

interview questions & assessment

1. Pre-Interview

Recruitment = the key to YOUR success

The difference between two very similar companies, with similar or the same offerings may be the core point of difference which creates profit = people.

You can only afford to recruit A players. You cannot afford to do average in anything when it comes to your recruits.

- 1.1 When hiring employees use **multiple interviews** and use consistent criteria
- 1.2 Interview in different **environments**
- 1.3 Interview over the **telephone**
- 1.4 For key employees interview **spouse and family**
- 1.5 For key employees consider using **industrial psychologists**
- 1.6 Have the candidate **describe the job in writing**
- 1.7 Have a **written contract** ready at time of recruitment
- 1.8 What is the **first word** that came into your head when you first met them? After the interview have you changed your mind?
- 1.9 Interview the candidate in **different a atmosphere** ie: first show a very professional approach where they will show you their 'interview' character, then interview them in a less formal way, making them feel relaxed you may see a different person!
- 1.10 Have as **many people involved** in the interview process as possible, look at academic, cultural, strategic and future planning fit. Not just what is written in the CV
- 1.11 On second interview create **structured scenarios** which relate to the candidates role.
- 1.12 When completing the interview Assessment form during your interviewing process, it is import to **LISTEN** to the candidate, make sure that you do not spend too much time writing notes and 'missing' what the candidate is telling you.

2. During the Interview

2.1 Opening the Interview

- 2.1.1 **Welcome** candidate and put them at ease - **introduce yourselves!**
- 2.1.2 Remind them of **the role**. Explain **purpose and format** of Competency Based Interview
 - 45 min – 1 hour duration
 - questions on a number of competences that relate to core skills and behaviours identified for the role
 - roles played by questioner and assessor/scribe
- 2.1.3 **Be professional and polite** throughout - use appropriate humour if it helps put them at ease
- 2.1.4 Ask them to listen carefully and **seek clarification** if required



- 2.1.5 Emphasise that we are looking for **specific examples** from their own personal experience
- 2.1.6 Explain that they can use **situations from outside work/hobbies or courses** if they can't think of an example
- 2.1.7 Start the questions with a **warm up section** to ease candidates into the interview - you will be probing various aspects of their working life throughout the interview so this section should not take longer than a few minutes. You may wish to include the following:
 - Please briefly **describe** your **current role and responsibilities**.
 - What do you **enjoy most** about your current / most recent role?
 - What do you **enjoy least** about your current / most recent role?
 - What are the **major challenges** in your current / most recent role?
 - What made you **apply for this position**?
 - How did you **hear about this job** opening?
 - Briefly, would you **summarize your work history & education** for me?

2.2 During The Interview

- Use suggested questions but you may wish to **rephrase** rather than read them verbatim
- **Listen** carefully to responses - funnel, probe and summarise
- If you have gained enough evidence on one Competence and time is short, move on to next one
 - This is referred to as the **'acid test of hiring'** approximately 10-15 minutes into the interview, ask yourself, 'How would I feel if this person were working for my competitor'?
 - Say something to them that you feel may **make them angry, see how they react**, push them a little to give you a guideline on how they handle themselves in an uncomfortable position.
 - Use a **score system** instead of writing everything they say, ie: 1 – great answer 2 – good answer 3 – bad answer, you do not always need to remember what was said just whether, at the time you were happy with the reply. This way if you look down the assessment form and see lots of '3' answers, do not give them a second interview!!!!

Question Databank

I. Work history

- What **special aspects** of your work experience have prepared you for this job?
- Can you describe for me one or two of your most **important accomplishments**?
- How much **supervision** have you typically received in your previous job?
- Describe for me one or two of the **biggest disappointments** in your work history?
- Why are you **leaving your present job**? (or, Why did you leave your last job?)
- What is **important to you in a company**? What things do you look for in an organization?



II. Job performance

- Everyone has strengths & weaknesses as workers. What are your **strong points** for this job?
- What would you say are areas **needing improvement**?
- How did your supervisor on your most recent job **evaluate your job performance**? What were some of the good points & bad points of that rating?
- When you have been told, or discovered for yourself, a **problem in your job performance**, what have you typically done? Can you give me an example?
- Do you prefer working **alone or in groups**?
- What kind of **people** do you find it most **difficult** to work with? Why?
- Starting with your last job, tell me about any of your **achievements** that were recognized by your superiors.
- Can you give me an example of your ability to **manage or supervise others**?
- What are some things you would like to **avoid** in a job? Why?
- In your previous job what kind of **pressures** did you encounter?
- What would you say is the most **important thing** you are looking for in a job?
- What are some of the things on your job you feel you **have done particularly well** or in which you have achieved the greatest success? Why do you feel this way?
- What were some of the things about your last job that you **found most difficult** to do?
- What are some of **the problems you encounter** in doing your job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?
- What are some things you **particularly liked** about your last job?
- Do you consider your **progress** on the job representative of your ability? Why?
- How do you feel about the way you & others in the department were **managed by your supervisor**?
- If I were to ask your present (most recent) employer about your ability as a _____, what would he/she say?

