

Hiring Process

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Summary

The purpose of this document is to describe how to prepare for a hiring process, how to hire for talent and how to conduct candidate interviews.

Why is hiring for talent important?

You can teach skills and knowledge, but you can only hire for talent. You may be able to help an employee discover a hidden talent, but you generally cannot create it. Skills, knowledge, and talent within the same person create an enormously potent combination. However, it is important to keep all three distinct in your mind, particularly when thinking about what talents are needed in a job, and what talents to look for in a resume, and in an interview.

This documents guides you through the process, starting with your assessment of which talents are necessary for your position, and how to assess that in a candidate.

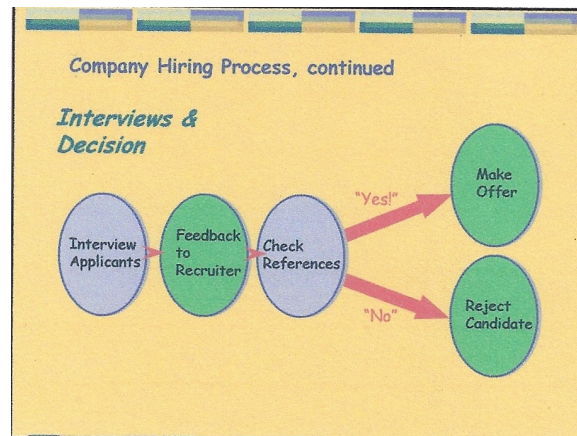
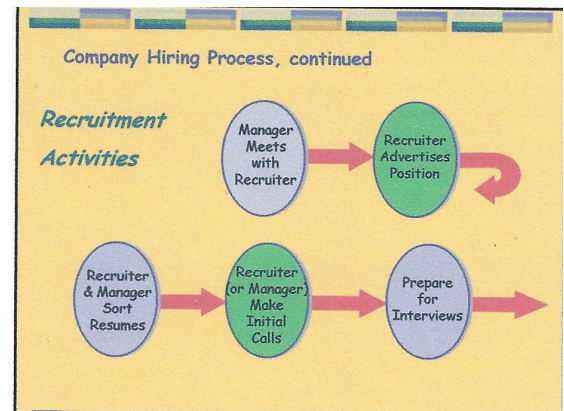




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Hiring Process Overview

The hiring process starts when you decide to fill the position. Work with each individual who will be involved in the hiring process to determine departmental priorities and identify performance needs in order to understand what kind of talent, qualifications, and skills the position requires.

The example steps of the hiring process are illustrated here:

1. Decide your Recruiting Process: where are you going to post the position; are you going to use a recruiter, or use your own sources. Here are few recommended sites
 - Craigslist (be ready to receive several applications, if you don't have time to process them this might not be a good bet.)
 - dice.com (known for technical entry level positions)
 - LinkedIn (good source for any level of position, use it if you have good number of connections. Your post will be visible to your and your connections' connections.)
 - the ladders (good source for highly compensated jobs)
 - Facebook (posting the link at your page doesn't hurt, also allow you to reach out to your immediate connections)
 - idealist.org (recruiting site for non-profit organizations. If you are a non profit, highly recommended.)
2. Write Job Description
3. Post position
4. Prepare screening (phone screening & interview) questions
5. Create tests
6. Process Candidates
 - Review applications
 - Make online search of candidates: google their names, etc.
 - Conduct phone screening
 - Conduct interview
 - Check references
7. Compare candidates
8. Make a decision





Preparation

1. To be prepared for the hiring process and later for the interviews, you need to meet with the selected hiring team to discuss:
 - If there are any changes to the qualifications and responsibilities since the hiring process started;
 - What kind of talent, skills, and qualifications the company is looking for; and
 - Who will be determining which types of skills, talents, and qualifications we are looking for in a candidate? For example, the Personnel Manager determines the cultural fit; the department manager determines the skill level and qualifications.

This discussion will shape the interviews and help decide what kinds of questions to ask. It will also help minimize individuals from repeating the same questions across interviews, and will ensure that key qualifications are assessed throughout the process.

