



INTERVIEW

as if Your Bottom Line
Depends on it!

UPDATED 1/2021



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Interviewing v 1: Consistently ruling the right people in and the wrong people out **2:** Finding the answers to all your questions **3:** Detecting and resolving **red flags** as they arise.

Unless you have a human resources background, it is likely that those who do most of the interviewing in your company have little or no training on this subject. Interviewing is not typically discussed in business degree programs and is rarely taught before someone has to make their first hire. This implies interviewing is an innate talent, or simply not important. Both messages are wrong.

There are many books on the subject of interviewing, and for good reason. Hiring errors cost seven to nine weeks of pay for an entry-level person, about a year's salary for a professional person, and *several years'* salary for senior executives and senior sales people. We do not present the following few pages as a complete answer to the subject of interviewing, but offer it as a place to begin. STM stands ready to support your hiring process from recruiting through interviewing and selection, but it is ultimately your own decision to hire a candidate or not. You must define and use an appropriate interview process to generate the right outcome every time. Use this document as a design template or to test your current system.

This booklet is designed to provide specific interview tips to use with STM's Behavior, Motivation and Competency assessments. This should aid you in screening out a greater percentage of poor candidates and reducing the number of candidates you have to assess to find the best possible employee for the unique needs of your company. Whether you are familiar with STM's assessments or not, this guide can help you interview to key behaviors, motivators, attitudes, and talent.

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Introduction

There are two basic interviews—**The Screening Interview** and **The Exploration Interview** and these form the two major sections of this revised booklet on interviewing. This material summarizes information we have accumulated over the years about interviewing and links your interview to STM's assessments that many of our clients use to select their final candidates. What we present here can allow you to interview to the assessments and make better choices in selecting finalists and investing in hiring assessments with STM.

For most candidates you will review a résumé and cover letter to determine if the candidate meets your basic knowledge and experience requirements. Details of how to handle this step can be found in our booklet *The Hiring Process*. The Screening Interview is used to determine if the candidate should be seriously considered for employment. You are going beyond the aptitude issues to confirm that the candidate meets your requirements for *attitude* and *fit*.

The Exploration Interview is used with the candidate to explore specific issues raised by earlier interviews and assessments. There may be a series of Exploration Interviews until you are sure you know everything you need to know about the candidate and are convinced he or she will be a *great employee*.

The objective is not simply to fill a position or select the best person from the applicant pool; the objective is to select exactly the right person to fill the right seat in your organization. A perfectly acceptable outcome is that you go through the interview and assessment process only to conclude that none of the applicants are suitable. While that can be frustrating and time consuming, it is far better to find out before you hire the person that they cannot perform to your expectations. Hiring the wrong person is far more costly in the long run.

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The Screening Interview

There are two rules of thumbs for an interview to screen out poor and mediocre candidates:

- ✓ Do not give the benefit of the doubt.
- ✓ Do not leave the interview with unanswered questions.

Before you pick up the phone and call the candidate, do the written documents received from the candidate meet your expectations? This includes résumés, cover letters and emails. There are specific tips for this stage in our booklet, *The Hiring Process*. But the basic rule, do not give the benefit of the doubt, means checking for:

Good Signs

- ✓ They submitted all information requested
- ✓ Appropriate education and experience
- ✓ Ever increasing responsibilities
- ✓ Consistent career focus

Bad Signs

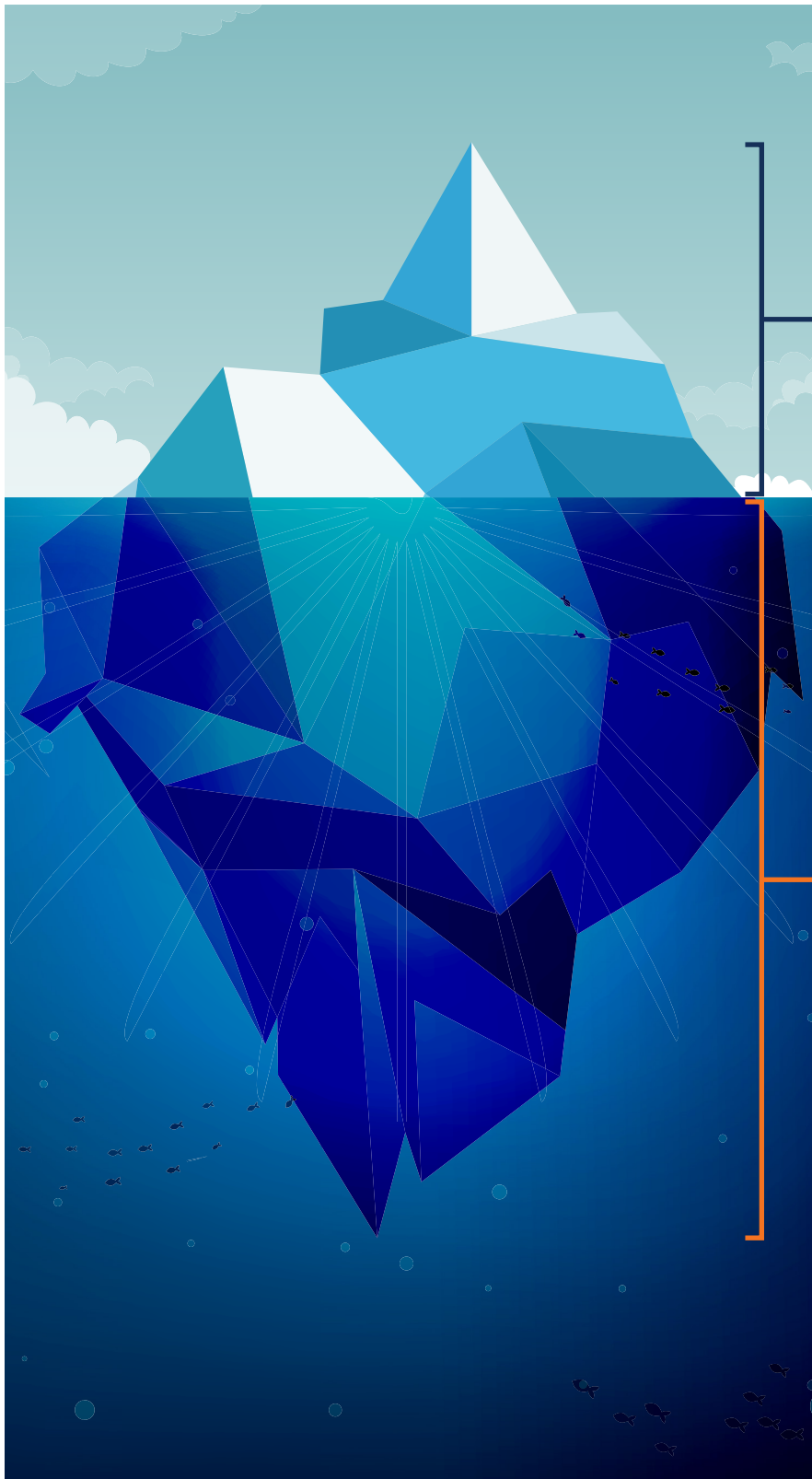
- ✓ Spelling, grammar, and formatting errors
- ✓ Significant turnover or “job hopping”
- ✓ Significant gaps in their employment history
- ✓ Missing information (cover letter, dates, etc.)

