

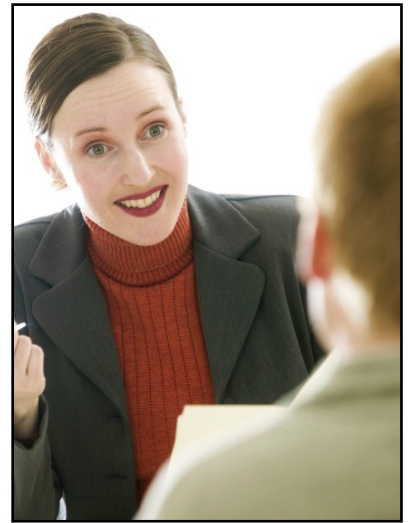
HOW TO INTERVIEW CANDIDATES

Questions To Ask Candidates

Interviewing is not an easy task. Here are a few sample questions that have been developed by a psychologist in the search business. These questions are designed to elicit information about the candidate and his/her experience, and help determine how that person will fit into a particular company or position.

These are open-ended questions. They can't be answered "yes" or "no."

1. What was your early life like? How do you think it has affected you?
2. Where did you go to school and why?
3. What kind of student were you in school?
4. What do you feel you got out of school?
5. Where did you work? What were your responsibilities? Your accomplishments? What lessons did you learn? What did you move from/to in each position?
6. Why were you successful (or unsuccessful) at each position?
7. What have you done that makes you feel most proud? Least proud?
8. Describe your management style. How does it differ from that of your boss?
9. Describe the ideal boss. What skills does your current boss have that you want to learn or emulate?
10. Describe your current position. What are your responsibilities and accomplishments? Would you draw your organizational chart?
11. Describe your current corporate culture.
12. Tell me about your ideal job: What would you like to do? For whom? What type of management? What would be your compensation?
13. What are your greatest strengths? Name your top three assets. What about your weaknesses? Is there a strength you use to excess?
14. What is a common misperception about you?
15. Do you have greater insight into yourself or others?
16. What type of job do you want to avoid?
17. What is your current compensation? How do you feel this compares to your peers? Who are your peers?
18. Why did you choose (sales, engineering, personnel, etc.) as your career?
19. What is the biggest mistake you ever made in business? How did you solve it?
20. What is the biggest risk you ever took in business? Was it successful? If so, why? If not, why not?



21. What is the biggest problem you have now, or have had in the past, with a peer? With a boss? How was each problem resolved?
 22. What three adjectives would your boss use to describe you? What three would peers use? Subordinates? Your spouse or “significant other”?
 23. If you had \$10,000 to use solely on your own development, what would you do?
 24. What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?
 25. What are the key requirements for a successful executive? Specifically, what are the requirements within your company?
 26. What do you think about how your industry is operating today? What direction do you think it should take?
 27. What interests you about your company’s product or services?
 28. What do you feel determines a person’s success?
 29. What advice would you give your child or someone else’s child about business?
 30. How hard do you work?
 31. How will you know when you’ve been successful?
 32. Where do you get your drive?
 33. What periodicals do you routinely read? What did you think about the recent cover story in _____?
 34. How do you reward yourself?
 35. Outside of work, what gives you the most satisfaction?
 36. What is your mission? How are you accomplishing that? What have been the results?
 37. How do you feel after you have accomplished a goal?
 38. How did you increase sales, profits, design that part, etc.?
 39. What frustrations or problems do you face in your current position?
 40. What limitations have you overcome, and how?
 41. When you assumed your last job, what goals, ambitions, and concerns did you have in mind?
 42. Are there any questions that you’d like to ask?
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Other Ideas

Preparation: You will be at an obvious disadvantage without some fairly comprehensive knowledge of the applicant’s qualifications prior to the interview. With preparation, your line of questioning can be thought out ahead of time and based on the particulars of his/her experience.

Privacy: Unless some unforeseen contingency arises that must be immediately resolved, courtesy dictates that your interview must not be interrupted.

Avoid a Hasty First Impression: Consider the first few moments as a warm-up period and avoid the temptation of forming a quick impression, positive or negative.

Maintaining Control: Do not let go of the reins. Skilled interviewees will adroitly “steer” the interviewer with wide ranging questions on company policy, products, etc. This is acceptable, and expected within limits, but chances for a penetrating, revealing interview of the candidates are smothered in the process.

Job Definition: Avoid any gray areas by making the job description as clear as possible. Realistically define the paths of upward mobility that can lead to increased responsibility based on merit. **Be very careful not to oversell**, as this can lead to discontent and turnover at a later date if expectations are raised and not met.

Identify the Real Applicant: There are “two” candidates present in most interviews . . . the “real” applicant and the role playing his/her perception of what you are looking for in the ideal candidate. Naturally every candidate wants to appear in the most favorable light. You must, however, distinguish between the real and the make believe. To do this, **use open-ended questions and focus on two primary areas**—attitudes toward work and attitudes toward people.

Don't Get Lost in the Details: Matching technical experience to job technical specifications is the easy part. The most difficult, and most important, calls for matching the attitude and personality of the individual with the job atmosphere and corporate culture of your organization. It calls for an appreciation of the intangibles of the individual and an empathy for the often delicate nuances of the job. **Look at the whole picture.**

Sell the Position: Most interviewers are so intent on evaluating the candidate that they fail to sell the positive aspects of the position and company. To maximize results, determine what the candidate hopes to obtain in a position and realistically emphasize the benefits your company has to offer in relation to those desires. Different perks appeal to different people. **Personalize the interview as much as possible.**

Be Friendly But Non-committal: Explain the next step in the interviewing process. How many other applicants are being considered? Will there be a second interview? When is the position expected to be filled? If the applicant is not selected, will he/she be contacted regarding future opportunities? Guard against giving the applicant the idea that he/she has made an extremely favorable impression, even by implication. If there is an interest, let the candidate know, but leave a way to gracefully back out in case a later prospect is far more qualified.

Decisive Action: Delays stretching out the hiring process have cost many companies prime employees. Keep the length and number of interviews consistent with the level of responsibility under consideration. Keep in touch with the candidate during the decision period to show your continued interest. Above all, **keep your commitments!** Nothing turns a candidate off faster than promises not kept.

When it makes good business sense to use SEARCH to find that special person, please call us. You won't be disappointed.

“I won't send you anyone I wouldn't hire myself.”

Dick Williams - Founded in 1988 by Dick Williams - semiconductor executive bringing firsthand experience to the search process - is well versed in areas of capital equipment, instrumentation, materials and chemicals. As a president, sales and marketing vice-president and an operations director and one-time job seeker, Dick understands recruitment from the candidate's point of view.



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