

# Wellspring Consulting

## About Wellspring Case Interviews

# The structure of Wellspring interviews

Wellspring Consulting conducts two rounds of interviews

Each round consists of two ~50-minute interviews broken down into:

- ~15 minutes: Behavioral questions
- ~30 minutes: Case
- ~5 minutes: Questions from the candidate

These materials specifically focus on the case aspect of the interview

# The purpose of a case interview



It exposes a candidate to the kind of work we do at Wellspring



It allows us to see a candidate's thinking style and problem-solving ability



It enables us to see how a candidate can use data real-time to develop key insights

In a case interview, the candidate seeks to solve the problem, real time, in interaction with the interviewer

# Anatomy of a case

## Case set-up

The interviewer sets up the case with a clear description of the problem the interviewee is being asked to solve

The interviewer will lay out some initial facts of the case, however, important facts will still need to be uncovered

## Initial thinking

The candidate organizes their thinking and draws data out of the interviewer

The candidate determines what questions to ask to elicit sufficient information to arrive at insights and answers

## Exploration

The candidate is encouraged to ask probing questions and through those answers assemble a deepening understanding of the solution to the case

The candidate should be “on a hunt,” searching for the data in a real time process of investigation and discovery

## Quantitative analysis

Along the way, the case includes a portion where the candidate is tested in their facility with numbers

## Conclusion

After 20 -30 minutes, the interviewer asks the candidate to summarize the case, the data, possible solutions, other data they would have liked to gather, etc.

The candidate should look for quantitative or logical relationships that could provide key insights

# What we hope to learn in a case interview

The case interview is meant to help us learn the following about a candidate, including how well the candidate:

- Understood the problem
- Structured their thinking to effectively navigate through the complexities of the problem-solving
- Engaged in fact-gathering and real time analysis to gain insights into possible answers to the problem
- Arrived at meaningful insights about what the solution set might be
- Brought it all together with simplicity and clarity
- Seemed to enjoy this kind of problem-solving
- Employed a practical, feasibility-oriented, approach to their thinking
- Demonstrated an effective, intuitive sense about where the solutions may lie

# Common pitfalls

## Over-reliance on common frameworks

- It's useful to learn common frameworks (e.g., from Case in Point, etc.) but they rarely fully fit a case, particularly a social sector case
- Instead, consider the unique context of the client and question in developing your thinking

## Incorrect pacing

- The right pace to move through a case can be tricky and we don't worry about precisely how long a candidate takes
- Take enough time to structure your thoughts, particularly at the beginning of a case (~2 or 3 minutes)
- Avoid pausing for too long in later portions of the case, especially if you've been asked to brainstorm or think out loud

## Failure to consider all relevant nonprofit stakeholders

- Many nonprofits must engage with and understand many stakeholder groups, including their audience / customers, Board of Directors, funders, and partners
- Don't forget to consider the full range of potential stakeholders who may influence—or be influenced by—the client

## Failure to stay nimble to different pathways

- If your interviewer suggests a different direction or perspective, take it into account in your thinking
- Aim not to hold too tightly onto any one assumption or idea you might have – preconceptions can create “blinders” and reduce your ability to find the solution

# Tips for preparing for a Wellspring case interview

Tip	Additional detail
<b>Familiarize yourself with Wellspring's work and values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Wellspring's website to consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Which of Wellspring's clients you'd be excited to work with and why</li><li>– What differentiates Wellspring from other firms and what it is about Wellspring that appeals to you</li><li>– The types of problems that Wellspring seeks to solve and the firm's approach (the provided case studies can be helpful)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Complete practice cases to think about how to structure answers and articulate thinking in a concise and organized way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review non-profit cases developed by <a href="#">Case in Point</a>, <a href="#">Bridgespan</a>, or other consulting firms<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An example Wellspring case be found here</li></ul></li><li>• Practice several cases with a casing partner<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– It's particularly helpful to practice with someone who works in or has recruited for consulting</li></ul></li><li>• On your own, think through strategic questions faced by nonprofits that you know or have read about and how you might approach those questions</li></ul>
<b>Read nonprofit publications to build your knowledge of the social impact sector and relevant terminology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helpful sources include Chronicle of Philanthropy, The NonProfit Times, The NonProfit Quarterly, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Harvard Business Review</li><li>• Consider how incentives and stakeholders differ between the private and public sectors</li><li>• Contemplate nonprofit governance and funding structures, as well as how nonprofits communicate their growth and impact</li></ul>