

HIRING OUTSTANDING TALENT

INTERVIEWING EXCELLENCE GUIDE

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SECTION I

OVERVIEW OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

“If we don’t get the people thing right, we lose; it is the most important thing in all our businesses.”

--Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

Acquiring and retaining quality talent is the key to any organization's success. Managers play a critical role in the hiring of qualified and motivated people. The result is that the right employees are in place to deliver on the goals of the business.

The employment interview is a vital component in the hiring process. In order to hire the most qualified candidate from outside the company or internally, managers must be well versed in how to effectively conduct interviews. In addition, managers must be aware of federal and state legislation that precludes them from asking certain questions during an interview. The hiring process can be very costly for employers if not handled correctly. The expenses associated with turnover of a position are approximately 1.5 times the annual salary of an exempt employee and 0.5 times the annual base salary for Non-exempt employees (Saratoga Institute, a PwC affiliate). Potential legal outlays resulting from an improper interview can be significant.

This guide was designed to help you achieve the greatest results when hiring high-quality employees. This quick reference tool will help you get ready to fill the position opening you have, develop your interviewing skills, plan the questions you will ask during the interview, learn what you legally can and cannot ask, and understand your responsibilities when working with the our staffing organization.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Preparation for an interview begins well before you shake hands with a candidate. In fact, the initial steps of preparing for interviews focus solely on the position and not on the candidates you will meet.

Using the Candidate Profile Template, you start by analyzing what you know about the position to determine the work that needs to be done, the critical skills, technical knowledge, characteristics, and competencies required to perform in the position successfully. These selection standards are the **job success factors and competencies** for the position. The more concretely you identify the work, the critical skills, knowledge, characteristics and competencies of a position opening, the more accurately you will be able to match the position to a candidate and a candidate to the position.

Skills and technical knowledge are the things a person needs to be able to do or must know in order to perform the job well. Characteristics and competencies are the performance factors that affect a person’s ability to apply themselves in a position.

The job success factors and competencies become the selection standards used when seeking out candidates who have shown they are capable of exhibiting those

qualifications and behaviors for the position. In the case of several qualified candidates, these are used to determine which candidate best possesses the qualifications to meet the job requirements.

To ensure that the selection standards objectively reflect the requirements of the position, they:

- ❖ must be identified prior to interviewing any candidate,
- and
- ❖ must be job-related and necessary for success in the position.

Realistically, few candidates will have the exact experience for which you are recruiting. However, by using consistent selection standards, you are equipped to find evidence that supports your evaluation of a candidate's ability to perform the job. You are ensuring each candidate has an equal and fair opportunity to present job-relevant evidence of his or her capabilities. If competencies are ignored, you will be basing your hiring decisions on criteria not related to job performance.

Now that we have focused solely on the position, we are ready to move forward and broaden our focus to include the candidates.

SPECIFICS FOR CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

"Past behavior predicts future performance" is the foundation of behavioral-based interviewing. The key assumption is that job candidates who have previously demonstrated a particular behavior to address a situation will repeat that behavior in the future when confronted with a similar set of problems.

The face-to-face meeting with candidates has three objectives:

- Probe candidates for information related to the selection standards of the position.
- Create a comfortable interview climate that enables candidates to freely share and disclose information about their background and experience.
- Maintain a positive image as a potential employer.

To assist you in ensuring these objectives are met, it is important to organize the time you spend with a candidate. An effective way to do this is to use a structured interview approach:

1. Screen carefully
2. Plan the formal interview
3. Create a proper interview environment
4. Put the candidate at ease
5. Outline the interview "Agenda" (Interview Triangle - jobs, self, others)
6. Information gathering
7. Clarify contradictions
8. Control the interview

9. Take notes
10. Information giving
11. Close the interview
12. Evaluate the Candidate
13. Select the Best Candidate

Throughout this section, you will learn the necessary steps to take before, during and after you meet with your candidate to ensure a successful and productive meeting.

