor at various business and management schools to teach at post-graduate studies; IPE Management School, Paris-France, Victoria University, Switzerland for Middle East Programs, and Frankfort School of Finance and Management, International Advisory Services, in Germany as HR and Training expert and Consultant.

In Egypt, he used to teach with University of Maastricht, Maastricht School of Management, Cairo Outreach Program, EsLsca – Business School, Paris, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, and RB College, UK.