2. Review testing materials if applicable. Testing is usually conducted after the first round of interviews.
3. Decide how you would like candidates to be prepared. You can ask candidates to submit materials before or during the interview. This will enable you to probe the candidate's knowledge and experience. You can ask candidates to bring or send their portfolio, or you can give them an activity-based task lasting not more than 10 or 15 minutes during the interview. For example, if you are hiring a Services Engineer, you can ask candidates to bring a pre-prepared presentation to the interview and present for 10 to 15 minutes, or you can ask a Product Developer to write software for a certain purpose or function and ask him or her to explain it during the interview.
4. Assess the candidate's application materials: cover letter, resume, and portfolio. This helps you draw some preliminary conclusions about the candidate pool, and helps you identify key areas where you will need additional information.
5. Prepare a list of strengths that you would expect the candidate to have.
6. Review goals of the Company and of the department.
7. Decide on the questions you will ask. Asking at least two or three of the same questions to every candidate will help you to compare and contrast them better. If you don't do this, you may not have a tangible comparison between candidates. Select your focus area, and try to come up with questions for each section:
 - Required qualities
 - Past experience
 - Positional fit
 - Skills
 - Knowledge
 - Attitude: motivational fit
 - Competencies
 - Talent
 - Cultural fit
8. Ensure that they are given full details of the interview process. Please explain to the candidate if a presentation is required, if any tests will be given, and if expenses can be claimed. If the interview is to contain an activity-based task, the candidate should be advised of the task well in advance or, if appropriate, given preparation time prior to the interview.





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Before Individual Interviews:

1. Review the candidate's application materials. This helps you draw some preliminary conclusions about the person's job fit, and helps you identify key areas where you will need additional information. Look for any gaps in resume, logical job moves, and reasons for leaving.
2. Prepare a list of strengths and weaknesses, comparing these points with the job description.
3. Google their name. See if they have a website, review their LinkedIn account. Do their resume match with their LinkedIn history? What else can you find about the person online? What other activities do they do? What interest groups do they belong to? What does their network look like? Are they well connected?
4. Reserve the meeting room where there will be no interruption.

When you are thoroughly prepared, you:

- Learn key information about each candidate.
- Avoid possible discrimination charges. See the section on "Avoid Common Mistakes" for more information.
- Use the interview time effectively.
- Formulate specific behavioral questions.



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Interview

1. Set up the interview room; an informal atmosphere is preferable. Make sure that the correct equipment is available to ensure that any activity-based tasks can be performed. For example, have a projector ready for presentations and a white board, pens and the eraser available for any coding, architectural or conceptual explanations.
2. Make sure you are prepared for the interview and that there will be no distractions.
3. Allow sufficient time for the interview and stick to the schedule.
4. Welcome the candidate and try to ensure that they are comfortable.
5. Start by outlining the process of the interview.

Example

1. Briefly outline the Company
2. Briefly outline the job and how the position fits with the company structure. Try not to give too many answers to the candidate at this stage
3. Questions about experience and qualifications
4. Activity-based task and questions
5. Wrap-up questions
6. Candidates' questions
7. Close with what happens next
8. Don't forget to arrange reimbursement to the candidate for their interview expenses. Collect receipts and mailing address, if possible.





Hire for Talent

You can teach skills and knowledge, but you can only hire for talent. You may be able to help an employee discover a hidden talent, but you generally cannot create it.

Skills, knowledge, and talent within the same person create an enormously potent combination. However, it is important to keep all three distinct in your mind, particularly when thinking about what talents are needed in a job, and what talents to look for in a resume and in an interview.

Skills

Skills are the “how-tos” of a role, the capabilities that can be transferred from one person to another. The best way to teach a skill is to break down the total performance into steps, which the employee learns in order to reproduce the total performance. The best way to learn a skill is to practice. For example, a skill for a salesperson is the ability to close a sale.

Think about:

What is one of the skills you are looking for in a candidate right now?	• ...
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Knowledge

Knowledge is simply what you are aware of. There are two kinds of knowledge:

- Factual knowledge: things you know; it can and should be taught.
- Experiential knowledge: understandings you have picked up along the way. It is less tangible and harder to teach. It is primarily your responsibility to step back, review your experiences, and make sense of them. Some of these understandings are practical.

Factual knowledge for a salesperson is the features and benefits of your products. Experiential knowledge for a sales person may be the understanding that different types of customers have different buying patterns. Also, knowing how you come across and how and why someone is reacting to your selling helps to change your approach when needed.

Think about:

What is an example of factual knowledge in the job you are hiring for?	• ...
What is an example of experiential knowledge in the job you are hiring for?	• ...





Attitudes

A person's prevailing attitudes are part of his or her mental filter, and in this way, attitudes are talents. For example, it is more effective for a sales person to have a positive or optimistic attitude rather than a cynical or hopeless attitude. Examples of opposing attitudes are: positive or negative, service or self-oriented, cynical or trusting, optimistic or malcontent/fearful, experimental or conservative, competitive or collaborative. Is this a salesperson that is going to get the job done and make their quota? Or is this a person who will make excuses about why they are not making their quota? Is this a hardworking and engaged person who will take initiative and be able to work within our processes? Is this an organized intelligent salesperson with skill?

Think about:

What attitude will be useful for the job you are hiring for?	• ...
--	-------

Talents

Talents are the recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. For example, studies of great accountants show that one of their most important talents is a love of precision.

If you try to train for talent, as if it were a skill or knowledge, the trainee will only be able to apply it within those trained guidelines. The power of true talent is that it is transferable from situation to situation.

