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## Sample Interview Question Guide

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For effective interviewing of potential hires, it is important to understand the types of interview questions and what research reveals about their effectiveness.

The following types of interview questions are options to consider:

1. **Behavioral:** These objectively measure past behaviors as a predictor of future results.  
*What were the steps you followed to accomplish a task?*  
*Can you give a specific example of how you did this?*
2. **Competency:** The purpose is to align an applicant's past behaviors with specific competencies required for the position.  
*Can you give me a specific example of your leadership skills?*  
*Explain a way in which you sought a creative solution to a problem.*
3. **Credential Verification:** This type is sometimes known as resume verification, i.e.  
*What was your degree?*  
*How long were you with XYZ company?*
4. **Experience Verification:** These types of questions subjectively evaluate features of the applicant's background.  
*What were your responsibilities in that position?*  
*What did you learn in that class?*
5. **Opinion:** These subjectively analyze how the applicant would respond in a series of scenarios.  
*What are your strengths and weaknesses at work?*  
*What would you do in this type of situation?*

In studies it has been found that behavioral and competency interview questions yield a predictive validity for job success of 55%. Behavioral and competency interview questions are gaining greater acceptance as interviewers are trained and experience good results with hires. Credential, experience and opinion types of questions have a predictive validity for on the job success of just 10%, but are commonly used in interviews and may still help the hiring manager gain additional information about the applicant.

The following types of interview questions are not typically job-related or have a high predictive validity, and therefore are NOT recommended:

1. **Brainteaser:** The purpose is to evaluate your mental calculation skills and your creative ability to formulate an equation. *What is 1000 divided by 73?*
2. **Case:** The purpose is to evaluate your problem-solving abilities and how you would analyze and work through potential cases. *How many gas stations are there in Europe?*  
*What is your estimate of the global online retail market for books?*
3. **Dumb:** The purpose is to get past pre-programmed answers to find out if the applicant is capable of original thought. *What kind of animal would you like to be? What color best describes you?*

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SHOULD BE:

1. Based on Job Duties and be Job-related
2. Open-ended questions (to get the applicant to talk)
3. Past-performance questions
4. Measurable questions which can be scored numerically
5. LEGAL

## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- *Please give examples of a time you had to work closely with someone at work whose personality was very different from yours. What was the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *Give me examples of times you faced a conflict while working on a team in a work situation. How did you handle the situations?*
- *Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important in a work situation. What was the outcome?*
- *Tell me about a time you addressed an issue with a colleague, and in retrospect wish you had handled it differently. What did you learn from the situation?*
- *Please give an example of a time when you did not meet a client/customer's expectation. What happened and how did you resolve the situation?*
- *Describe a time you had to interact with a difficult client/customer. What was the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *How do you prioritize your client/customer's requests?*
- *Describe a time when it was especially important to make a good impression on a client/customer. How did you go about doing this?*
- *Please tell me about a time you were under a lot of pressure at work. What was the situation and what was the result?*
- *Describe a time your team or department was undergoing change. How did the change impact you and how did you adapt?*
- *Please give an example of a time you had to think quickly in a difficult or awkward situation at work. How did you handle it?*
- *Tell me about a time you failed at work. What was the situation, the results and what did you learn?*
- *Give me an example of a time you managed multiple responsibilities and work tasks. How did you prioritize and meet the requirements the various tasks and responsibilities?*
- *Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself at work. What steps did you take to meet the goal?*
- *Tell me about a time your work to-do list became overwhelming. What did you do to resolve the situation?*

- *Give me an example of a time you were able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way at work?*
- *Describe a time when you were the technical expert at work. What did you do to make sure everyone was able to understand you?*
- *Tell me about a time you had to rely on written communication to get your ideas across to your team at work.*
- *Please give me an example of a time you had to explain something fairly complex to a client/customer who was frustrated. How did you handle the situation?*
- *Tell me about presentation you gave that was successful and why it was successful?*
- *Describe a time you saw a potential problem at work and took the initiative to correct it instead of waiting for someone else to do it.*
- *Tell me about a time you had to work under close supervision. How did you handle this type of supervision?*
- *Tell me about a time you had to work very independently, with little direct supervision or guidance. How did you handle this type of supervision?*
- *Please give an example of a time you were able to be very creative at work. What was challenging about the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *Please give an example of when you have worked as part of a team at work?*
- *How do you manage interruptions at work when you are trying to focus on a task?*
- *What skills and experience do you bring to this position?*
- *How do you stay current in your professional field?*
- *Please describe your most significant work accomplishment that relates to the duties of this position?*
- *Please provide specific examples of your use of XYZ software/application, etc?*
- *Please give an example of a challenging situation you resolved as a manager.*
- *Please give examples of how you set and measure performance goals and development for your employees.*
- *How do you build consensus when facing disparate opinions/choices at work?*
- *Please give examples of when you have managed a work project successfully?*
- *Please give examples of how you work with others at work who are different from you?*
- *Please discuss the definition of diversity and how it impacts teamwork in a work situation?*

## ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Generally, any question that is personal in nature would be an illegal question. Also please refrain from writing down personal information if an applicant discloses in an interview.

- *Have you ever been arrested?*
- *Are you married? Are you single?*
- *What religious holidays do you practice? What is your religion?*
- *Do you have children? Do you have reliable childcare?*
- *What country are you from? Are you a US Citizen?*
- *Is English your first language?*
- *Do you have any outstanding debt?*
- *Do you socially drink? Do you use drugs? When was the last time you used illegal drugs?*
- *How long have you been in the workforce?*
- *What type of discharge did you receive from the military?*

If you are trying to determine if someone will be able to work certain hours, overtime or weekend work, you can frame the questions in a different manner to make them legal.

Ask:

- *This position requires weekend work/Sunday work. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement?*
- *This position requires occasional overtime at 5:00 pm or before 8:00 am. Will you be able to accommodate this request?*
- *This position requires you be available to be on site after a call in within 30 minutes. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement?*

As long as you make the question job-related, you should be legal.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact:

### **RECRUITMENT & WORKFORCE PLANNING**

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