

Interviewing & Hiring the Right Person for the Right Job at the Right Time

**The Most Important Decision
Your Company Can Make**

MAKING HUMAN CAPITAL
A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



A large, stylized flame graphic in a lighter shade of red, positioned in the upper right corner of the page, behind the title.

Introduction

How many times have you hired a candidate, and then found out the candidate was missing the right skill set? Hiring the right person for the right role at the right time is a strategic organizational responsibility. Often, we hire people for their hard / quantitative skills and very often overlook the importance of the soft / human skills that determine how the job gets done both inside and outside the organization. It is often 'just assumed' that professionals possess the all-important soft / human skills, but here is where the interview process can go off the rails.

Interview preparation is key. It starts with developing a detailed role benchmark that includes role responsibilities and competencies / capabilities for the role articulating both hard and soft skills. This benchmark becomes the springboard to take a deep dive into a candidate's background, looking for evidence and examples that align with the role benchmark.

Asking the right questions and using follow-up questions to elicit information that leads to tangible evidence is critical. To help with this process, we have outlined key questions focused on the following five soft / human topics:

FIVE SOFT / HUMAN TOPICS:

- 1. Growth Potential**
- 2. Culture Fit**
- 3. Collaboration**
- 4. Adaptability**
- 5. Leadership**

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Do You Want Your Company to Grow? Hire the Right Person with the Greatest Growth Potential

EMPLOYEES WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL AND THE LOOMING TALENT CRISIS

Here we will focus on interviewing questions that can help you tangibly determine the growth potential of a candidate. Why are these questions so incredibly important? Our organizations, according to Workforce 2020, are in a talent crisis. With the rate of change increasing, employee skills are deteriorating or become obsolete every 2–2.5 years. In many organizational functions, this 'skills obsolescence' is actually accelerating in a way we have not experienced before.

In our studies, when employees were surveyed, 60% responded that they fear becoming obsolete and irrelevant given the demands of the future workplace.

Since we are now working in a continuously changing and dynamic environment, we need to address the organizational need to have employees who have growth potential and can align and stay relevant with the rapidly changing work demands.

COST OF HIRING OR KEEPING THE WRONG PERSON

In addition, did you know that if an employee leaves an organization, it can cost as much as 1.5 times more to replace that employee? This means that hiring people who have the potential to grow with your company not only saves you the time and resources of replacing them, but it also saves the organization money.

TOP 5 GROWTH POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

If your company is in a growth mode, and what company isn't in today's world, it's critical that



you hire the right person in the right role with the right assessment of their growth potential.

To help determine if your candidates have the potential to grow with your organization, here are the **top 5 growth potential questions** to ask during your next candidate interview:

1. Recall a time when your manager was unavailable at a time when a problem arose. How did you handle the situation? With whom did you consult? What was the outcome? What did you learn?
2. Describe a time when you volunteered to expand your knowledge at work, as opposed to being directed to do so? What caused you to volunteer? What was the outcome? What did you learn?
3. What would motivate you to make a move from your current role?
4. When was the last occasion you asked for direct feedback from a superior? Why?
5. What was the biggest career goal you have ever achieved? What did it take for you to be successful? What did you learn?



Top 6 'Culture Fit' Questions: How to Avoid 'Culture Clash'

We often hear hiring managers say, "I can teach people skills, but hiring people to work in our culture is more important. I can't teach that!" These words are so true. How important is this topic to hiring in a growth organization? It's critical! Get it right and employee retention, productivity and engagement follow. Get it wrong, and the management nightmare begins. And with that nightmare, goes productivity issues, disengagement, and the spread of discontent among both your staff and the client users who must interact with your people. Culture clash affects and infects your entire organization.

ADDITIONAL CULTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Today, there are additional culture overlays that impact formerly stable organizational functions. In growth organizations, you need proactive problem solvers that create value. Here are some additional considerations regarding your people. Are your people:

- Reactive to the business or proactive business problem solvers?
- Business maintainers or business accelerators?
- Business partners or a cost center and cost drain?
- Value creators or value 'eroders'?
- Equipped with the right business skills that can anticipate and innovate to make the business more competitive?

These issues all come down to culture and the way your function and people act. How they embrace the operating norms, person by person,

will determine your operating culture. And we must remember that culture is fragile and can be fractured by one or two wrong hires.

HOW TO OPTIMIZE HIRING FOR 'CULTURE FIT'

Did you know that employees who are a good culture fit tend to have greater job satisfaction, superior job performance, and are more likely to stay with the company? When a significant number of hiring failures are due to poor culture fit, screening for this quality is key to finding the right employees for your organization.