For example: you train a new salesperson in the skills and knowledge that they need to close a sale. As long as the customer sales stay within the guidelines covered in the training, they will perform acceptably well - but what happens when they are confronted by a customer question or concern they have never heard of?

If they have the relating talent of being committed to collaboration or "partnering with" versus 'winning' the client, they will perform well. Instinctively, they will find the right words and tone to respond in such a way that they make sure that the customer gets what they need, and bring home the sale.

Company-wide Recognized Talents and Skills

Everyone should pay attention to whether or not the candidates have these talents. Ask specific questions or look for cues throughout the process.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Accomplishes tasks with a concern for all areas involved, no matter how small. An ability to enjoy and accurately complete tasks requiring great precision or rigor.

QUALITY AND IMPACT OF WORK

Quality is a perceptual, conditional, and somewhat subjective attribute and may be understood differently by different people. What we define as quality is being able to count on people to get things done in an appropriate manner for specific projects. When an employee has the right skills and talent to execute good quality work, it has an overall positive impact on the department and the organization.





ADAPTABILITY

Being adaptable means being flexible in regards to structural and role changes, and how well a person responds to change overall.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Good organizational skills mean an ability to work competently on several different tasks or projects at the same time.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Strong communication skills help surface important issues, so there are no surprises. Identify the candidate's preferred form of communication and assess their communication skills.

Think about:

In addition to company-wide required skills and talents, what kind of additional talents and skills are you looking for?	• ...
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Sample Selection of Talents

- **Courage:** an ability to use emotion to overcome resistance.
- **Creativity:** an ability to devise unique approaches to performing tasks and solving problems.
- **Attention to detail:** an ability to enjoy and accurately complete tasks requiring precision.
- **Ethics:** a clear understanding of right and wrong, which guides your actions.
- **Fast work pace:** an ability to work competently at a fast pace.
- **Flexible:** ready capacity to adapt to a new, different, and changing requirements.
- **Focus:** an ability to set appropriate goals and to use them to guide actions.
- **Numerical:** an affinity for numbers.
- **Persuasion:** an ability to persuade others logically towards a course of action or to take a position.
- **Problem Solver:** an ability to think a situation through with incomplete data.
- **Relater:** an ability to have mutually beneficial relationships that last.
- **Multi-relater:** an ability to build an extensive network of mutually beneficial relationships.
- **Responsibility:** a need to assume personal accountability for your work.
- **Self-starter:** a willingness to accurately see what needs to be done and to do it without being directed to do so.
- **Service-oriented:** a drive to be of service to others.
- **Strategic thinking:** an ability to play out alternative scenarios in the future and choose the most viable.
- **Tactical thinking:** an ability to play out alternative scenarios and determine the most effective one; the capacity to think about the practical details needed to make something happen.
- **Task variety and organization:** an ability to work competently on several different tasks or projects at the same time.





- Team player: able to work with others in a setting of mutual support to produce an agreed upon product or service.
- Willing to learn: an ability to identify the new skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that are needed to competently deliver what is needed in a situation, and to quickly and enthusiastically find ways to learn it and follow through.
- Willing to work: an ability to define the task and results, as well as the resources needed in a certain situation, and to gather the necessary resources and to produce actions in self (and others) that will competently accomplish the task and deliver the results.

Competencies

Competencies are skills, knowledge, or talents (or a combination of all three) that are acknowledged for each candidate. However, these are generally lumped together without paying attention to which competencies can be taught and which are inherent. If you are going to look for specific competencies in a candidate, make it clear which are skills and knowledge that can be taught, and which are talents that cannot be taught.

For example, a skill competency for a salesperson that can be taught is "Use sales points and practices when calling a new client." A competency that is a talent is "remembering names and faces"—yes, you can teach this, but for talented individuals, it comes naturally.

An example of a competency that is both knowledge and talent is knowledge of the marketplace; some of it comes from experience, and some of it comes from the talent of grasping patterns and trends.

Are you working with any job competencies now? Can you sort them into skills, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and talents?

NOTE: None of this implies that a person cannot change. Everyone can change. Everyone can learn. Everyone can get a little better. But by separating the concepts of skills, knowledge, and talents, a manager can identify where radical change is possible and where it is not.

Know which talents you want:

1. Look beyond the job title and description. What is the culture of the company? Search for people who possess the talents you are looking for.
2. Think about how expectations will be set.
3. Think about your management style. What will mesh, and how closely the person will be supervised?
4. Think about the other people on the team. Think about the whole work environment that the person will have to fit into.
5. Study the people who are best in the job. For example, all salespeople feel as if they are selling themselves, but the difference in the best salespeople is the feeling of personal investment.

In the end, much of the secret to selecting talent lies in the art of interviewing.

