

Tips for a Successful Interview Process

Before contacting applicants to schedule interviews, you must receive approval from:

Faculty Searches - Dean of the College and HR (Specialist, Talent Acquisition-Robin Santini)

Staff Searches – HR (Specialist, Talent Acquisition)

An Applicant Evaluation Rubric must be included with the request to interview. Please send an email with the Posting Number in the Subject Line.

Confidentiality is required and respect for the applicant's personal information should be maintained throughout the search process.

Please review the section on interviews in the [Procedures for the Policy on Employee, Recruitment and Hiring](#).

Interviewers need to recognize and consider their own biases before and after an interview. Be aware of double standards, for example, consider if you would react differently to the same answer provided by someone else who you relate to more easily.

To assist with maintaining a positive relationship with applicants, any applicant who is interviewed but not offered a position, should be contacted by the Search Chair and informed they were not selected for hire.

Please remember to encourage the candidate to apply for other positions in the future!

Although search committees are not required for Non-Classified Staff postings below Grade 10, departments that value collaboration may gain more insight by conducting a group interview rather than only one-on-one interviews. This can be done with Finalists in an informal manor, for example a series of meetings with potential team members or an informal group gathering. Observing group dynamics is one way to evaluate interpersonal skills. However, it is important to maintain consistency in interview format across the candidates.

Sample Interview Questions for Predicting Future Performance

Using Behavioral questions is an interview technique that focuses on the applicant's experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities by asking for specific examples of when they demonstrated certain behaviors or skills. The answers you receive based on these questions can be used to predict future performance.

After considering the most important attributes required to be successful in a position for which you are interviewing, you can compile a list of interview questions that address those attributes and can be used along with other questions specific to the position.

Important attributes include Communication, Collaboration, Performance Management, Customer/Client Focus, Flexibility, Ethical Practice, Initiative, Leading, Time Management, Stress Management, among others.

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The following list contains attributes that can be evaluated with the Behavioral interview questions and/or General interview questions. Examples of both types of interview questions are provided.

Communication

Behavioral

- Give an example of how you considered your audience prior to communicating with them. What factors influenced your communication?
- Describe a time you used your communications skills to negotiate with an angry person.
- Have you ever given a presentation to a group? How did you prepare for it? What would you do differently?
- Describe a time when you were able to overcome a communications barrier(s).
- Tell me about a time when effective listening skills helped you in a problematic situation.
- Tell me about a time when you thought someone wasn't listening to you. What did you do?

General

- Management requires both good writing and verbal skills for effective communication. When it comes to giving information to employees that can be done either way, do you prefer to write an e-mail or memo or talk to the employee? Why?
- How well do you communicate with others? What communication techniques do you use?
- When do you think it is best to communicate in writing? When do you communicate face-to-face?
- In terms of communication (face-to-face, phone, e-mail, instant messaging, texting), when might you use each?

Collaboration and Interpersonal Skills

Behavioral

- Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker. How did you handle the situation?
- Describe a difficult time you have had dealing with an employee or customer. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you were instrumental in creating or improving a good relationship with another department within your company.
- Recall an occasion when you had to work with people from different divisions to accomplish a single goal.
- Recount an occasion when you were able to connect individuals from different backgrounds or cultures in a unified organizational effort.

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General

- What would your last boss say about how you collaborate with others?
- What do you think of your last boss?
- Describe how you like to be managed.
- If I asked your previous or current co-workers about you, what would they say?
- Tell me what type of relationship exists and *should* exist between your current department and the department it works most closely with.
- Each boss is a little different. My management philosophy or style is _____. In what way(s) do you think that your work style would complement mine [or other relevant person's work style]?
- Describe what you foresee to be as challenges or adjustments for us in this new role.
- In terms of communication (face-to-face, phone, e-mail, instant messaging, texting), which is your preference for collaboration? Why?

Diversity and Inclusion

Behavioral

- What has been the most challenging aspect of being in a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?
- How have you handled a situation when a colleague was not accepting of diversity of others?
- What strategies have you used to address diversity challenges? What were the positives and negatives?
- Describe a time when you included someone in your team or on a project because you felt he or she would bring a different perspective.

General

- What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with backgrounds different from your own?
- What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity, and how would you develop and apply your commitment at this company?
- What was or is the diversity value at your current or former employer? What impact did you make on this value?
- What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?
- What have you done to further your knowledge about diversity? Have you included diversity in your professional development? How have you demonstrated what you have learned?
- What does "implicit bias" mean to you?

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Performance Management

Behavioral

- What was the most challenging employee performance issue you've had to deal with, and how did you handle it?
- Explain, step by step, how you have handled an employee who had performance problems.
- Describe a time when you needed to discipline an employee who reported directly to you.
- What coaching or mentoring experience have you had? With groups or one-on-one? How did you determine the appropriate way to coach or mentor, and what were the results?

General

- Discuss and differentiate between remediation, corrective action, and discipline.
- What is the difference between coaching, counseling, and discipline?
- Who should be responsible for monitoring and managing employee performance?

Customer/Client Focus

Behavioral

- Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to give great service to a customer.
- Tell me about a time when you asked for feedback on your customer service skills from your manager or co-worker and then used that response to improve your work.
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult guest- or client-relations problem. What was the outcome? What did you learn?
- Tell me about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this?
- Tell me about a time when you had to say "no" to a customer because his or her request was against company policy.
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble working with a difficult or demanding customer. How did you handle this?
- Tell me about a situation in which you "lost it" or did not do your best with a customer. What did you do about this?
- Describe a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations.
- Share an example of a time when you developed rapport with a customer. What strategies did you use? How did you transfer the use of those strategies to other customers?