THE TOP 6 'CULTURE FIT' QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR NEXT CANDIDATE INTERVIEW:

1. What are the three things that are most important to you in a job?
2. Tell me about a time in the last week / month when you've been satisfied, energized and productive at work. What were you doing?
3. Tell me about a time in the last week when you've been dissatisfied, disengaged, energy depleted and not productive at work. What were you doing?
4. What's the most interesting thing about you that is not on your resume?
5. What would make you choose our company over others?
6. What's the biggest misconception your coworkers have about you and why do they think that?



Hiring for the Collaboration Revolution: Top 6 Collaboration Questions

I recently attended a conference focused on the future of the workforce. The keynote speaker focused on the different work revolutions that have redefined the very nature of the workforce and shifting business needs. The speaker reviewed the issues of the industrial revolution and followed through to the technology and internet revolution.

Today, the speaker talked about how we are now entering the next workforce revolution – the collaboration revolution. The nature of organizations is changing and companies are embracing strategic partnerships and alliances, working virtually across geographies with new organizational structures that will perform and behave in vastly different ways.

The word collaboration has its root in Latin meaning to co-labor, or work together. Collaboration is defined as:

The action of working with someone to produce or create something. To work together, especially in a joint intellectual venture.

What does this mean for your interviewing and hiring process? In tomorrow's organizations, collaboration will be a key skill as employees work:

- in matrix organizations - across internal departments
- with contractors – outside the organizational hierarchy
- with vendors and outsourced organizations

It's no secret that hiring people who are able to work well with others is essential to having a productive and happy team. Why is this important? Because a majority of employees and executives believe that a lack of collaboration and team alignment can directly impact the outcome of a task or project.



TOP 6 COLLABORATION QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How did you handle interactions with that person?
2. Tell me about a time when you were communicating with someone and they did not understand what you were saying. What did you do? What was the issue? What did you learn?
3. Tell me about one of your favorite experiences working with a team and your contribution.
4. Describe the best partner or supervisor with whom you've worked. What part of their managing or work style appealed to you? Why?
5. Describe the worst partner or supervisor with whom you've worked. What part of their managing or work style was difficult for you? What did you do about it?
6. Can you share an experience where a project dramatically shifted directions at the last minute? What was the outcome? What did you learn from the experience?



Hiring for Adaptability: A Major Hiring Challenge

Did you know that a significant majority of hiring managers say Adaptability is the most important soft skill they screen for? To stay competitive today, your company needs to be able to adapt to a changing economy and business needs. This means you also need to hire employees who are able to adapt, as well.

So what does this mean for your hiring process? Adaptability is one of the most difficult challenges in the hiring process. Why? Because when you consider how positions are evolving today, the role of many employees increasingly requires the Adaptability soft skill. Adaptability is now required for the following:

- Adaptability with evolving and new information / knowledge / technologies
- Adaptability when moving up the management and leadership ladder
- Adaptability when dealing with peers or matrixed colleagues
- Adaptability when dealing with contractors
- Adaptability when interacting with internal clients / partners / users
- Adaptability when dealing with vendors
- Adaptability when working with outsourced functions

Given this list, it's safe to say that Adaptability is required for almost every aspect of a professional's responsibilities. However, we often just

screen for the first bullet, **Adaptability with evolving and new information / knowledge / technologies**. That screen is 'relatively' easy since the topics to explore are more tangible and the responses are more quantitative. Screening for the other Adaptability bullets in the interview process can be very difficult given the many potential layers of questions that need to be asked to arrive at tangible and credible responses.

Since an interview is typically an hour, you have very little time to figure out if the person has the Adaptability qualities you are looking for in your next hire. The good news is that behavioral interview questions are a proven way to more easily determine what someone will be like to work with.

HERE ARE THE TOP 5 ADAPTABILITY QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR NEXT CANDIDATE INTERVIEW:

1. Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you had never done before. How did you react? What did you learn?
2. Describe a situation in which you embraced a new system, process, technology or idea at work that was a major departure from the old way of doing things?
3. Recall a time when you were assigned a task outside your job description. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
4. Tell me about the biggest change you have had to deal with. How did you adapt to that change?
5. Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project to achieve your objectives.



Top 5 'Leadership' Questions to Ask Your Candidates

Did you know that organizations with high-quality leaders are more likely to outperform their competition? Finding people who will be able to inspire, motivate, and influence others will be essential to your company's success.

To help determine if your candidates have what it takes to become high-quality leaders, here are the top 5 leadership questions to ask during your next candidate interview:

1. Tell me about the last time something significant didn't go according to plan at work. What was your role? What was the outcome?
2. Describe a situation where you needed to persuade someone to see things your way. What steps did you take? What were the results?
3. Give me an example of a time when you felt you led by example. What did you do and how did others react?
4. Tell me about the toughest decision you had to make in the last six months.
5. Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your coworkers or group? How did you do it? What were the results?





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