Cultural Fit

You are assessing three important areas: do they have a potential for professional and personal growth, can they fit the company and the group culture, and can they support the direction of your company.

Personality assessment tools may be used, such as to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Inventory and the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator ("MBTI").





Do not overwhelm the candidate, and do not try to analyze him or her. It is not your job. However, you should watch for specific behaviors, and see if there is any strong reason to reject the candidate. Select the five most important selective questions that you think will reveal what you are looking for. Ask questions to your coworkers and see how they respond before asking them to candidates.

Think about:

What kind of behaviors would fit the company culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...• ...
What kind of behaviors would fit the group culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...• ...





Avoid Common Mistakes

Prepare questions for your interview that are fact-finding, hypothetical, behavioral, and business-based. Using the interview guidelines below will help you avoid many of the common selection problems that keep companies from hiring the best people.

Selection Mistakes

1. Interviewers miss important information when they fail to develop a complete picture of the candidate.
2. Interviewers neglect job fit by focusing only on skills, and overlooking motivation and talents.
3. Interviewers ask illegal and non-job related questions, which expose the company to lawsuits at the most, and waste the interviewee and interviewer's time at the least.
4. Multiple Interviewers' topic coverage overlaps. Candidates hear the same questions repeatedly and other areas get neglected.
5. Interviewers do not use the selection process in an organized manner, and end up interviewing individuals who should have been screened out of the process. Using different steps in the process for some candidates and not others can also put some of them at a disadvantage.
6. When interviewers talk too much, or are redundant, rude, or disorganized, candidates are put off and are wary of the job.
7. Interviewers classify people into stereotypes such as "the typical engineer" or "the college dropout," and may fail to see the effect these prejudices have on their decisions.
8. Interviewers take insufficient notes and "trust" too much in memory, which can be unreliable.
9. Interviewers misinterpret candidate information when they play amateur psychologist and guess at the meaning or motivation behind a candidates' job experience or interview responses.
10. Interviewers make snap judgments about applicants on the basis of a handshake, initial nervousness, or looks, and then ask questions that reinforce early snap decisions.
11. Interviewers allow one particularly strong or weak characteristic to influence their judgment about the individual as a whole.
12. Interviewers' hiring decisions are not systematic. When interviewers meet, they share impressions, but not the critical information that led to the impression, nor do they look for the gaps in the information.
13. Companies rely exclusively on interviews and don't use other information, such as reference checks.
14. Pressure to fill a position affects judgment when standards are lowered and interviewers rationalize their decisions.

Illegal Questions

We are committed to maintaining a diverse and discrimination-free workplace. In recruiting, hiring, developing, and promoting employees, all employment processes and decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or marital status.

All staff involved in the hiring process need to be aware of, and apply these principles, throughout the hiring process, regardless of the country they are located in.

U.S. federal, state, and local laws and regulations are also clear about what questions are illegal. If you are unsure about what questions you can and cannot ask, consult with the Personnel Department.





You should not ask about any of the following areas. Not hiring a candidate because of any one of these areas is discriminatory:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Birthplace
- Age
- Disability
- Marital or family status

For example:

Don't ask:	Instead ask what is relevant to the position:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old are you? When did you graduate from high school? • Are you married? Are you pregnant? or do you plan to be pregnant? Do you have children? • What is your citizenship? What country are you from? Where were you born? • What is your sexual orientation? • How tall are you? How much do you weigh? • Do you have any disabilities? Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? • Have you ever been arrested? • Would your religion prevent you from working on weekends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you over the age 18? • Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing to travel as needed for the job • Are you authorized to work in U.S.? What languages do you read, speak or write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.) • Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, if that is part of the job? • Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? • Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.) • This job requires overtime and working during the weekend occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime and during the weekend as necessary?





Decide on Your Interview Questions

When you draft your questions, refer back to your notes for “Hire For Talent” section and make sure you have the correct questions that will assess the talent you are looking for.

Who is the best candidate and how do we identify him or her?

The main purpose of the selection interview is to find out how well the candidate's experience, knowledge, skills, and talents match the requirements of the job. The interview also gives you an opportunity to inform the candidate about the job and behavior expectations, so that the candidate can, in turn, decide if the job is a suitable match for him or her.

Ask questions specific to your area of expertise, and determine their knowledge and experience level.

Review the job description ahead of time, and ask questions to identify their experience level on responsibilities in which you will be involved.

This is also the time to communicate the focus of the Company and its values, as well as the importance of the particular position the candidate hopes to fill.

You can find out the information you want through a combination of questions. The different types of questions are:

- Fact-finding
- Hypothetical
- Behavioral

Fact-Finding

These are simple questions that at times solicit a yes or no answer, and other times solicit an "essay form" answer. These questions go beyond the apparent match that may show up on the resume or in the initial screening call, and explores further the significance of his or her experience and education to the position.

