

## Sample Interviews

Interviewing candidates is never easy. How can a company truly get to know a candidate's potential – including experience, attitude, skills, challenges, and ability to “fit” with your current team – in the short timeframe and formalized setting of a job interview?

The fact is, effective interviewing is both an art and science. It requires preparation of well-framed questions, as well as good listening skills. It also requires practice. You may have to interview a number of people before you truly feel confident in your technique.

A good rule of thumb when interviewing is the 80/20 rule. As the interviewer, you'll want to speak (asking questions, describing the company or job, etc.) only about 20% of the time. This leaves 80% of the time for getting to know the candidate. If you're talking more than 20% of the time, you'll lose valuable time during which you could be getting to know the candidate.

As the candidate is speaking, be careful not to comment or editorialize on his/her answers. Don't show signs of agreement, disagreement, and don't express your own values. Your job is simple: to listen.

The following are some sample interview questions, including many open-ended questions designed to encourage a candidate to talk...thereby providing you with the information you need to make a good hiring decision.

### **Enthusiasm/Interest in Available Position**

What made you interested in working for our company?

Where did you hear about this position?

What about the current position particularly appeals to you?

How familiar are you with what our company does? Can you describe our business?

What do you feel you can bring to our company in this position?

How do you feel about relocating or commuting for this job?

### **Current/Most Recent Position**

Please describe your current/most recent position. What were your specific responsibilities?

What do you enjoy most about your current/last job?

What do you enjoy least about your current/last job?

Describe a typical day in this position.

What have you learned in your current/most recent position?

Why are you seeking a job change at this time?

Tell me about an accomplishment of which you are particularly proud. What did you do, and how did it impact the company?

### **Skills**

Describe a situation you've faced, which you considered especially challenging. How did you handle it?

What is your experience in [writing reports, account development, customer service, etc.]?

What are your strongest points in a work setting?

What are your weakest points? How do these impact your work?

How do you go about learning a new skill?

### **Supervisory/Management Experience**

What kind of supervision of other workers have you been responsible for? Describe.

How would you describe your management style?

How did the people you supervised react to you?

Describe an experience in which you feel you could have been more effective as a supervisor. What would you do differently today?

What do you feel makes a meeting effective? How do you organize/run meetings?

What types of employees cause the most problems for you? With what types of employees do you get along best?

How do you think your employees would describe you? Do you think their perception is fair?

What was your employee turnover? Why do you think this was the case?

Have you ever been faced with low employee morale? Describe, and tell me what you did about it.

### **Work Style**

What type of work environment do you prefer? Why?

How would you describe your work style?

What kinds of work do you particularly enjoy?

Describe your ideal position/job.

What types of interactions do you have/have you had with your co-workers?

What is your experience working in groups?

How do you feel your co-workers would describe you?

### **Scenarios**

Tell me about a time when you:

- Worked effectively under pressure.
- Missed a solution to a problem that later seemed obvious.
- Were unable to complete a project on time.
- Persuaded team members to do things your way.
- Had to make an important decision with limited facts.
- Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
- Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
- Had to deal with an irate individual.
- Delegated a project effectively.
- Surmounted a major obstacle.
- Set your sights too high (or too low)
- Made a bad decision.
- Lost or won an important contract.
- Influenced employee morale.

### **Expectations**

What are your salary expectations?

If you were offered a position, how soon would you be available to begin working?

### **Objectives**

What are your specific goals for your next job?

Describe some of your long-term career objectives.

What kinds of professional organizations do you belong to? Why?

Have you ever turned down a good job? Why?

**General**

Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the position for which we are interviewing? Please describe it, according to your understanding.

Do you have any questions for me before I have you meet with \_\_\_\_\_?