SCREEN CAREFULLY

The basic screening device in many situations will be the information contained in the resume. But should you come across a candidate whose resume is not strong but who has written a compelling cover letter or comes with a recommendation from somebody you trust, that candidate is probably worth a mini-interview by phone. Talking to candidates by phone is an excellent way to narrow down a large field to screen in those who appear to be worth a closer look. The phone interview is also useful before you go to the trouble or expense of bringing in a candidate from out of town.

PLAN THE FORMAL INTERVIEW

It is important that you are prepared when you interview the candidate. The best way to prepare is to be familiar with the Candidate Profile, their resume, details of the job description, job success factors and functional competencies. By reviewing the resume, you will not waste time getting information that is already available to you. You should use this time to plan exactly what it is you want to learn about this particular candidate. Review the resume 10 minutes prior to the interview so that it is fresh in your mind. The number of questions you can ask a candidate is enormous. You should jot down a general plan for the interview, along with specific questions you want to have answered. There is no need to memorize the questions. Decide in advance of the interview how long it should take to interview for a particular position and make sure to allocate sufficient time. Make a list of the interview questions that will help determine the information you receive to help you make a decision. Asking these questions consistently as you conduct your interviews will be helpful as you compare and evaluate candidates.

CREATE A PROPER INTERVIEW ENVIRONMENT

Hold the interview in a quiet place where you can talk with candidates, free from interruptions. If you are in a cube, it is best to find an open office or conference room. Activate your “Do Not Disturb” or “Call Forward” on your phone to prevent the phone from ringing while you are interviewing.

PUT THE CANDIDATE AT EASE

It is your responsibility as the interviewer, to do whatever you can to ease the tension and establish a comfortable rapport. By creating a comfortable environment, the candidate will be less nervous and you will be able to get an accurate assessment of the candidate’s ability and willingness to do the job. Greet the candidate. Introduce yourself. Use the candidate’s name throughout the interview. Put them at ease with small talk on a general topic or something related to the particular applicant such as the

weather or how he or she likes the area if that person recently relocated. Let the candidate know what you do and how your job relates to the position for which he or she is interviewing.

OUTLINE THE INTERVIEW “AGENDA”

Describe the structure of the interview meeting to the candidate and get agreement on following it. Providing an overview to the candidate of what you want to accomplish during your time together will set the stage for how the interview will flow.

Example: “We are interviewing you for the position of Sr. Product Manager. What I want to gain from this interview is a general sense of your experience, your background and some of the strengths you think you could bring to this position. We will leave some time at the end of the interview so I can answer any questions you have and provide you with job and company information.”

INFORMATION GATHERING

Ask the candidate your interview questions – and let the candidate do the talking! Collect information about experience, education, and activities, probing for clarification when needed. It is very easy, when interviewing a candidate to spend all the time selling them on the job and the company. The general rule is that as the interviewer, you should do no more than 20% of the talking. Bear in mind that experienced job seekers may do their best to get you to do more of the talking so that they can get a better sense of exactly what you are looking for and tailor their answers accordingly. Just let them know that you will answer questions at the end of the interview and that you have some information you would like to gather first.

CLARIFY CONTRADICTIONS

Ask about past errors, problems or weaknesses. Probe for contrary evidence and clarify any discrepancies or contradictory information that may have come up during the interview.

CONTROL THE INTERVIEW

Stay in control of the interview. Some candidates will try to their best to get you to do most of the talking by turning the interview around by asking you a lot of questions. They may also steer away from the subjects they do not want to discuss. Your task in these situations is simple: you have to shift the focus away from you and shift it back to the candidate. You should also steer the candidate to the areas that you want to explore. There is no single technique for staying in control of an interview. It is primarily a matter of knowing ahead of time what you are looking for and being alert during the interview to signs that you are moving off course.