You have reviewed the applicant's resume and have had the recruiter call the applicant; you may even have called the applicant yourself. If you have crucial things you need to know about the candidate's ability to do the job, issues that might immediately eliminate them can be:

- Whether the person is legally permitted to work in the United States
- Whether the person is able to travel (% of time)
- Whether the person is able to work on weekends
- Whether there would be any problems with getting bonded and fingerprinted
- Whether there are feasible reasons for overlaps, inconsistencies, or gaps in employment
- Whether the candidate actually has the crucial experience or education

It is useful to ask these questions in an initial screening call, before you go through the effort of an interview. As long as these questions are legally phrased and there is a business reason for asking them, they should be part of the initial screening call. You and other members of the hiring process can decide on the questions and who will ask them ahead of time.





Note: Each candidate must be asked the same questions in order to comply with anti-discrimination laws.

During the interview, you will want to ask more factual questions about aspects of the applicant's knowledge, skills, experience that are crucial to the competent performance of the job.

Because of the initial screening call, some of your fact-finding questions may have already been answered. After the initial greeting and small talk, it is suggested that you continue the factual questions as applicants can answer them more easily, and it helps them warm up. In addition, applicant's answers to factual questions provide a more effective basis for analyzing their responses to hypothetical or behavioral questions later in the interview.

Probe any gaps in the career history, changes in career direction, or frequent changes of job and reasons for leaving. It is suggested to ask the candidate to start from past to recent and tell you about their job experience. It will also give you an idea of their career development, and how and why they move from one job to another.

Fact-finding questions should be clear and brief. Sometimes, it is helpful to tell the candidate why you are asking the question. For example: "This job requires you to have some experience selling a service, versus a product. Have you had any experience selling a service before? If yes, what was it? Have you ever had any training in selling services? If yes, tell me a little about the training, and what you learned."

Some general questions that you might want to tailor for a position:

- What an applicant actually did in his or her last position, and the reasons for leaving this or other jobs.
- What the applicant learned in previous jobs or in training programs.
- Whether any previous jobs have prepared the applicant for this position.

Look again at your job description, review the applicant's resume, and think about the contribution the candidate will have to make, and the results the candidate will have to produce in the new position. Your fact-finding questions should be based on whether the applicant matches crucial requirements for the job.

In thinking about the position you are now hiring for:

Identify one to three fact-finding questions that would give you specific information that is crucial to the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
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Hypothetical

Here's an example of a short vignette for a sales candidate.

- You are out in the field, and you have an appointment to see a current customer to talk about upgrading their service. They tell you right away that they are interested in buying the service that a services engineer had just told them about. You have not heard about this service yet, what would you do?





"Great applicant" answer:

- I would reaffirm that the Company is always updating services because they are so customer-oriented, and I would express enthusiasm about their interest, and ask a few questions about their understanding of the service and how they think it would help them.
I would check with them about whether they would like me to check on that service immediately, or whether they would like to continue with our planned discussion. If the former, and it was during the Company's regular office hours, I would call in and see what the service is about, and when it is going to be available. I would first call you, my supervisor, and if you weren't available, then I would ask to speak to the Vice President of Engineering, the Marketing Director, or the Director of Customer Service. If no one is available, or if the client said that it could wait, I would give the client a time when I would get back to him. I would then find out as much information as soon as possible and get back to him.

"Good enough" answer:

- I would make a joke with the client to smooth things over, about being a salesman out in the world with a fast-paced company and how everything changes when you are away. Then I would tell the client that I would find out about the service and get back to him. Then, I would try to start the meeting that we had planned.

Can you see the differences in the two answers? What "talents" differentiate the two candidates?

Think of a situation in your department that your "not yet hired" employee would have to face competently.
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Vignette Situation:

Write it in a few short clear sentences:	...
What kind of answers would the applicant you're looking for give?	...

Using vignettes are particularly helpful when two candidates seem to be equally qualified.





Other Examples:

Different questions based on seniority. Junior level position with no experience will be asked different questions than a management level or senior level position.

Management:

- You are working on a major project and the requirements are not finalized. You have some ideas about how you would like to proceed, but your manager is not available to give you the needed feedback. Either he or she is extremely busy or on a business trip. As a company policy, you have to get the document approved first, and you have a deadline to meet. What would you do?
- You have gathered information from your team members to finalize your project. While you are presenting the work to your manager, you suddenly realize that one of your team members gave you incorrect information, which effects a big portion of the project. The error almost ruins the end result. Your team member had said that he or she was confident about the information, and you had trusted his or her word without reviewing the information for accuracy. What would you do?
- You had a long meeting with your manager, and agreed on a plan for how to proceed with a project. You already begin executing the plan, but a week later, your manager decided to implement a different plan. You do not agree that the new plan is a good idea. You also feel frustrated because you had already spent a lot of time on the project and you don't understand why you weren't told about the change in plans earlier. What would you tell your manager?