If you do not like what you see here, the chances are that it is not going to get any better. Stop now and save yourself time, money, and frustration!

If the candidate meets your expectations to this point, schedule a 30-minute phone appointment to screen for the non-tangibles such as behavior, motivation, attitude, and fit. The following sections address the Screening Interview with each of STM’s assessments in mind. This generates more useful information and may help you screen out the candidate before you invest in a formal assessment.

The entire interview process is predicated on the fact you know what you are looking for. The assessments are valuable in that they can tell us if the candidate meets or exceeds your benchmark or expectations. If you do not have a clear benchmark, STM has benchmarks for most positions, industries, and our client companies. The traditional hiring dilemma was that even if we knew what we were looking for, we simply had no reliable assessment tool to determine if the candidate met the standard. Now we do, and we can use this information to sharpen up our screening interviews and final selection decision. Read on!

How the Assessments are Related



Behaviors

How one is perceived to perform (Communication Style)

Behaviors are visible and observable. They are not about us as much as how we are perceived by others. We are judged by how we communicate and interact with others.

Motivators

Why one performs

Motivators shape Behaviors. They show how we determine the importance of people and things around us and what spurs us to action.

Competencies

Will one perform? (Capacity, Attitudes, Energy and Drive)

Competency shapes both our Behaviors and Motivators. It informs how we think about the world around us and ourselves. Competency includes attitudes, beliefs, energy and drive.

Attributes

Predict performance (Common Business Success Factors)

Attributes are specific factors common in business and organizational life that speak to our predicted performance.

Motivators

The single most important factor for determining suitability to fill a position is the candidate's motivational profile. Each position and each organization will motivate its employees in a certain way and if the candidate is likewise motivated, she will be happy in the position. Happy employees make good employees. If you are looking for a manager to develop a promising team of entry level employees, you will need to hire someone who is motivated by mentoring and sharing what they know with others. A candidate with years of experience and demonstrated success in a wide range of areas, but who is *not* motivated to teach, mentor or help others—will be disengaged and fail to meet your expectations.

Motivation is by definition an internal and intangible quality. How can you interview for this? Think about areas of your life where your motivation is most evident. Is at work or at play? In other words, is what motivates you more evident in your *vocation* or *avocation*? Your motivation is revealed most clearly by what you do in your free time or as a hobby.

A caveat before we continue. Motivation is NOT associated with Behavior. Consider this exchange:

What do you like to do when you have the free time?

I am a voracious reader. I read all the time.

What course or classes have you taken recently?

I love taking classes and learning new things. I am enrolled in night school.

The benchmark for the position is someone who is motivated by learning and studying new things. Is this person motivated to learn? The correct answer is *I have no idea!* Reading a book or taking a class are *behaviors* and can be driven by any number of *motivators*. You need to know *why* they are taking a class or reading the book. To get beyond the mere behavioral elements in the above exchange you must dig a bit deeper. In this exchange we see the candidate has no particular interest in learning:

What do you like to do when you have the free time?

I am a voracious reader. I read all the time.

What are you reading right now?

I have not had the time recently to read anything but school texts, I am enrolled in night school.

What was the last book you read before you enrolled in school?

I love reading science fiction. I read Asimov's Foundation Trilogy two summers ago.

What are you taking in school?

Business courses.

Sounds like it keeps you busy, why are you taking business courses?

I have been in the same position for four years and my employer tells me that with a degree I can become a manager, I will get a substantial raise.

There is nothing wrong with wanting a raise, but what this exchange reveals is that the candidate is not motivated to learn and most likely motivated to make money and or get ahead. If you really need a learner in this position, this candidate may not be the right choice.

