



TOP 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HIRING MANAGERS MUST ASK

Hiring the right person is a challenge for most busy managers and business owners. For many, the core competencies of recruitment, interviewing, and retention are unfamiliar and even uncomfortable terrain.

Once you have a defined position description, and have established written performance benchmarks for the position, you are ready to recruit. No matter how you source candidates, you must conduct a meaningful interview process. Prior to conducting interviews, develop a targeted list of questions to help you gauge the potential fit of each candidate. If you find yourself wondering how to develop that list of questions, read on, as the following will help you to demystify this important step in the hiring process.

To be effective in the interview, all questions must relate to the candidate's ability to perform the job well. Sounds obvious, right? In reality, many job interviews are focused on whether or not the hiring manager likes the candidate. Many hires are made on positive impressions of liking the individual, bonding over similar interests, or having a similar sense of humor. While these things might form the basis of a friendship, they have little to do with the candidate's ability to excel in the position offered. The following are sample questions that will reveal skills, traits, and a potential fit in the culture of your organization.

DEFINE THE SKILLS YOU NEED

What are the top 4 – 6 skills that are required to be successful in the job? Be realistic about the scope of duties, and look for related skills. Here is a sample skill set for an entry level position:

- Customer Service
- Database Management
- Organizational Skills
- Excel Spreadsheets
- Telephone Skills

DEFINE THE QUALITIES & TRAITS

It is important to think not only about today's tasks, but also about future roles and responsibilities. Look for these traits in candidates you can hire and develop:

- Love of the business or industry
- High energy level
- Inquisitive/love of learning
- High integrity
- Sense of urgency

TOP 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) What was your favorite job thus far? Why?
- 2) What is your proudest career accomplishment to date?
- 3) Who was your favorite boss thus far? Why?
- 4) What kind of customers do you find most difficult to work with? How do you handle them?
- 5) What are the top three things you are looking for in your next job?
- 6) How would you handle multiple priorities with the same deadline?
- 7) Describe your 3 most important work-related values, and provide an example of how you operate from those values. (example: integrity or customer-focus)
- 8) Describe a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker and tell how you were able to resolve that.
- 9) How would your next boss best motivate and manage you?
- 10) What do you consider your top 3 strengths or job-related skills? Give an example of how you used those skills in your most recent position.

There are several key things that you should look for in listening to the responses to these questions:

- candidate responds to the question, rather than telling a story that “sells you”
- brief and relevant answers, without rambling
- positive attitude, even when describing conflict or challenge
- lack of anger or bitterness toward previous employers
- self-awareness and knowledge of skills and traits
- ability to articulate concepts and situations
- genuine interest in the position you offer

The questions listed are a starting point; craft your own questions that relate to the specifics of your organization and the job. The responses to these questions and similar ones will reveal the true strengths, interests, values, and maturity level of the candidate. Similarly, these questions will reveal candidate flaws such as a lack of insight into others, poor critical thinking skills, lack of motivation, unrealistic job expectations, or poor communication skills.

Take notes during the interview so you can review them after hearing the candidate’s responses. Develop follow up questions to clarify information or clear up concerns. If you get “red flags” in any area, you must pay attention to that. For instance, the candidate who is angry at the past 3 employers is not likely to fare any better with your company. If you uncover such issues, take a pass on that candidate, and keep looking!

Given the high costs of turnover, it pays many times over to invest in hiring the right person the first time. By breaking down the hiring process into manageable steps you will dramatically improve your hiring practices and ensure that you attract the highest caliber candidates.

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