Administration:

- You arranged a trip for the CEO to meet a customer. The CEO is driving to the customer's office and is almost there. Fifteen minutes prior to the meeting time, you realize that you had given him the wrong address, and that the meeting location is in another city 2 hours away. What would you do?

Behavioral

There are two premises for behavioral questions:

1. Past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior; that is, the direction the candidate takes spontaneously will be the most predictive of future behaviors.
2. The "top of mind" response gives you an insight into an individual's talents; an individual tends to remember what is recurring behavior, and recurring behavior is reflective of talent.

Clues to talent can be found in the answers to the specific questions.

- Rapid learning is an important clue to a person's talent.
 - **Fact-finding Question:** What job activities are the easiest to do? What kind of roles have you been able to learn quickly?
A great salesperson might tell you that he or she very quickly learned the steps of selling from opening to closing and has been able to make them very personable so that they stay fresh and client-centered.
 - **Behavioral Question Follow-Up:** Tell me about a time when you learned something you needed to know for your job very quickly.
- What is fulfilling or satisfying on the job is a clue to a person's talent.
 - **Fact-finding Question:** What part(s) of the job do you find most satisfying?
A great salesperson might tell you that they get a kick out of turning a no into a yes.
 - **Behavioral Question Follow-Up:** Tell me about a time recently when you found your work fulfilling or satisfying.





- The extent to which a person uses and trusts their instinct is a clue to talent.
 - **Fact-finding Question:** How often do you use “gut instinct” when working with a client?
A great sales person might tell you that they have learned to use it all the time when they are with a client.
 - **Behavioral Question Follow-Up:** Tell me about a recent time when you were with a client and relied heavily on your gut instinct.

If you ask a behavioral question following these fact-finding questions you have a chance for the applicant to reveal how he uses his talents on a daily basis.

When you ask a behavioral question (Tell me about a time when you...?) be sure to listen for the situation or task, action, and result. You want to make sure you are getting the whole story and not just an opinion, a vague statement, or a future-oriented statement.

Behavioral Question: Tell me about a time when you learned something you needed to know for your job very quickly.

Situation of Task: The background or context in which the candidate took action:

In my second sales job, I found that I had to make professional presentations by actually showing and explaining the technologies that we were offering to our clients, and I had to integrate this in with Power Point slides that highlighted the company's client service strategy and presented data on how quickly customers could get questions answered and technical assistance.

Action: What a candidate did or said in response to a situation, and how he or she did it, shows us the behaviors we are looking for.

I realized that I needed to learn the technology quickly and I needed to find someone within the sales force who was already doing this well to apprentice with. I signed up and took courses in Power Point and Java, and I asked my boss who on the sales staff was particularly good at these presentations. I then approached Sanjay, the sales person he had suggested, and asked him to work with me on developing my own presentation. He agreed, and also referred me to Natasha, the engineer who had taken the time to explain the technology to him and who kept him up to date on any changes.

Result: The effect of the candidate's actions tell us what changes or differences the person's actions made, if any, and whether those actions were effective and appropriate.

I was initially worried that I would not be able to work with the technology aspect and that it would interfere with my personal “partnering” style with a customer, but I found that it was easy to learn and it made sense. I liked having the data right at my fingertips, my clients definitely liked it, and I was able to integrate the technology very quickly into my more personal approach.

During Behavioral Questioning you are focused on whether the candidate identifies the situation or task, the action he or she took, and the results of the action.

Your note taking here is very helpful. You might even have a small grid that you draw ahead of time.

In thinking about the position you are now hiring for:

Identify one to three behavioral questions independently or follow up to fact-finding questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
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Question and Answer Examples:

Question: Tell me about a time when you received resistance to a good idea.			
Example	Situation	Action	Results
1. A few months back, I proposed a new sales strategy that I found worked with most of my customers, but no one would listen to me.	✓		
2. So I took the time to track my sales for three months before I started using this new strategy, and compared it to the two months after I started to use it. My sales had really improved.		✓	
3. When I presented this data in the next staff meeting, several of my colleagues expressed interest in trying it and asked me more details about how I did it.			✓

Template table:

Question: [Insert your Question here]			
Example	Situation	Action	Results





Example Questions

Some example questions to help you decide what to ask.

There should be different questions based on seniority. Junior level position with no experience will be asked different questions than a management level or senior level position.

1. Tell me about yourself.

One of the most often asked question in interviews. This looks like a simple question, but will give you great deal of information about the candidate. Candidates might look surprised and mumble for a little bit or might have a short statement prepared in mind which may sound rehearsed. In both cases, be curious and ask more questions. You can pick a work-related area of your interest and say, "that sounds interesting, could you please tell me more?" You will get the best answer after they are actually relaxed and start answering the question, instead of repeating their elevator talk.