III. EDUCATION

- What special aspects of your **education or training** have prepared you for this job?
- What **courses in school** have been of most help in doing your job?

IV. CAREER- GOALS

- What is your **long-term employment** or career objective?
- What kind of job do you see yourself holding **five years from now**?
- What do you feel you need to develop in terms of **skill & knowledge** in order to be ready for that opportunity?
 - Why might you **be successful in such a job**?
 - How does this job fit in with your **overall career goals**?



- Who or what in your life would you say **influenced** you most with your career objectives?
- Can you pinpoint any specific things in your **past experience** that affected your present career objectives?
- What would you most like to **accomplish** if you had this job?
- What might make you **leave** this job?

V. SELF-ASSESSMENT

- What kind of things do you feel most **confident** in doing?
- Can you describe for me a difficult **obstacle** you have had to overcome? How did you handle it? How do you feel this experience affected your personality or ability?
- How would you **describe yourself** as a person?
- What do you think are the most important **characteristics & abilities** a person must possess **to become a successful** ()? How do you rate yourself in these areas?
- Do you consider yourself a **self-starter**? If so, explain why (and give examples)
- What do you consider to be your **greatest achievements** to date? Why?
- What things give you the **greatest satisfaction** at work?
- What things **frustrate** you the most? How do you usually cope with them?

VI. CREATIVITY

- In your work experience, what have you done that you consider truly **creative**?
- Can you think of a problem you have encountered when the old solutions didn't work & when you came up with **new solutions**?
- Of your creative accomplishments big or small , at work or home, what gave you the **most satisfaction**?
- What kind of problems have people recently called on you to **solve**? Tell me what you have devised.

VII. DECISIVENESS

- Do you consider yourself to be thoughtful, analytical or do you usually **make up your mind fast**? Give an example. (Watch time taken to respond)
- What was your most **difficult decision** in the last six months? What made it difficult?
- The last time you **did not know what decision to make**, what did you do?
- How do you go about making **an important decision** affecting your career?
- What was the **last major problem** that you were confronted with? What action did you take on it?

VIII. RANGE OF INTERESTS

- What **organizations** do you belong to?



- Tell me specifically what you do in the **civic activities** in which you participate. (Leading questions in selected areas. i.e. sports, economics, current events, finance.)
- How do you **keep up** with what's going on in your company / your industry/ your profession?

IX. MOTIVATION

- What is your **professional goal**?
- Can you give me examples of experience on the job that you felt were **satisfying**?
- Do you have a **long & short-term plan** for your department? Is it realistic?
- Did you **achieve** it last year?
- Describe how you determine what constitutes **top priorities** in the performance of your job.

X. WORK STANDARDS

- What are your **standards of success** in your job?
- In your position, how would you **define doing a good job**? On what basis was your definition determined?
- When judging **the performance of your subordinate**, what factors or characteristics are most important to you?

XI. LEADERSHIP

- In your present job what approach do you take to get your people together to establish a **common approach** to a problem?
- What approach do you take in getting your people to **accept your ideas or department goals**?
- What specifically do you do to **set an example** for your employees?
- How **frequently do you meet** with your immediate subordinates as a group?
- What **sort of leader** do your people feel you are? Are you satisfied?
- How do you get people who do not want to work together to **establish a common approach** to a problem?
- If you do **not have much time** & they hold seriously differing views, what would be your approach?
- How would you describe your **basic leadership style**? Give specific examples of how you practice this?
- Do you feel you work more effectively on a **one to one basis or in a group situation**?
- Have you ever **led a task force or committee or any group who doesn't report to you**, but from whom you have to get work? How did you do it? What were the satisfactions & disappointments? How would you handle the job differently?

XII. ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS

- Have you ever done any **public or group speaking**? Recently? Why? How did it go?
- Have you made any **individual presentations** recently? How did you prepare?



XIII. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Would you rather **write a report or give a verbal report**? Why?
- What **kind of writing** have you done? For a group? For an individual?
- What is the extent of your **participation in major reports** that have to be written?