First Tip: *When you think you have your answer, ask two more questions to be sure.*

This table indicates some hobbies and activities that might confirm motivation, but you always have to push a bit harder to uncover whether the hobby or activity is truly indicative of the motivation. Some behaviors, such as reading, are suggestive of multiple motivators but there are subtle differences you can look for. Note the shorthand notation in capital letters:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge & Discovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Reads trade journals, current events, biographies, history, non-fiction✓ Takes classes, seminars, education opportunities✓ Teaches, coaches, mentors others LEARNING AND EDUCATION FOCUSED |
| Return on Investment (ROI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ No true hobbies✓ Most activities directly related to making more money and often include long hours at work VALUE AND MONEY FOCUSED |
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Competitive sports, showy cars and activities✓ Politics, leadership positions on volunteer boards✓ Hobbies that involve leading others or self to win or stand out in some way POLITICAL CONTROL AND RECOGNITION |
| Aesthetics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Painter, musician, or craft-related hobbies✓ Interest in languages including computer languages, culture, or mathematics✓ Nature, travel, non competitive sports, and self improvement activities CREATIVE AND SYSTEMS FOCUSED |
| Helping Others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Regular or long term volunteer service✓ Teaching, coaching, mentoring or simply being with others✓ Active in social issues that are other-focused HELPFUL AND FOCUSED ON OTHERS |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Guiding Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Religion or other strongly held beliefs ✓ Activities and interests related to history and the past ✓ Deep commitment to activities related to family, community, and certain events <p>PRINCIPLE AND BELIEF FOCUSED</p> |
| Peace & Harmony | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meditation, massage, or other physical/spiritual methods to seek balance ✓ Interest in eastern cultures or methodologies ✓ Interested in organizations and tools that promote peace and unites others <p>BALANCE AND TRANQUILITY FOCUSED</p> |

Behaviors

Interpersonal behavior is the first thing we notice about anyone we meet. We tend to make a judgment in about ten seconds that this person is like me or not which translates into, *I like them or not*. This is how most interviews proceed—the entire judgment about the candidate is based on whether or not we like them! Behavior, however, is about 50-60% accurate in predicting success in a position. That being said, it is important to evaluate behavior in an objective fashion in order to establish fit within a team, communication style, and how they build relationships with people. At another level, behavior can tell you something about stress which may indicate underlying problems.

By example: If you are hiring someone to sell to a hard-nosed, business oriented client who is frequently blunt and occasionally even rude, you need to hire an assertive, direct, and equally hard-nosed sales person. The client's impression of a quiet, reserved sales person will be negative, and the new sales person may well be intimidated by this client. No matter the motivational profile of the sales person, this relationship is doomed to fail. If your client base is broad and includes all sorts of different people, you may want to hire a sales person who is flexible, customer oriented, and has outstanding interpersonal skills—they will be able to talk to almost anyone with ease.

Any question at all can yield behavior information. You need not have a specific set of questions in order to interview for behavior. Your feelings and reactions to the person are important as you are attempting to determine if the person can work with you and your team, but we want to be sure to take you beyond your feelings. Key things to *listen* for during this segment of the interview:

- ✓ **Pace**—How fast do they speak? Do they dominate the conversation? Do they interrupt?
- ✓ **Tone**—Are they quiet or loud? Are they deferential and diplomatic? Are they blunt and plain?
- ✓ **Focus**—Are they people or task oriented? What do they mention first?
- ✓ **Emotion**—Are they controlled or driven? Do they wear their feelings on their sleeve?

Second Tip: *Behavior is about how the candidate talks, not what he says.*

Behavior is relatively easy to interview for, you have been doing it all your life. Behavior is by definition observable and will reveal itself during an interview. Here are some tips about interviewing for behavior. Note the shorthand notation in capital letters:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| D: Dominance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Loud, fast, dominates the conversation ✓ Blunt and to the point ✓ Decisive, quick to make a decision and may exhibit anger <p>TASK FOCUSED AND EXTROVERTED</p> |
| I: Influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Friendly, humorous, dominates the conversation ✓ Optimistic and people oriented ✓ Open and enthusiastic <p>PEOPLE FOCUSED AND EXTROVERTED</p> |
| S: Steadiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quiet, relaxed, and friendly ✓ Team oriented and not emotional ✓ Prefers that things stay the same <p>PEOPLE FOCUSED AND INTROVERTED</p> |
| C: Compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quiet, diplomatic, accurate, and precise ✓ Clean, neat, and detail oriented ✓ Risk averse, safety conscious <p>TASK FOCUSED AND INTROVERTED</p> |

Competency Assessments

This is the most challenging profile to determine by interview, but the most important. This assessment is the differentiator. If your candidate appears to have the right behaviors and the correct motivators for the position, you need to determine their attitudes, thinking process, and energy levels to make an accurate final decision. There are 6 Dimensions that you need to understand:

EXTERNAL FACTORS

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Empathetic Outlook | EMPATHY FOR OTHERS They see others as individuals. HIGH: Anxious to please others; cannot say “no” MEDIUM: Healthy respect for others but able to keep some distance as appropriate LOW: Does not “read” people well; likely to hurt or offend others without realizing it |
| Practical Thinking | PLANNING, DETAILS, AND SOCIAL SKILL They see process and projects unfolding ahead of them. HIGH: Enjoys projects and handling the details; may be poor delegators MEDIUM: Very good with projects and details but understands that things happen with the best laid plans LOW: Cannot see the detail or how projects flow from “A” to “Z,” pessimistic |
| Systems Judgment | RULES AND PROCEDURES They see the need for rules and structure. HIGH: Control and rule oriented; tends to “tell not sell;” dependent on procedures or direction from others MEDIUM: Knows what is required and how to communicate it to others; flexible and good delegators LOW: Rebellious of authority and weak communicator; does not like to manage or be managed |