2. What do you know about [your company]?

This question is to assess if they did some research before the interview. It also shows their interest level. If they are farther along in the hiring process, had passed phone screening, and had a number of interviews already, ask them about their impressions.

- What was your first impression of the position and the Company when you saw the job posting, and has your impressions changed since then? In which way?
- What are your impressions about [your company] so far?
- After interviews, have your understanding of the position and the company changed, in what way?
- With what you know about [your company] so far, why would you still leave your current position and why?

3. Why would you want to work for [your company]?

4. Explain how you would be an asset to this organization.

Pay attention to whether or not they sound enthusiastic. Make eye contact.

5. Why should we hire you?

If you didn't get a good sense of their understanding and enthusiasm, you can ask this question close to the end.

6. What experience do you have in this field? Based on your past experience why would you be a right fit for this position?

Develop follow up questions to see if the person has the right experience to perform the job. Review the resume ahead of time, and ask specific questions about their prior experience. Will they qualify for future projects and ideas for the department and the organization? Will they be able to learn and improve themselves to grow with the company? For example, for a marketing position, if they mention working on a website and you know one of the next projects is redesigning the website, ask them how they would improve it.





7. **The role requires some flexibility in working hours and location, would that be a problem?**
Roles such as IT may require that. Be careful though, as this question could be discriminatory if asked to one gender only.
8. **Are you willing to travel?**
Ask this question only if it is a job requirement. Sales persons or Services Engineers may be required to travel up to 40% or 50% of the time, for instance.
9. **How do you define success and do you consider yourself successful?**
They will most probably say “yes.” A good explanation that candidates usually use is that they have set goals, and they have met some and are on track to achieve the others. Ask them to give an example. It will help you to get to know the candidate better.
10. **What do your co-workers say about you?**
They might be prepared with a quote or two from co-workers: either a specific statement or a paraphrase would work. Follow up question: What would your co-workers say they would want you to improve?
11. **What have you done to improve your knowledge in your field in the last year?**
If they don't know, and look unsure, ask them what they plan to learn and improve in the next year and why.
12. **What are your salary requirements?**
Give them the range if they ask for it or if they don't know. You can say: If everything about the Company and the position seems right for you, would you accept this position if the salary range was between X and Y. Also explain to them briefly the bonus system and percentages.
13. **Can you give me an example of the most effective team and committee you have been a part of? What were the factors or skills that made it effective?**
If you ask someone if they are a team player, of course they will say yes, because who would say no? With this question we are trying to understand their behavior in groups and what kind of behavior they have learned that helps with teamwork.
14. **How long would you expect to work for us if hired?**
Tell them we are looking for someone for long term. We invest in our employees. We are committed to them and we expect the same from them.
15. **Did you have a reporting staff?**
16. **Have you ever had to fire anyone? How did you feel about that?**
See if they were sensible and logical.
17. **What does it mean to you to be a (manager, director, vice president, or chief officer)?**





18. **How would you describe your management style?**
19. **Describe a management style you exhibit and prefer.**
20. **What qualities do you look for in a boss?**
If they are giving too generic an answer, ask them to give an example.
21. **What kind of qualities do you look for in your team?**
Ask this if they are being interviewed for a management level position.
22. **What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?**
This question is good if you are hiring a team member. It will help you to figure out how to position them in the group, and if they fit the current need in the group.
23. **What irritates you about co-workers?**
24. **What kind of company culture would you avoid getting into and why?**
25. **Describe your preferred work environment. What must exist in your workplace for you to be happy and motivated?**
26. **What is your greatest strength?**
27. **What is your philosophy towards work? What does work-life balance mean to you?**
We like hardworking employees, and we also encourage work-life balance. This question is to assess their preference in life currently.
28. **Have you ever been asked to leave a position?**
This is a sensitive question, but a good one. You don't have to look sentimental or understanding. You are not there to validate or share a person's feelings. Be natural and just ask the question. This is a normal thing, and could happen to anyone.
29. **Tell me about your dream job.**
30. **What are you looking for in a job?**
31. **Why do you think you would do well at this job?**
Give several reasons and include skills, experience and interest.
32. **What kind of person would you refuse to work with?**
33. **What would your previous supervisor say your strongest point is?**
There are numerous good possibilities they will say: Loyalty, Energy, Positive attitude, Leadership, Team player, Expertise, Initiative, Patience, Hard work, Creativity, Problem solver. Ask for an example. Why do you think they would say that? Could you give me an example?