XIV. FLEXIBILITY

- What was the **most important idea** or suggestion you received recently from your employees? What happened as a result?
- What do you think about the **continuous changes** in company operating policies & procedures?
- How effective has your company been in **adapting its policies** to fit a changing environment?
- What was the most **significant change made in your company** in the last six months which directly affected you, & how successfully do you think you implemented this change?

XV. STRESS TOLERANCE

- Do you **feel pressure** in your job? Tell me about it.
- What has been the **highest pressure situation** you have been under in recent years? How did you cope with it?

XVI. STABILITY & MATURITY

- Describe your **most significant success & failure** in the last two years.
- What do you **like to do best**?
- What do you **like to do least**?
- What in your last review did your supervisor suggest **needed improvement**?
- What have you **done about it**?

XVII. INTEREST IN SELF DEVELOPMENT

- What has been the **most important person or event** in your own self development?
- How much of your **education did you earn**?
- What kind of **books & other publications** do you read?
- Have you taken a **management development course**?
- How are you helping your **subordinates develop** themselves?



Suggested Second Interview Questions

- What have you been **criticized** for during the last 4 years?(Here you would be looking to see if this individual admits to being wrong etc....)
- Where **would you like to be in 3-5 years time**? (Do they set themselves goals, do they know what they want from their career, life)
- Ask the candidate to **cite three situations where they did not succeed** and why. (Do they admit their mistakes are they honest? Do they blame others?)
- What are the three things you are **afraid to find in this job**? (Do they admit their fears?)
- Ask for three areas in which they would **like to improve** (To see if they have learnt by mistakes and errors do they admit weakness and are they understanding of themselves?)

Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
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Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Customer Focus</p> <p>Knowing who your customers are, keeping the meeting of their needs at the forefront of the mind and taking responsibility for the service delivered to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasant and patient to customers at all times • Regularly asks customers about their needs and expectations • Regularly gives information to customers to help set expectations of what we can deliver. • Takes personal responsibility for ensuring customer problems are resolved • Understands customer's personalities and views and thinks through what will have most impact on them. <p>Tries to get others to see things from the customers perspective</p>	<p>1) In your current role, who are your customers?</p> <p>Why are they important?</p> <p>What have you done to ensure the service you provide is what the customer wants?</p> <p>Tell me about a time you went the extra mile to meet a customers needs.</p> <p>2) Tell me about a time a customer approached you with a problem.</p> <p>How did you find out what the customer needed.</p> <p>What did you do to solve the problem?</p> <p>How did you set the customers expectations?</p> <p>3) What feedback do you collect from your customers?</p> <p>What changes have you introduced as a result of customer feedback?</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Communicating and Influencing</p> <p>The ability to communicate effectively and to influence others to act and/or commit support to one's own goals or objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks and writes clearly, concisely and to the point • Listens effectively • Communicates enthusiastically and leaves customer feeling good about the interaction • Considers needs and level of the audience in communication • Thinks through material in advance and structures in a logical sequence <p>Sounds people out in advance to check their views and tailors approach accordingly</p>	<p>4) Tell me about a time when you communicated a piece of information to a group of individuals.</p> <p>How did you approach this?</p> <p>What did you do to check the understanding of the group?</p> <p>5) Tell me about a time when you convinced a colleague to participate in a work activity.</p> <p>How did you ensure they fully understood their involvement in the activity?</p> <p>6) Tell me about a best piece of written communication you have produced.</p> <p>What made this communication good?</p> <p>What feedback did you receive?</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Teamwork</p> <p>Displaying the ability to contribute co-operatively and successfully, whether on a divisional or cross-divisional basis, in a 'process managed' company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works co-operatively with others to complete tasks • Listens to what team and colleagues have to say • Encourages and supports other team members • Communicates effectively with your team and colleagues • Behaves in a way that builds trust • Proactively identifies and uses skills and expertise of others to add value to overall results 	<p>7) Tell me about a time a colleague asked you for help.</p> <p>What did you do?</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p> <p>Why do you think your colleague chose to approach you?</p> <p>8) Tell me about a successful team you were part of.</p> <p>What role did you play?</p> <p>How did you ensure that all members of the team were working towards the same goal?</p> <p>9) Tell me about an idea one of your colleagues had which you built upon.</p> <p>How was the idea implemented?</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Decision Making and Judgement</p> <p>The ability to exercise judgement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects on the pros and cons of an number of non-complex options and decides on the most appropriate using agreed criteria • Is empowered to make day to day decisions affecting the running of the area or the satisfying of customers own area • Makes sound judgements about whether to escalate an issue or just get on and do it • Decides who needs to be informed of which decision 	<p>10) Tell me about an important decision you have made in the last 3 months.</p> <p>Why was the decision important?</p> <p>Talk me through how you reached the decision you did. Was it the right decision?</p> <p>11) Tell me about an 'on the spot' decision you had to make to satisfy a customer's needs.</p> <p>How did you decide upon the best route to take?</p> <p>How did you feel about having to make the decision quickly?</p> <p>What follow up action did you take?</p> <p>12) Tell me about the last time you were faced with a decision that you had to escalate rather than just following your own course of action.</p> <p>Who did you approach to help with the decision?</p> <p>Why did you choose to escalate this decision</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Planning and Organising</p> <p>The ability to develop clear and logical step-by-step plans for others which set out what needs to happen, when, how and by whom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules days activities and uses time effectively • Plans how to deal with peaks and troughs in workload during the day/week • Gets the most important work done first (even if it is not as interesting as other work) • Balances the short term request with long term priorities • Can keep track of and manage several tasks simultaneously • Puts together plans which take a number of factors into consideration and which deliver the desired end result 	<p>13) Tell me about the ways in which you plan your workload.</p> <p>How do you deal with unforeseen circumstances?</p> <p>Please give me an example, tell me exactly what you did.</p> <p>How did you prioritise your workload?</p> <p>14) Tell me about a time when you re-set a colleague or customer's expectations regarding the timeframe within which you could complete work.</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p> <p>15) What are your favourite aspects of your job?</p> <p>What are your least favourite aspects?</p> <p>How do you discipline yourself to ensure all other aspects of your job are given equal priority?</p> <p>Please give an example.</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Preference for Action</p> <p>Grasping issues that require resolution and ensuring that appropriate effective action is taken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes advantage of opportunities as they arise • Acts quickly and decisively in a crisis • Takes action to solve identified problems • Makes timely and effective decisions • Spots and seizes short term opportunities • Identifies potential short term opportunities and acts to address them before they have an impact 	<p>16) Tell me about a problem in your current workplace which your actions resolved.</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p> <p>17) Describe to me the last crisis you faced within your workplace.</p> <p>What did you do to deal with this situation?</p> <p>What would you have done recently?</p> <p>18) Tell me about a problem which you have identified within your department.</p> <p>Having identified the problem how did you decide upon what actions to take?</p> <p>If you had not resolved this situation what impact would it have had on the business?</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Business Knowledge</p> <p>Having a sound grasp of the operating environment and expected services in general in your business... (Have they done their homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess any research undertaken prior to interview • Demonstrates a basic understanding of the role of FD / CIO / others specific to your business. • Demonstrates good understanding of what they think they need to deliver within the role 	<p>19) What is your knowledge/understanding of [enter your Company Name]?</p> <p>20) How familiar are you with the role of an [enter the name of the role]?</p> <p>21) What do you think are the key requirements of this role?</p>	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks straightforward problems down into smaller parts • Adopts a clear and systematic approach to analysing large volumes of information • Weighs up options using the available data • Considers situations from a number of angles • Describes a complex situation in a logical and structured manner • Identifies the key issues in ambiguous / inconsistent data 	<p>22) Tell me how you go about analysing data that is given to you</p> <p>23) Tell me about a time when you were not able to complete a task because you were given insufficient or inaccurate data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how did you deal with this? - how did you convey the situation to the person asking you to complete the task? <p>24) Tell me about a time when you had to analyse complex data and feed this back in a simple easy to understand manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how did you go about this? - how did you check the level of understanding? - what information did you leave out? 	



Competence	Questions	Notes / Evidence
<p>Change Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the needs for change • Is willing to embrace change • Able to see the positive effect of change • Positively identifies where / where not change is working • Able to help others through the change process 	<p>25) Tell me about a time when there has been a change to the way you work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how did you react? - how did others around you react? <p>26) Tell me about a time when you you have had to give negative feedback about a change that has been implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why did you have to do this? - did you make a suggestion for a better way? <p>27) Tell me about a time when you instigated a change in working practices / procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how did you go about this? - how did you help this change to be implemented? - what was the reaction of your colleagues and how did you react to this? 	



3. Closing the interview

- Ask them to **summarise** their main strengths and what they can bring to the role/team/department
- Ask if they have **any questions** re the opportunities

4. Post interview

- **Thank** them for their time and wish them well

