

Webinar:
Human Resources Panel Discussion
Thursday, March 25, 2021

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Resources provided by our HR Panelists

- **Interview Tracking Sheet**
- **Behavioral Interviewing overview**
- **Questions NOT to ask**
- **Questions TO ask**
- **A guide for creative recruitment**

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Applicant Tracking Sheet

Applicant Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____ Department: _____

Application Date: _____ Human Resources Interview Date: _____

1. Manager interview Date: _____ With: _____
2. Second Interview Date: _____ With: _____
3. Peer interview Date: _____ With: _____
4. Peer Interview Date: _____ With: _____
5. GM Interview Date: _____

Comments: _____

HR Office Use Only

References Checked: 1) Date: _____ Who: _____

Comments: _____

2) Date: _____ Who: _____

Comments: _____

Turned Down Reason: _____ Date: _____ HR: _____

Job Offered Date: _____ Start Date: _____ Hourly Rate \$: _____

PAF/Application/Resume (if given)/Checklist to HR _____ Date: _____

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING BASICS

Because your time with each candidate is limited and you want to find out the most relevant information about their experiences, it's important **to choose your behavioral interview questions strategically.**

1. JOB FUNCTION

Look at the job description and determine key competencies required to successfully perform the role. What knowledge, skills and abilities does the position require? Pick out 3-5 areas of focus.

Think about top performers in these roles and what attributes do they possess that make them successful.

Competencies could include teamwork, problem-solving, customer service, communication, negotiation, leadership, initiative, adaptability, time management, etc.

Think about the work to be performed as well as the current personalities of the existing team, another element of fit.

2. CULTURE AND VALUES

Because your company has a unique culture, it's worthwhile to ask candidates behavioral questions that will indicate if they could thrive in your workplace.

Look at your values list and think about how they translate into a behavior. Then craft questions based on the behavior. *See the How to Craft Your Own Questions section following.*

Creating Your Own Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral-based interview questions rarely come in the form of questions. They are usually statements that guide candidates into sharing a situation from their past experience and have two to three parts.

1. THE OPENING

Following are some common sentence openers:

“Tell me about a time when...”

“Give me an example of...”

“Describe a situation when...”

“Walk me through...”

2. THE SITUATION OR PROBLEM

The second part of the behavioral question suggests the type of situation or problem the interviewer would like to find out more about.

For example, if a cultural value is “resourcefulness”, you could say, “Describe a project you had to complete with very limited resources.”

3. ADDING SPECIFICS

While many behavioral questions stop with only two parts, adding a qualifier allows you to find out more specific information relating to the candidate’s role.

For example, if you want to know more about how a candidate deals with conflict, you could ask, “Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work,” and get a wide array of answers. By adding a qualifier, you can focus the candidate’s answer: “Tell me about a conflict you had with a customer / a manager / a colleague / an employee. “Each of these options will lead the candidate down a different path, giving you the information you need that is most appropriate to the role and your objective.

You can take it a step further, by adding, “What did you do about it?”

How To Probe

Candidates may or may not be trained in the commonly used STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method of sharing their experience.

But you can leverage this popular method as a guide when interviewing candidates who give answers that may seem too short or incomplete. As you consider a candidate's answer, think about what other information you would like to get a complete picture of the how they approached the situation.

SITUATION

What was the business problem or goal? Who was involved? What were the budgetary considerations? What were the time constraints?

TASK

What did you hope to achieve? How did you come to that conclusion? Who did you consult? What information did you review to come to that conclusion?

ACTION

What did you do? What tools or resources did you use? Who did you work with? What skills or experience did you draw upon? What Obstacles did you encounter?

RESULT

what were the business results? What positive feedback did you receive? What did you learn from the experience?

Note: This approach is also effective in providing feedback to employees.

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Sample Questions

PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Tell me about a time when you had limited resources and were able to bring a project to the finish line.
- Describe the most challenging work problem you faced in your last job.
- Walk me through a scenario of a process you invented or improved.

TEAMWORK

- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style to complete a project successfully.
- Describe a situation when working with others produced more successful results than if you had completed the project on your own.
- Tell me about a time when you were in competition with a co-worker.
- Recount a time when you worked with a colleague who was not doing their share of the work.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Describe a situation where you have had to deliver bad news to a customer.
- Tell me about a time when you have resolved a problem for a disgruntled customer.
- Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to satisfy a customer. What was the outcome?

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Explain a time when you have had to deliver tough feedback to a colleague.
- Tell me about how you delivered project results to your manager.
- Tell me about a time when you had to get someone else to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you resolved a conflict with a colleague in your past role.
- Name a time you had to convince someone to do something they did not want to do.