General

- What do you find is the most difficult part about providing customer service? What is the best part?
- Describe a process or system that you improved so customers would be better served.

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- When are policy exceptions to customers warranted? Not warranted?
- How do you go about deciding what strategy to employ when dealing with a difficult customer?
- We all have customers or clients. Who are your clients, and how do you identify them?
- What have you done to improve relations with your customers?
- How would you define guest or client satisfaction?
- What does the term "customer" mean to you?
- Describe a time when someone failed to provide satisfactory service to you. How could that person have improved his or her performance in that particular situation?
- What types of behaviors do you find most annoying or frustrating in a client or customer? How do you handle those behaviors?
- What specific process do you go through when a client or guest is dissatisfied?
- How do you think your clients, customers or guests would describe you and your work?
- Have you ever contacted a customer with the sole purpose of seeking feedback about a product or service you delivered? What did you learn? What did you change?

Teamwork Orientation

Behavioral

- Tell me about a time when you needed to work as part of a team to satisfy a client or resolve an issue.
- Tell me about a time you worked on a cross-functional team. Were there different challenges compared to a departmental-task team?
- When groups work together, conflict often erupts. Tell me about a time that conflict occurred in one of your workgroups and what you did about it.
- Tell me about a time you pitched in to help a team member finish a project even though it "wasn't your job." What was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you were a part of a great team. What was your part in making the team effective?
- Tell me the role you play within workgroups and why.
- Tell me about the most effective contribution you have made as part of a task group or special project team.
- Have you ever worked on a virtual team? If so, tell me about this experience. What were the team dynamics? Was the team successful? If not, what do you perceive to be the advantages and disadvantages of this type of team? What would you do differently? How would you suggest creating team cohesiveness in a virtual setting?

General

- What do you think are the best and worst parts of working in a team environment? How do you handle it?
- If I asked several of your co-workers about your greatest strength as a team member, what would they tell me?
- What do you think makes a team of people work well together? What makes them not work well together?

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- How would people you work with describe you?
- What is essential for a team to be successful?
- Who is the most valuable "player" on any team?

Ethical Practice

Behavioral

- Describe a time when you came across questionable business practices. How did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. How did you deal with this situation, and what was the outcome?
- Have you worked in a situation in which an employee, vendor or supplier had a conflict of interest? How did you handle this?

General

- Define professional behavior or conduct appropriate in the workplace.
- Explain the phrase "work ethic," and describe yours.
- How important is ethics in the workplace?

Flexibility

Behavioral

- Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline and you were interrupted and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?
- Give an example of a time when you had to quickly change project priorities. How did you do it?
- Recount a time when you accommodated someone beyond your comfort level, though you did not have to.

General

- People react differently when job demands are constantly changing. How do you react to this?
- How important is it to be flexible?

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Initiative

Behavioral

- Can you tell me about a time during your previous employment when, unsolicited, you suggested a better way to perform a process?
- Tell me about a career goal that you have accomplished and why that was important to you.
- Could you share with us a recent accomplishment you are most proud of?
- Describe a time when you performed a task outside your perceived responsibilities. What was the task? Why did you perceive it to be outside your responsibilities? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you kept from getting bored when dealing with routine tasks.
- What was the most creative thing you did in your last job?
- Give me an example of a time you were able to take the lead in changing a policy for your department and for the organization.

General

- When were you able to demonstrate initiative?

Leading Others

Behavioral

- Give me an example of a time when you needed to help other employees learn a new skill set. What did you do?
- Have you ever been in a position in which you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it? Tell me about problems you had and how you handled them.
- Have you ever managed a situation in which the people or units reporting to you were in different locations? Tell me how this worked.
- Tell me about a time when you organized, managed, and motivated others on a complex task from beginning to end.
- Give me an example of how you have motivated your employees.

General

- Describe an ideal supervisor or manager.
- Tell us about your management style—people, teamwork and direction.
- What is the largest number of employees you have supervised, and what were their job functions?
- Tell me about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.
- Tell me about your experiences with staff development.
- What is your own philosophy of management?
- What do you do to develop employees you manage?

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- Do you find it more natural to point out what's wrong so employees can accomplish tasks competently or to praise employees for their work and then later point out what may need correcting?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to team cohesiveness?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to unifying a department, division, plant or so forth?
- What do you think are the most valuable traits in a good leader?

Business Acumen - Time Management

Behavioral

- Have you worked under time constraints before? Give us an example.
- Was there a time when you struggled to meet a deadline? Tell us about it.
- Describe a time you identified a barrier to your (or to others') productivity and what you did about it.
- When you have a lot of work to do or multiple priorities, how do you get it all done? Give me an example.

General

- Tell me about your productivity and time management skills.
- What do you do when someone else is late and preventing you from accomplishing your tasks?
- How do you determine what amount of time is reasonable for a task?
- How do you keep your team from feeling overwhelmed when various projects in process are equally important?
- What percentage of time did you spend on each functional area of your job?
- Describe the workload at your current position. How do you feel about it? What would you change about it, if you could?
- Define time management.

Stress Management / Composure

Behavioral

- Tell me about a work "nightmare" you were involved in. How did you approach the situation, and what was the outcome?
- Have you ever been caught unaware by a problem or obstacle that you had not foreseen? What happened?

General

- Describe what you would classify as a "crisis."

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- What do you do when others resist or reject your ideas or actions?
- How would your past employers describe your response to hectic or stressful situations?
- What kinds of events cause you stress on the job?

Reference:

Society for Human Resource Management

Accessed at: <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/interview-questions/Pages/default.aspx>