34. **Tell me about a problem you had with a supervisor?**
35. **Describe your work ethic.**
Statements about their determination to get the job done and work hard while enjoying the work are good but cliché. See if they can say something else. Ask them to tell you more.
36. **What has disappointed you about a job?**
This question can reveal their work ethic. It is good to know what they wouldn't stand for.
37. **Tell me about your ability to work under pressure.**
You can also ask if they prefer a high-pressure or relaxed environment. In which environment would they perform better? Do they prefer deadline-driven or no deadlines?
38. **What motivates you to do your best on the job?**
They might be too general and say recognition, challenge, and etc. In that case, you can ask the next question as a good follow up question.
39. **Could you give me an example for when you felt most involved and excited about your job and why?**
This question may reveal what motivates the person most and what they thrive for to stay engaged with their jobs.
40. **In your previous position, what do you consider your greatest accomplishment?**
This may reveal how they define success.
41. **Describe challenges you have faced and how you have dealt with them.**
This question may reveal their problem solving skills, the approach they use, what they are proud of about themselves.
42. **Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.**
This question will give information about their problem solving technique and how they view disputes.
43. **What has been your biggest professional disappointment?**
See if they show acceptance or negative feelings. It is important to be able to acknowledge that disappointments are a learning opportunity; it shows maturity.
44. **Would you be willing to relocate if required?**
If the position requires them to relocate, you must ask this question. They might have family or other kind of reason not to relocate. You don't want to be surprised later.
45. **What did you learn about yourself from your current or previous work experience?**
Every experience is a learning opportunity. It is important to learn the lesson before moving on. The response should help you to see if the candidate is a person who moves from one job to another just to repeat the same mistake, or if they are actually learning in the process.





46. What have you learned from mistakes on the job?

Compared to the previous question, this one is more generic. This question may reveal how they define a mistake.

47. If you were hiring a person for this job, what would you look for?

48. Do you think you are overqualified for this position?

Ask this question if you think they are clearly overqualified. A nice follow up question could be: "What motivated you to apply for this position, if you think you are overqualified?" if they haven't already explained it.

49. How do you propose to compensate for your lack of experience?

You might run into a candidate that lacks experience when you are interviewing for a junior level position. Probably they will be prepared to answer this question, saying that they are a hard worker and a quick learner. Don't ask this question unless you have a specific reason in mind, such as they will be required to take a class or learn specific material, and ask if he or she is willing to do that.

50. Do you have any other applications in the pipeline? What are the circumstances?

51. When will you be available to start work?

52. Do you have any questions for me?

Ask them if they need any clarification. If they don't have additional questions, conclude the meeting and make sure to let them know about the next step.





So There Are Fewer Surprises

These are some things to know about your company that are worth mentioning to job candidates. You want to be as candid as possible with candidates so they know what to expect if they join and there are no surprises. When mentioning these points, observe how the candidates react to them. There are certain things that you can change, but there are others that you can't or won't change anytime soon. The candidates need to know what they are getting into, and you need to know that they are willingly doing so.

They should only join the company if there is a match. Since candidates know themselves, if you are honest about who you are and how you operate, you give them the opportunity to make the judgment of whether he or she is a good fit. When interviewing, always be honest with the candidate and never present the company as how you would like it to be.

One example: imagine you are a small company but still have structure, and certain procedures to follow. If the candidate wants to join [your company] because they assume because of your company size there is no structure and that they can do whatever they want, perhaps like other companies they have worked for, correct them, and say that we do have our systems and a structure that all employees have to follow.

Write a list of things about your company that may be worth mentioning, if it comes up.

Examples:

- Our CEO is hands on and detail oriented. He has some involvement in every department and he likes to give feedback.
- Although you will be a member of the [Department Name] department, you will work closely with [give names and titles.] [Arrange a meeting, if it wasn't arranged.]
- Sometimes meetings take a bit longer than scheduled.
- Impromptu meetings may occur.

Now think of yours:

-
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Candidate Assessment

You can choose whether or not to make notes for each question, but in the end you need to write your overall impression of the candidate. Be as specific as possible for why you think he or she would be a good candidate or not. Make sure to specify your confidence level. Don't assume you will remember your impressions later; write them down as soon as possible after the conclusion of your interview.





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Decision

Everyone involved in the hiring process needs to meet and discuss each candidate. If at least 2 people have an objection to a candidate, it is recommended to pass on that candidate. Don't hire if you are not sure. It is more expensive hiring the wrong fit rather than continuing your search. Remember, by hiring the wrong fit, you are wasting both your and the candidate's time. **Don't hire a person because you are tired of looking—wait to hire the right person.**

Resources

Sharon Mulgrew, Integration Strategies, Net Gain Hiring Top Talent

Excerpt from the book The Accelerated Job Search by Wayne D. Ford, Ph.D, published by The Management Advantage, Inc.: <http://bhuvans.wordpress.com/2006/08/19/50-common-interview-qa/>

NOTES:

