

Randstad's Interview Essentials



Speaking of work...

By all measures, the job market is undergoing tremendous changes that are transforming the way companies search for employees and the way employees search for work. As demand for qualified workers intensifies, the ability to filter potential candidates down to the right employee becomes more crucial than ever before.

At Randstad, our track record for finding the right candidate is rooted in our "Job Fit, Boss Fit, Company Fit" philosophy. This unique, three-tiered approach has served us well across Canada and in 19 countries throughout Europe, Asia and North America.

This exclusive tool is filled with information on our distinct philosophy, plus valuable tips and pertinent advice you can use to simplify your interview process and find the candidate you're looking for.

Take the time to read through the information that follows. Then give us a call if you have any questions or need more information.

Job Fit



To make the right hiring decisions, you should look for candidates who not only have the right skill sets and experience to do the job, but also a legitimate interest in performing the tasks involved. In the interview, take the time to ask about the candidate's specific strengths and weaknesses as well as their likes and dislikes. The following questions will help you delve a little deeper into these areas.

In your current/previous position(s), what were your main responsibilities?

What duties did you enjoy most?

What did you like most about these duties?

What duties did you enjoy the least?

What did you dislike about these duties?

Describe a difficult problem you had to solve in your last or current position. How did you go about resolving it?

Give me an example of a mistake you have made at work. What caused you to make that error and how did you rectify it?

What aspects of your previous job did you find stressful? How did that stress affect you or your performance?

In your most recent performance appraisal:

What did your supervisor feel were your greatest strengths?

What developmental areas did he/she identify?

Do you agree with their assessment?

Based on your previous work experience:

What do you think would be the most interesting or enjoyable aspects of the position?

Why?

What do you think would be the most difficult or challenging aspect of the position? Why?

In your current job search, what other positions have you applied for or considered?

What was appealing about these positions?

What types of positions, for which you are qualified, have you avoided? What is it about these positions that you find unappealing?

Interpreting the answers

The best way to predict future performance is through past performance. You are ideally looking for a candidate who has demonstrated their competence and sustained interest in positions similar to yours in the past. If the candidate is inexperienced, traits such as conscientiousness, interest and ability to learn new things will give you a good idea of what to expect. Remember to consider both ability (technical skills and experience) and willingness (preferences and criteria). Many people are technically competent at jobs they quit due to lack of interest.

Boss Fit

It is a well-accepted fact that the chemistry or fit between manager and employee is an excellent predictor of the ultimate success and sustainability of the employment relationship. For this reason, it is important to explore what a potential employee is looking for in a boss and the factors that have contributed to the success and/or failure of their previous manager-employee relationships.

Describe the best supervisor you ever had. What did you appreciate the most about this person?

Tell me about the supervisor that was the most effective at motivating you. What, specifically, did they do?

Describe the supervisor that you least enjoyed working for? What specifically did you dislike about their approach? What impact did this supervisor have on your performance?

Give me an example of a time when your boss did something that demotivated you. What was the situation and how did you react?

In your previous jobs, have you ever reported to more than one person at a time? Did this reporting structure work for you? Why or why not?

Give an example of a time when you received critical feedback from your supervisor. How did they approach giving you the feedback? What was your reaction?

Tell me about a criticism you received from a supervisor that you felt was not justified. How did you react?

In your most recent position, how much direction did you get from your direct supervisor? Do you feel that this level of supervision was sufficient, excessive or not enough?

Describe a time where your supervisor gave you a task to complete or an instruction and you were unclear. What did you do?



Interpreting the answers

A great match between a manager and an employee begins with shared values and mutual understanding. Take a few minutes to candidly assess your style as a manager, and compare it to the anecdotes of past great and not-so-great boss-employee relationships shared with you by the candidate. Will you be effective at motivating this employee? Will you be able to deliver feedback or criticism in a manner acceptable to this person? Will the level of supervision you provide be in keeping with what they need and want? In the area of boss fit, compromise can be costly and stressful for everyone concerned. When you get it right, the results speak for themselves.

Company Fit



An essential part of recruiting is to hire employees who will be motivated by their work environment, who will work well with other members of the team and who will embrace, or at the very least respect, the values of the company. Employees are most productive in a team and in an environment where their principles, priorities and objectives fit. Here are some questions to help you assess if a prospective employee will be an asset or a liability to your organization.

What do you know about our company?

What interests you about our company? What aspects of working here would you find the most appealing?

Of the companies you've worked for, thus far in your career, which one did you most enjoy working for and why?

Which employer least impressed you? What could they have done to become a better employer?

When you think of the different departments or teams in which you have worked:

Where did you experience the best teamwork?

What made that team successful?

Where did you experience the least effective teamwork?

What reduced this team's effectiveness?

Provide an example of someone you found difficult to work with and why?

Describe a time when you had a difficulty accomplishing a task that had been assigned to you because of an obstacle you encountered within your department or company. What did you do?

Describe a time in your previous job where you were asked to do something you did not agree with. What did you do?

Describe the different workspace arrangements you've experienced (open space, cubicle, private office...). Which one worked best for you? Why?

Interpreting the answers

In general, employees who are able to function well in teams and organizations will have had mostly positive experiences with past employers. Listen closely to the employee's description of the teams they have worked with. Most effective team players will use "we" more than "I" when describing team projects and accomplishments and will demonstrate a measure of understanding and ownership for team objectives. Conflicts or disagreements between colleagues are bound to occur, and the ability to resolve these situations constructively is a valuable skill for your employees to have. Here again, how these situations have been handled in the past should speak volumes.

Interview Tips

To help you make your next hiring decision as objective and well-informed as possible, we have included some pointers you can keep in mind when interviewing potential candidates.

Paint a True Picture. Be sure to give the candidate a full and accurate description of the position, the boss and the work environment. Tell them both the high points and low points and observe their reaction.

Sell as well as Buy. In today's employment market, candidates have more choices than ever before. That means, more job offers are refused. If you are interested in a candidate, take time to answer their questions and introduce them to their future colleagues.

Follow don't Lead. Whenever possible ask candidates to explain, elaborate or give examples of past experiences that illustrate their perspective or point of view. This will prevent you from drawing incorrect conclusions.

Patience. Avoid making decisions about candidates in the first few minutes of an interview since first impressions tend to be based on incomplete information and false perceptions.

Horns and Halos. All candidates will have both strengths and weaknesses pertinent to your position. Try not to love or hate the candidate based on a single factor or attribute.

A lot like me. The best teams are composed of people with diverse skills, experiences and backgrounds. Avoid favouring those most like yourself.

Thank you for taking the time to go through this guide. We hope it helps you in your quest to find the perfect candidate.

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