INTERVIEWS (UNIT 9)

Job interviews can generally be divided into three main types. The first is what I would call the 'traditional interview'. This is usually just a series of standard questions about qualifications, work experience, knowledge and expectations. So what you have here is basically a list of quite straightforward questions, you know, like 'What duties did you have in your previous job?' This is still the model for a lot of interviews today. In my view it's not the best to select staff. In fact, I would say that it's very often quite inappropriate.

Then there's the 'case interview', which is particularly challenging. What happens here is that the interviewer presents a problem and then follows this with a series of questions to find out how the candidate would approach the problem. To give you an idea, it might go something like this: 'Company X wants to increase the number of university graduates that it hires every year by 50 percent without exceeding its current budget, which is $2m. What would you advise them to do?' Now this puts the candidate in a pretty uncomfortable position because they're really being asked to do several things – to demonstrate that they can analyse the problem logically, formulate appropriate questions and communicate effectively with the interviewer. So it's a pretty stressful form of interview.

The third type is what's known as the 'behavioural interview'. It's designed to find out how candidates actually behave in certain situations. The questions are usually based on anecdotes from the candidate's own past. They're designed to find out about how the candidates handled tricky situations and relationships in the past. A typical question might be 'Can you give me an example of a situation where you had to follow orders that you didn't agree with?' Now that puts the pressure on the candidate because they have to find a good example and they have to do the talking, so it opens up a lot of information and the interviewer gets to see more of the person who's sitting opposite.