INTERNAL FACTORS

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Self Esteem | THEMSELVES They see themselves clearly. HIGH: Highly self-satisfied; often refer to themselves rather than others MEDIUM: Healthy confidence but sees the need for improvement LOW: Depressed, negative, or overly focused on external matters |
| Role Awareness | THEIR WORK They see their personal or professional roles clearly. HIGH: Loves what they are doing; hardworking and highly engaged MEDIUM: They are OK with what they are doing, but see room for improvement around them LOW: Negative and unhappy about what they do, do not see things getting better |
| Self-Direction | THE FUTURE They see the future they want clearly. HIGH: Clear about where they are going, but may be to the point of “marching to their own drummer;” has high energy MEDIUM: Reasonably clear about how to move forward and optimistic about the future; solid energy LOW: Negative and completely disconnected from the future; ineffective communicator |

To dig deeper into attitudes, ask questions about past employers and companies for whom the person has worked. Someone with a rebellious attitude will not be able to resist bad mouthing previous employers and managers. While many people change jobs because of poor management, you need to determine if this candidate caused the problems or found themselves on the receiving end of poor management. Low Systems Judgment makes managing them a challenge and they will have trouble managing others. Their lack of clarity about the rules, procedures, and systems hobbles their ability to communicate clear expectations to others.

You should be able to rate each of the six factors high, medium, or low by listening carefully to the candidate's answers to all your questions. In other words, you may pick up in questions about motivation and behavior that their Empathy for Others is strong because they talk only about other people and how they enjoy making them happy or doing things for them. The following specific questions may also be useful and are presented in the same order as the preceding table.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Energy is critical, but we need to know if the energy is directed in a useful way. Depending on the position you are seeking to fill, the benchmark will clarify key factors for success. There are a few *super* men and women out there, but many people are capable of being very successful with a bit of development or coaching. The interview can tell you if the person is trainable or coachable. Here are some ways to figure that out.

Empathetic Outlook—Empathy for Others

This is a very important factor. A great test for this is talking to your receptionist and others about how the candidate treated them. Also watch for inappropriate jokes and comments. A low-empathy person simply does not realize their comments are offensive because they cannot “read” other’s body language or subtle messages. This is especially difficult in a leader as people will feel the lack of respect and caring. Use questions about handling delicate personnel matters to measure Empathy for Others. The key separation you must make is the candidate’s level of empathy and their ability to distance themselves from other’s problems. Most every business position benefits from strong empathy, but stop short of being a “people pleaser.”

- ✓ Describe a time when you had to deal with a particularly difficult situation with a colleague or customer. How did you handle it?
- ✓ Describe your favorite supervisor and your least favorite. What distinguished the two?
- ✓ Have you ever had to set aside your own priorities for the good of the team?

Practical Thinking—Planning, Details, and Social Skill

This is also a very important factor. Have the candidate walk you through the process of planning and executing a project. The ease and thoroughness with which they do this is a good indicator of high Practical Thinking. Quiz them about how they handle problems, unexpected events and changes. A good planner has considered all the possibilities and has the capability of rethinking the plan on the fly. Strong scores here suggest mastery of the details and great social skills. The latter point is critical—they master projects and details and people relationships the same way; they know them inside out and can get to a desirable outcome. Now your challenge is to separate a person with outstanding social skill from a manipulator. This is a fine line sometimes, and the answer may come from the next factor.

- ✓ On a complex project, what tools do you use to keep yourself organized?
- ✓ How do you get started with a complex project? [For a leader:] How do you get your team organized for a complex project?
- ✓ How do you handle interruptions and unexpected problems?

Systems Judgment—Rules and Procedures

This will help you determine how to best manage the candidate and how they respond to rules, plans and structure. If you pick up an overall negative tone, beware.

- ✓ Set up a hypothetical situation about following procedures versus getting something done.
- ✓ If you were in charge of your last company, what changes would you make?
- ✓ How do you communicate expectations to employees?

Third Tip: *Listen carefully to what the candidate sees most clearly around him.*

INTERNAL FACTORS

We are very interested in the candidate's answers to questions about the future, their work and themselves as this tells us about their energy levels. You have to be cautious as sometimes these factors are low for reasons of a temporary nature—like personal difficulties, a job layoff or other serious yet temporary problems. But you must still keep in mind that their energy level will be low and they may not *hit the ground running*. The immediate future may be a plateau rather than a steep incline. Youth will do this also—a young person may not have great direction or role awareness for lack of knowledge or experience. Take into account the whole person.

Self Esteem—Themselves

One of the classic energy *drains* is something we call the *bureaucratic mindset*. This person has a high opinion of themselves and sees no particular need to improve or even work hard. This is someone, no matter their age, who has already “retired” and forgot to mention it to anyone. Signals abound, but are most often confused with self confidence. Self confidence is a good thing; it means they present well and strongly. Being overly self-assured means the only thing important to me is *me*. This person has never made an error or a mistake; and shows no interest in self-improvement. Nothing and no one is as important as themselves and for that reason you do not want to hire them! The best way to judge this factor is by listening to all their answers on other subjects—if it always comes back to them no matter the question, one has to assume that their Self Esteem is through the roof.

- ✓ Tell me something about yourself that others may be surprised to know about you.
- ✓ If there was something in your past you were able to go back and do differently, what would that be?
- ✓ When we contact your last supervisor and ask which area of your work needs the most improvement, what will we learn?