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PROJECT OR TIME MANAGEMENT

- Describe a time when you have had to delegate work to others.
- Explain how you kept your work organized in your last role.
- Tell me about a time when you have had multiple competing deadlines and how you managed it.

ADAPTABILITY

- Describe a time when you have had to learn a new process or skill.
- Tell me about a time when you have had to pivot away from a current project to address a “crisis”.
- Tell me about a time when you dealt with ambiguity.

WORKING UNDER PRESSURE/STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Tell me about a stressful situation and how you dealt with it.
- What did you do in your last role when your workload was enormous?

INITIATIVE

- Tell me how you set goals and monitored progress in your last position.
- What did you do in your last role if you knew that you might fall short of hitting a goal?
- Tell me about a time when you were given little direction on a project and how you were able to complete it?
- Describe a situation in which you exceeded requirements.

LEADERSHIP

- Tell me about a time you were leading a group, were assigned a goal, and did not reach it.
- Describe a time when you’ve had to train someone.
- Tell me about a time you had a poorly performing team member.

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SUMMARY

By conducting thorough, behavioral-based interviews that go deeper than simply checking off relevant skills, you can make an enormous impact on the success of your team and the overall advancement of your business goals. Finding candidates who have the right skills and who are also great culture fits with the ability to weather adversity, manage stress, deal with ambiguity, work constructively as a team, and demonstrate resourcefulness will serve you well in both the short and long term.

It takes a little planning ahead – choosing what interview format you will use, what questions to ask, and who will ask them – but the payoff is high.

Finding the right fit for each role will drive innovation, productivity, customer satisfaction and profits.

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW

1. Have You Ever Been Convicted of a Crime?

What used to be a common check-the-box question on employment applications is now illegal to ask before the employment offer stage. In late 2017, California joined several states in introducing “ban the box” laws to reduce barriers to applicants in the pre-hiring stage. Under [AB 1008](#), California employers with more than five employees now must not

- include on any job application questions that seek the disclosure of an applicant’s conviction history,
- ask about or consider the conviction history of an applicant until he/she has received a conditional offer, or
- consider, distribute, or disseminate information related to specified prior arrests, diversions, and convictions when conducting a conviction history background check.
- San Francisco’s version of the “ban the box” legislation provides even greater protections to job candidates and includes stiff penalties for violations.

2. How Much Do You Currently Make?

With the passage of [AB 168](#), effective January 1, 2018, California employers must not ask job applicants for “salary history information” or rely on that information in deciding whether to offer a job and how much to pay. But if the applicant voluntarily discloses salary history, the employer may consider or rely on that information in setting salary so long as prior salary is not the *only* factor justifying any disparity in pay.

Under recent [legislation](#) clarifying the scope of AB 168, employers *can* ask about an applicant’s salary expectations for the position.

3. Where Are You From?

The innocent icebreaker questions, “Where were you born?” or “Where are you from?” or “How long have you lived in the U.S.?” can land employers in hot water. Such questions, though seemingly offhanded, can be interpreted as questions about the applicant’s national origin.

Also, California’s Labor and Workforce Development Agency has made it clear that the state’s labor protections apply to all employees—regardless of their immigration status. Thus, you should

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stay clear of questions about a candidate's citizenship (unless U.S. citizenship is a legal job requirement). You *can*, however, ask whether the applicant has a legal right to work in the United States, so long as you do not do so on a discriminatory basis.

4. When Did You Graduate High School?

Questions about a candidate's age are prohibited under both California's FEHA and the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Thus, employers should stay away from questions that could reveal a candidate's age, like "What year did you graduate high school?"

You *may* ask a candidate's age, however, if the job has a minimum age requirement, for example, if it involves serving alcohol.

5. Are You Married/Do you have children?

Any questions related to parenthood or marital status are off limits. Prohibited questions include whether an applicant is married, pregnant, or plans to be in the future. Even the innocuous question, "What does your spouse do?" should be avoided as it could be seen as a round-about way of getting to the candidate's marital status.

Illegal Job Interview Questions

- ❑ Age.
- ❑ Race, ethnicity, or color.
- ❑ Gender or sex.
- ❑ Country of national origin or birthplace.
- ❑ Religion.
- ❑ Disability.
- ❑ Marital or family status or pregnancy.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW

1. What career accomplishment makes you most proud?

While it's important to hire someone who can do the job well, you also want to hire an employee who takes pride in their work. By asking the candidate to share their favorite career accomplishment, you give them the opportunity to share a career highlight — but this will also help you better understand the type of work that makes them feel fulfilled and determine whether it's aligned with what the role entails.

2. Tell me something about yourself that isn't on your resume.

Job seekers carefully craft their resumes to provide the best summary of their professional experience, but you can't learn everything about a candidate from what they put down on paper. This question is purposefully vague and allows the interviewee to decide whether they want to share something job-related or not. They may choose to tell you about their volunteer work, the sabbatical they took to travel the world or another defining experience.

The way they choose to respond to this question, and the story they share, can tell you a lot about the type of employee they will be and what they will be able to contribute to your company culture.

3. Why do you want to work here?

This question is your opportunity to determine how much an employee has researched the company, and get a better idea of what they're looking for in an employer. When asking this question, listen carefully for details about your organization and any parallels the applicant is drawing between your company and their career aspirations.

4. What made you want to apply for this position?

This is one of the best interview questions to ask because it delves into specifics about the job role. It shows how carefully the candidate read the job description, and also gives them the chance to share why they feel they'd be a good addition to your team. A well-crafted answer will touch on skills the applicant has as well as skills they want to develop or improve.

5. What are your greatest weaknesses?

This question is one of the most popular interview questions for a reason: it helps you quickly learn a lot about a candidate. This question enables you to deduce three things:

- Whether the candidate's weaknesses could conflict with job requirements or hamper their ability to excel in the role
- Whether or not the candidate is self-aware enough to know their weaknesses without having to think for too long
- How a candidate is working to improve on their shortcomings

6. What are your greatest strengths?

Like addressing weaknesses, when a candidate talks about their strengths, it shows their level of self-awareness and humility. This interview question also gives the applicant a chance to discuss how their best qualities align with the needs of the role and even demonstrate how they will use their strengths to help the company reach its goals.

7. Tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it.

Everyone has experienced challenging circumstances at work, and often it's in these moments that professionals grow the most. This is one of the best interview questions to ask because it allows the candidate to tell you about how they perform under pressure and also discuss their problem-solving skills and ability to manage stress.

8. Why are you leaving your current employer?

When you ask this question, pay close attention to how the candidate talks about their former job. Are they focusing on the negative aspects, or do they err more on the positive side by addressing their hopes for the future? The interviewee's ability to show respect for their previous employer and workplace demonstrates their civility and professionalism, which are two essential attributes in any role.

9. Tell me about a time you had to manage a particularly heavy workload. How did you handle it?

This is one of the best questions interviewers should ask because it reveals a candidate's organizational and time management skills, as well as how they deal with stressful situations — such as an increase in workload. Look for specific ways the candidate prioritizes a long list of

tasks, adapts to new challenges and works with others to get the job done.

10. Describe a time when you had to work with someone whose personality or work style was very different from yours.

Being able to work well with other people with different backgrounds, communication styles and personalities is an important part of nearly every job. This question gives the candidate a chance to show off their teamwork, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, including how they compromise, communicate and collaborate to achieve a goal or task. It can also give you deeper insight into their personality and work style.

See more: [Behavioral Interview Questions to Ask Candidates](#)

11. What are your long-term career goals?

By asking the candidate to discuss their long-term career goals, you can get a feel for how ambitious, goal-oriented and hardworking they are. Look for career goals that align with your company's values, mission and/or goals. This question can also reveal how long the candidate plans on staying at your company. For example, if their long-term career goals can't be accomplished by working at your company, it may not be the best fit.

12. How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?

One of the best questions for interviewers to ask candidates is what their goals are for professional development. A candidate may be focused on improving a weakness, building upon a strength or picking up a new skill that can help them in their career. Above all, this question can give insight into a candidate's willingness to invest in their own growth.

13. How would your previous coworkers describe you?

This question can reveal a candidate's various personality traits that may help them adapt to the role and company, examples of times when their characteristics helped them succeed in their past roles and how self-aware they are. Asking how previous coworkers would describe them can also give you insight into their interpersonal and collaboration skills. Consider asking for specific examples of peer feedback to get a better idea of a candidate's strengths.

14. How many jellybeans can fit in a suitcase?

This is a guesstimate interview question that doesn't require an accurate answer. Instead, it gives candidates the chance to demonstrate their thought process. Pay attention to how a candidate attempts to solve the problem. Do they ask you additional clarifying questions? Do

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they break the problem down into smaller pieces? Ask them to think out loud to see their problem-solving skills in action.

Recruiting is a group effort!

Use the following resource to help in your recruitment process:

- If candidates come into your establishment, interview on the spot
- Culinary Schools/Colleges- career pages
- Drop business cards/Recruiting cards when you are out if you see a talent
- Post Fliers on bulletin boards/churches/coffee shops/laundromats
- Employee referrals! Word of Mouth
- Social Media- Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn
- Unemployment job boards
- Career sites- sponsor postings to stay at the top of the page
- Are you competitive with wages in your area?