Role Awareness—Their Work

Listen closely to the candidate’s attitude about projects and work. How much do they like their work today? Do they talk about projects and opportunities with a rising tone and excitement in their voice or do they, as one client reported, yawn every time you ask about their work, favorite projects, or future goals?

- ✓ What is the favorite thing you do in the course of your day?
- ✓ What would you like to be doing in an ideal world?
- ✓ How do you like to be managed?

Strong, clear, and rapid fire responses again suggest that the individual has high Role Awareness and probably works overtime just because they love what they do and lose track of time.

Self Direction—The Future

This is a critical line of questioning. Ask questions about the future at different points during the interview:

- ✓ What do you want to accomplish this first year? How about the first two or three years?
- ✓ What will you be doing ten years from now?
- ✓ How does this position fit in with your overall career plan?

Specific, clear, and rapid answers to these questions suggest the person has a clear vision of the future and they have had it for some time. This speaks directly to Self Direction and may spill over to Role Awareness. By example,

would you consider the following a specific and clear answer to a future oriented question?

I will be able to double sales in that department and consistently gain high marks from the customers. We will be celebrating our success and growth over the years with a PR campaign and internal celebrations. The employees will be happy because raises and promotions are handed out like candy at Halloween.

How specific is this answer? After you weed out generalities and non-measurable statements, what do you really have? *Nothing*. When we say that someone is not clear about the future, they may literally tell you “I don’t know” in answer to your question, BUT if they are socially adept and good verbally, such as a high “I,” they can think on their feet and talk for hours at the drop of a hat. To repeat: *You want specific, clear answers, not general sentiments*. Here is how a high energy person might answer your question—notice the specificity and well thought out process behind the words:

I am convinced that organizations are successful because they have great people. My strategy would begin with changes in how we choose, manage, and promote staff. I would seek out people with high energy and a strong work ethic and coach them to take on more responsibility. With the right people in the right seats in our organization we will be able to dramatically increase productivity while keeping costs at the same or lower levels. Next we would...

This answer delivered at a rapid fire clip and in a firm manner, suggests that they have been thinking about this issue and know exactly how to move the organization. You have to put this in context with all your other conclusions such as being articulate and good on their feet. But a consistent picture of high energy, focus on the future, and clarity of purpose on two or three different questions would be convincing enough to take such a candidate to the next level and have them do an assessment, check references, and conduct Exploration Interviews.

Fourth Tip: *Energy comes from within. No specific goals, direction, desires, or dreams?*

No energy.

The Exploration Interview

The purpose of the exploration interview is to establish the significance of issues raised by the assessments, reference checks, résumé reviews, and so on. Perhaps the candidate understands their deficiency in one area and has taken steps to modify their behavior over the years, thereby blunting the significance of a cited deficiency. Conversely, perhaps the candidate is unaware of their behaviors and the impact on those around them, which would exacerbate the urgency of the problem. Most candidates have some

unattractive qualities, and the question comes down to this: *Are you aware of the significance of the issues and are you willing to take the management time and effort to resolve them, or can you live with the issues?*

Fifth Tip: *Hiring Issues become Management Issues as soon as you hire the candidate.*

Formulate hypothetical scenarios about typical events in your organization and develop a series of questions around each scenario. The questions should be designed to reveal the candidate's thinking about the situation without coming right out and asking a yes/no question about that situation. Each question should be asked without elaboration and with an open-ended invitation for the candidate to respond. Each successive question around the same hypothetical scenario should build the stress level, and provide additional insight as to the candidate's true feelings on the matter. Listen carefully.

Sixth Tip: *Successful interviewers talk 10% of the time; the candidate talks 90% of the time.*

Do not be surprised when you get the "right" answer to a hypothetical question. As you follow-up with an "escalator" question and add a level of stress, watch the candidate's body language and non-verbal response. Be prepared for more revealing answers as you stay with this escalation technique for at least three iterations—pay as much attention to the words spoken as to body language, humorous comments, and unguarded comments. To the last point we remind you about the TV detective "Columbo." Peter Falk would solve his cases by asking the key question as he was getting up to leave, or while chit-chatting with the suspect, rather than in his formal interview or interrogation.

Seventh Tip: *70% of communication is non-verbal. Watch body language carefully.*

Humor is an issue worth a few additional comments. People use humor to convey ideas they feel cannot be said directly. An off-hand response that "I would fire the guy!" (said with a big grin of course) could translate into, "I'm serious, I would fire the guy." But perhaps the candidate is not comfortable just saying so. Humor can also be used as a defense, "What would you do, leave me hanging out to dry on that one?" (said with a big grin, again) means that they are detecting a difference of opinion here and want to know where you stand.

Let's go through an example:

The assessment suggests that the individual sticks to their ideas dogmatically and will not change their approach with people or their job under any circumstances. This is a customer service manager candidate. The good thing in this style is that the candidate will not "give away the store;" on the other hand it could be a problem if the candidate never bends the rules for unhappy customers. The object of the Exploration Interview is you need to establish just how flexible or inflexible the individual will be.

Develop a scenario:

A very unhappy customer is on the phone demanding redress for the problems experienced with your product. Ask the candidate, *how would you handle that individual?* Expect a conventional and correct answer, and encourage the candidate to keep talking.

Escalator Question #1:

In the course of the complaint you understand the customer has had two replacement products installed over the past three months and your technician is still not able to make it work properly. How would you handle this? Because you have added a bit of stress, you may get a more interesting answer—but still, a savvy candidate knows that he cannot just give away the store or shut down a complaining customer, so expect another “right” answer.

Escalator Question #2 assumes the candidate has given in to the customer:

You would refund the money without investigation or talking to the field technician? Wouldn't that get expensive? These are \$25,000 units! Conversely, assume the candidate has refused to give in to the customer. *The customer is really angry now and wants to talk to the CEO. Is that the result you want?* As you escalate the stress factors you will get a more accurate picture where the line between flexibility and inflexibility lies in order to make an accurate hiring decision.

Escalator Question #3:

We recommend three questions only to fully explore the subject. You are watching the candidate to see that they remain calm, have confidence in their approach and are well aware of the various boundaries in the situation. If you need another question or two to be certain, a good way to keep them talking is to introduce a twist based on their response, as in the previous example.

Again, the words are less important than body language. Crossed arms suggest defensiveness or discomfort. Shifting in one's seat is the same. Slouched back in the chair with hands behind the head suggests ease and comfort or perhaps over familiarity or devil may care. Behaviors are predicted by the assessment, and so if someone is flagged as introverted and quiet—do not hold it against them that they were quiet and soft spoken in the interview. If that style will not work with your clients—then you should not be interviewing them in the first place. Conversely, the glad-handing, broad smiling, talkative candidate is exhibiting their natural behavior. Whatever the behavior, look at the body language in context of the assessment and the specific position you have in mind. If you do not get your questions answered—have someone else conduct an Exploration Interview on those points or plan a new line of questioning yourself.

Eighth Tip: *Hire only for Aptitude and run the risk of firing for Attitude.*

Review: The Interview Process

Interviewing is the most critical job in your company. Hire the wrong manager or president or carpenter, and find out just how much damage can be caused by one uncaring, disloyal, or accident-prone employee. Following is a basic interviewing model.

STAGE 1: The First Date

Each stage leading to the final interview is designed to screen out applicants who clearly do not measure up, which avoids the expense of time and money to conduct a thorough face-to-face interview or assessment. The first thing you need to do is scan the resume for the minimum requirements for the position. If the candidate passes this lowest level of screening, phone him or her for a 30-minute interview. The purpose of the interview is to *scan the person for the minimum behavior, motivation, attitude and fit requirements for the position.*

For this phone interview have one or two scenarios prepared that are most indicative of what is required in the position. Prepare questions concerning issues with the résumé—gaps, frequent job changes, lack of training and so on. Have another couple of questions ready about basic requirements such as relocation, travel, pay, and so on. In addition to the hard answers you are looking for—judge their MOTIVATION, BEHAVIOR and COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS as outlined in the *Screening Interview* section of this booklet. If the client fails the “first date” scan, thank them and hang up the phone fast. If not, invite them to participate in your on-line assessment program, explain it as part of your internal system to assure you are making the best possible choice for your company, which is in the interests of both the candidate and your company.

Ninth Tip: *Your mother was right. Don't kiss on the first date.*

STAGE 2: The First Kiss

It makes sense to assess the candidate after the Screening Interview and before the more intense Exploration Interviews and reference checks. *The next steps depend on you knowing exactly what you are looking for because you have well defined expectations and a clear benchmark for this position.* In either case the assessments do two things:

- ✓ They confirm that the candidate is right for this position, and
- ✓ Provide a wealth of material from which to plan and prepare Exploration Interviews.

It is important to plan the interview as the Exploration Interview is a time intensive and critical stage in the hiring process. You have gone to great lengths to avoid interviewing the obviously wrong candidate, and so it is quite likely the person before you is attractive in many ways. It is imperative that the interview,

or more likely, the multiple interviews are well planned and carefully designed. The critical step is to develop a series of scenarios that will decisively validate or eliminate red flags raised by the assessments. The assessments plus your knowledge of the position are key inputs.

Tenth Tip: *Assess for all positions. A hiring mistake is costly no matter if it is the Receptionist or Chairman of the Board.*

STAGE 3: Meeting Your Parents

We encourage group interviews where possible. When you do that, each interviewer takes on a distinctly different set of issues and prepares to ask questions in that area. Others may ask clarifying questions on that topic, but the lead person will take notes, ask his/her prepared questions and be in charge of that segment. A typical format:

Interviewer 1—Focus on technical capability, knowledge, and suitability for the role. Interviewer chosen for technical competence.

Interviewer 2—Focus on management knowledge, skill and suitability. Will this candidate get things done through our people, will she develop our people and can she confront inappropriate employee behavior and poor results? Develop hypothetical situations you know will arise because they have come up before, or you anticipate certain conflicts among people or between this candidate and particular staff members. Interviewer chosen for competence as people manager.

Interviewer 3—Focus on leadership knowledge, skill, and suitability. Will this candidate be the one to take us to the future, are they excellent communicators, and is their vision consistent with ours? Establish hypothetical scenarios based on where you see the company headed. Interviewer chosen for competence as leader.

Interviewer 4—Focus on behavior, motivation, and attitudes suitable for the position. This person may largely be an observer to the interview. Validate the assessments and explore issues raised by the assessments. *Interviewer chosen for their knowledge of behavior, motivation and attitudes as a success factor in hiring selection.*

Immediately following the departure of the candidate (ideally), each interviewer reports back to the rest of the interviewers their notes, findings, and conclusions. The key is to make sure each interviewer heard the same thing. Score the candidate against pre-determined criteria.(see Appendix 1) to make apples-to-apples comparisons among candidates.

There may be multiple interviews. The more critical the position, the more people you will want to involve with the interview. Supervisors and managers, teammates, colleagues from around the company, perhaps even key

customers, vendors, or strategic partners. Given the possibility of many interviewers taking many different points of view, it is important to use a standard set of criteria to judge the applicants.

Key Reminders

- ✓ **Know yourself.** If you are highly optimistic and willing to help or please others, know that you will have trouble being objective about a candidate's flaws. This is an issue for most interviewers.
- ✓ **Know exactly what you are looking for (and not looking for) in a candidate.** Assessments and interviews are only useful to the extent you are clear about your expectations, have a well-defined benchmark, and accurate Job Description.
- ✓ **Do not yield the benefit of the doubt.** Chase down every contradictory statement, inconclusive answer, and outstanding question. Introduce stress into the interview process and be prepared to quantify and compare each candidate's predicted success in the position.
- ✓ **Finally, plan for and be organized about each interview.**

Re-cap of the Ten Interview Tips:

First Tip: *When you think you have your answer, ask two more questions to be sure.*

Second Tip: *Behavior is about how the candidate talks, not what he says.*

Third Tip: *Listen carefully to what the candidate sees most clearly around him.*

Fourth Tip: *Energy comes from within. No specific goals, direction, desires, or dreams? No energy.*

Fifth Tip: *Hiring Issues become Management Issues as soon as you hire the candidate.*

Sixth Tip: *Successful interviewers talk 10% of the time; the candidate talks 90% of the time.*

Seventh Tip: *70% of communication is non-verbal. Watch body language carefully.*

Eighth Tip: *Hire only for Aptitude and run the risk of firing for Attitude.*

Ninth Tip: *Your mother was right. Do not kiss on the first date.*

Tenth Tip: *Assess for all positions. A hiring mistake is costly no matter if it is the Receptionist or the Chairman of the Board.*

APPENDIX 1: Candidate Interview Evaluation

Candidate's Name: _____ Date: _____

Position Interviewed for: _____

Interviewer: _____

Scoring System: 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Average 1 – Unsatisfactory

| CRITERIA | SCORE | COMMENTS |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Education | | |
| Technical Qualifications | | |
| Experience | | |
| Curiosity / Fast Learner | | |
| Detail Management / Organization | | |
| Strategic Thinking | | |
| Communication / Listening Skills | | |
| Relationship / People Skills | | |
| Teamwork | | |
| Engagement | | |
| Enthusiasm / Attitude | | |
| Goal Achievement | | |
| Independent / Remote Work | | |
| Cultural Fit | | |
| Overall Evaluation | | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Education | Does the candidate possess appropriate knowledge, certifications, or training necessary for the position? |
| Technical Qualifications | Does the candidate possess the required technical skills to perform well in the position? |
| Experience | Does the candidate have the depth of experience relevant to this position? Have they demonstrated success in relevant situations over time? |
| Curiosity/Fast Learner | Have they made an effort in the past few months or few years to enhance their knowledge in their field of expertise or expand their knowledge in new areas? |
| Detail Management/Organization | Do they possess the ability organize themselves for large and complex projects? Do they employ effective tools or techniques? For Leaders: Are they able to prepare their teams for large and complex projects? |
| Strategic Thinking | Critical for Leadership roles. Are they good at presenting or explaining complex ideas? Are they able to see “the forest for the trees?” |
| Communication/Listening Skills | Does the candidate demonstrate the ability to present their thoughts clearly and effectively? Are they equally good at listening to and understanding others? |
| Relationship/People Skills | Have they demonstrated an ability to resolve differences and turn around difficult situations? |
| Teamwork | Did the candidate demonstrate, through answers and overall demeanor, good teambuilding and interpersonal skills? |
| Engagement | Does the candidate demonstrate an interest in improving or growing in their role or industry? |
| Enthusiasm/Attitude | Did the candidate express enthusiasm for the position and a positive attitude throughout the interview? |
| Goal Achievement | Does the candidate have a clear and specific definition of their path to success? How do they show that they are a self-starter? |
| Independent/Remote Work | (Only relevant to remote workers and leaders) Have they demonstrated the ability to make difficult decisions without much support? Are they comfortable with ambiguous situations or situations where they do not have “perfect” knowledge? |
| Cultural Fit | Based on the candidate’s attitude, demeanor, and answers, will they contribute to the direction of this organization? Do they share the values of your company and your clients? |

Recommendation (circle): Hire Consider Do Not Hire Better Qualified for Another Role

APPENDIX 2: Hiring Calculator

This tool can help you dollarize the value of hiring the right employee the first time—and is a useful exercise to lend urgency to your selection process. Following is a simplified version:

| | SALARY COSTS | HARD COSTS | SOFT COSTS | VACANT ROLES |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| DIRECT COSTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary Signing bonus and training expenses Benefits Taxes and other costs for a Total Salary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation processing including coaching, counseling, “managing” and other direct expenses Recruiting costs for search firms, ads, resume screening, interviewing, reference checking, background checks, testing, and other onboarding costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bad public relations, impacts on vendor relations, cost of other relationship issues Lost productivity of executive team—what they could have been producing while dealing with these issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost income or benefit while this key position is vacant |
| PRODUCTIVITY COSTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time it takes to get up to speed in this position extended by their total direct salary cost for the period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burden placed on co-workers or direct reports extended by the average salary of all the people affected for the period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost productivity on key projects or initiatives Good employees who left because of this person’s management style—and the cost to replace them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost income or benefit due to the unnecessary departure of good employees |

Now, add up the numbers in each box—what is the Total Salary (white box)? \$ _____

What are the Total Costs (add up all the gray boxes)? \$ _____

Calculate the ratio of Total Costs/Total Salary: Turnover Cost Ratio _____%

Typically, turnover cost is 100% to 200% of the extended salary, or more. Multiply your ratio by the salaries of people who have left, on average, each year.

Annual Turnover Cost \$ _____

APPENDIX 3: Interview Questions You Can and Cannot Ask

These guidelines will help you distinguish between lawful, acceptable interview questions and those that are unlawful. These guidelines are not complete and only provide major highlights. Remember: any question that is not specifically job-related may be construed as unlawful. Generally, if you do ask a question, you must consistently ask the question in every interview.

| CATEGORY | OK TO ASK | DO NOT ASK |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Age | <p>If hired can you provide proof of age and / or submit a work permit?</p> <p>Are you over or under 18? (If not, proof of age and work permit required)</p> | <p>What is your date of birth?</p> <p>How old are you?</p> |
| Arrests & Convictions | <p>Have you been convicted of any crime?</p> <p>Are any felony charges pending? Give details. (You must tell applicant a conviction is not an automatic bar to employment but is only considered as fitness for job performance.)</p> | <p>Have you ever been arrested?</p> <p>Have you ever been charged with any crime?</p> |
| Birthplace | <p>Only relevant for background check.</p> | <p>Where were you born?</p> <p>Where were your parents born?</p> |
| Citizenship | <p>Are you a US citizen?</p> <p>Do you intend to remain in the US?</p> <p>Can you submit proof of citizenship or immigration status?</p> <p>If you are not a citizen are you prevented from becoming lawfully employed because of visa or immigration status?</p> | <p>What is your country of citizenship?</p> <p>Whether or when you or family members became naturalized citizens.</p> <p>To submit a copy of your naturalization papers.</p> |
| Credit Rating | <p>Can you be bonded? Only if job related.</p> | <p>Questions about credit rating, charge accounts, ownership of car, etc.</p> |
| Disabilities & Health | <p>Are you capable of performing the essential tasks and duties of the position as they have been explained to you?</p> | <p>Are you handicapped?</p> <p>Do you have a disability?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for any of the following illnesses...?</p> <p>Have you ever had a Worker's Compensation claim?</p> |

| CATEGORY | OK TO ASK | DO NOT ASK |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Education | <p>Describe your academic, vocational or professional education.</p> <p>Please list the schools you've attended.</p> <p>What is the highest grade you completed?</p> | <p>List the dates you attended or graduated from high school or college. (Some employment applications may ask for attendance dates to account for employment gaps.)</p> |
| Emergency Contact | <p>Name and address of a person to be notified in case of emergency</p> | <p>Name and address of a relative to be notified in case of emergency.</p> |
| Handicaps | <p>Describe or demonstrate the job function and ask whether the applicant can perform the function with or without reasonable accommodation. If asked, must be asked of every applicant.</p> | <p>General questions about whether they are handicapped or the nature or severity of their handicaps</p> |
| Height & Weight | | <p>What is your height and / or weight?</p> |
| Marital & Family Status | <p>Name and address of parent or guardian only if applicant is a minor.</p> <p>Are there any activities, commitments or responsibilities that may hinder the work attendance requirements?</p> | <p>Marital status: spouse's name, employment, etc. Maiden name. Preference among Ms., Miss, or Mrs. Are you pregnant? Do you expect to be pregnant within the year? Do you live with your parents? With whom do you reside? Number & age of children, or intent to have children. About child care arrangements.</p> |
| Military Record | <p>Are you a veteran of the US Armed Forces or State Militia?</p> <p>If yes, describe any training or education received while in the military.</p> | <p>Type, conditions or dates of military discharge or about experiences in other the US Armed Forces or State Militia.</p> |
| Name | <p>Have you worked for this company under a different name?</p> <p>Does this company need any additional information about a change of name, use of an assumed name or nickname to check your work record?</p> | <p>Any inquiries that would indicate marital status, maiden name, ancestry, national origin.</p> <p>Has your original name been legally changed?</p> <p>Inquiries about preferred courtesy title: Miss, Mrs., Ms.</p> |
| National Origin & Language | <p>What languages do you read, speak or write fluently? Only if job related.</p> | <p>Ancestry, lineage, national origin, descent, parentage or nationality.</p> <p>Nationality of parents or spouse.</p> <p>Native language and how acquired proficiency.</p> |

| CATEGORY | OK TO ASK | DO NOT ASK |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Organizations | List memberships in any professional or trade organizations or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform the job. What office, if any, do or did you hold? Inquiry into any organization that the applicant is a member only if providing the name does not reveal race, religion or ancestry. | List any or all social organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges to which you belong. |
| Photographs | May inform that a photograph may be required after hire only if job related. | Submit a photograph with application or before hire. Can only request after hiring. |
| Race & Color | | Race, complexion, color of hair, eyes or skin. |
| Religion & Creed | Are you available to work Saturdays or Sundays if needed? Only if job related. | Religious affiliation, denomination, church, parish, pastor, minister or rabbi, religious holidays observed. |
| Relatives | Do you have any relatives already employed by this company? If yes, please list their names. | List names and addresses of relative(s) to be contacted in case of emergency. |
| References | Name of persons willing to provide professional or character references for you. Who referred you here? | What is the name of your pastor, minister or rabbi? |
| Residence | What is your current address? How long have you resided at that address? What was your former address and how long did you reside there? Only for background checks. | Do you own or rent? Can you give the names and relationships of the persons residing with you? |
| Sex | Only permissible where a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification exists. | Are you male or female? Any inquiry related to sex or ability to reproduce. Any inquiry related to sexual orientation. |
| Salary / Pay | What are your salary/pay expectations? | Any inquiry related to salary or pay history. |



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