TAKE NOTES

You are likely to recall most of the details of the interview by taking notes. If you do not take notes, chances increase you are likely to forget certain details of the interview that could be important. Then, when the time comes to evaluate the candidate, you will rely on your overall or “gut” reaction to the candidate. Candidates interviewed early on may be given less consideration. It is best to let the candidate know ahead of time that you

will be taking notes. Do your best to keep the notes brief as opposed to writing everything down. Also, write down the actual pieces of communication and avoid documenting interpretations of what you are hearing from the candidate.

INFORMATION GIVING

Provide information on the position and the company. Answer questions from the candidate. Represent the position accurately to candidates. This will help the candidate understand the requirements of the position and help you match the right person to the opportunity. Regardless of how much a candidate impresses you during the interview, resist the temptation to oversell the position. It is to make sure the person you hire represents a good “fit” with the position and the company. Be as factual as you can when describing the position.

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW

The best way to end the interview will depend, in part, on your impression of the candidate during the interview. Be sure that you do not mislead the candidate into believing that they will be coming back for more interviews or that they will get the job. It is best to just let them know that you appreciated having the opportunity to meet with them and learn about their experience and that the Staffing Representative will be in touch with them.

EVALUATE THE CANDIDATE

The question often comes up – when is the best time to complete an evaluation of a candidate? The best time to complete it is immediately after your interview when the specifics are still fresh in your mind. If you are interviewing several candidates in one day and wait until the end of the day to complete your evaluation on all of them, it will be a much more difficult task.

To make an objective evaluation of a candidate, review your interview notes for concrete evidence of capabilities related to each selection standard. To do this your notes should include:

- ❖ Information supplied by the candidate
- ❖ Observations you made of specific candidate behavior during the interview

Valid evidence of a candidate’s acceptability:

Valid evidence IS:	Valid evidence IS NOT:
Related to a selection standard	Information irrelevant to successful job performance
Information reported by applicant	A conclusion without any facts to back it up
Specific observations of the candidate’s behavior	An opinion unsupported by observed examples

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Is to be based on the unbiased, objective evaluation of the candidates' backgrounds and experience compared to the identified selection standards, you are in a position to identify the best qualified candidate for the job.

SECTION II

LEGAL ASPECTS OF INTERVIEWING

There are legal implications to keep in mind when interviewing candidates. The legal aspects are important because if not handled properly, it can result in significant financial, time and resource costs to you and the company.

There are currently over 400 federal laws pertaining to employee rights and selection. The following is a list of the major laws and applications that apply to everyone involved in the interview process.

WHAT LAWS APPLY

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the cornerstone to anti-discrimination legislation in the U.S. Title VII of this act pertains to labor and employment. Its purpose is to require the removal of artificial, arbitrary, and unnecessary barriers to employment when such impediments discriminate against individuals based on race, sex, or religious beliefs.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 amended Title VII to prohibit discrimination based on childbirth, pregnancy or related medical conditions.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (as amended in 1978) prohibits discrimination in hiring of individuals age 40 and older.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits job discrimination against otherwise qualified disabled individuals.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 prohibits the employment of illegal aliens, except under certain specified conditions.

The Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended by the Equal Pay Act, sets minimum wages, as well as overtime and equal pay standards.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, transportation, public accommodation, and telecommunications.

THREE “RULES OF THUMB”

Curious about exactly what constitutes a discriminatory question? Below is a summary of interview principles that will help you stay on the right side of the law. Three key points to remember concerning the legal aspects of interviewing are:

1. Never ask a question of one candidate that you would not ask all candidates.
2. Every question you ask must be job-related.
3. A question must not call attention to the fact that a candidate is a member of a group of people protected by law. This includes religion, race or color, National Origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, gender, marital or family status, pregnancy, or medical condition.

Any question asked must be legal. Your questions should be designed to help you determine the suitability of the candidate to a particular job. Job-related questions are the only legal means to help you determine a candidate's skills and qualifications for the position. If a candidate perceives that he/she was discriminated against because of *non-job-related information* that you uncovered during the interview or other conversations that led to a non-hiring decision, then that individual could bring a law suit against you and the company for failing to hire them. The company is put into the position of needing to defend the decision and prove that discrimination did not occur when making the decision to not hire.

EXAMPLES OF LEGAL QUESTIONS AND INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

SUBJECT	LEGAL QUESTIONS	INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS
Age	If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age? If under 18, can you, after employment, submit a work permit?	How old are you? What year were you born? When did you graduate from high school?
Disability	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation?	Do you have any physical or mental disabilities? Have you ever received worker's compensation? What is the nature or severity of your disability?
Arrests or Convictions	Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Note: Such a question must be accompanied by a statement that a conviction will not necessarily disqualify an applicant from employment. A conviction will be considered only as it relates to fitness to perform the job candidate is seeking.	Have you ever been arrested?
Race	None	What is your race?
Citizenship; Birthplace	If hired, can you furnish legal proof that you are eligible to work in the United States? Are you fluent in any languages other than English? Note: The second question can be asked only when it relates to the job being sought by the candidate.	Where were you born? Are you a U.S. citizen? How did you acquire the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language?
Sex	None	I can't determine from your name, but are you male or female?
Sex; Marital Status; Family; Religion	Statement by employer of regular days, hours, shifts to be worked or travel required. Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the days and hours required or travel expectations?	Do you have any children? What are your child-care arrangements? What is your maiden name? Are you married? What is your religion? Does your religion prevent you from working weekends or holidays? What religious days do you observe?

ORAL EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

The company is an at-will employer. A contract can be created unintentionally that will eliminate the at-will relationship when an employer orally promises that:

- Employment will continue for a particular period
- Employment will be terminated only for certain reasons
- An employee will be entitled to particular procedures before termination
- An employee will be considered or selected for a transfer or promotion

WHAT CAN YOU ASK?

Questions that relate specifically to the candidate's prior education and work experience and to any candidate's attitudes that have an obvious bearing on the job. Questions that fall within this framework can be arranged in any number of ways. Some recommended categories you can choose from are:

- Relevant knowledge, experience & skills
- Past performance/work history
- Driving for Results
- Customer Focus
- Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Leadership/ Management

SECTION III

DEVELOPING BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The goal of the interview is to have 3 questions answered once the interview is finished:

- ❖ Is the candidate **able** to do the job?
- ❖ Is the candidate **willing** to do the job?
- ❖ Is the candidate **manageable**?

The three best sources for developing questions are from:

1. Selection standards derived from identified success factors and competencies for the position.
2. Review of candidate's resume and/or application.
3. Information the candidate provides during the interview itself.

The best source of information to help you develop good interviewing questions is the selection standards derived from the success factors and competencies identified for the position. Since you will use the selection standards to evaluate each candidate, the questions you develop should investigate these specific areas. All of the questions you develop must determine whether the candidate has the necessary skills, technical knowledge, and abilities to perform the position. In other words, every question must relate to a previously identified and defined selection standard.

One of the best predictors of future performance in a position is past performance. Behavioral interview questions uncover demonstrated skills, knowledge and abilities that are applicable to a position. When developing interviewing questions, you will want the questions to get the candidate to tell you about what they have done and how they have performed. What you learn will indicate the candidate's capabilities related to each of the selection standards of the position you have open. If a person has mastered a certain skill or technical knowledge in a previous assignment, he or she is likely to be able to transfer similar skills to the same level of competence in a new situation.

For example, if a candidate for a sales position has exceeded sales quotas in another job under conditions that approximate your organization, you can reasonably expect the person to exceed similar sales quotas again. If the candidate does not appear to have direct comparable work experience, probe for experiences similar to those you seek.

PERFECT YOUR QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

Knowing **how** to ask questions is just as important as knowing which questions to ask.

There are several different ways of asking the same question. Depending on the situation, you may want to vary the approach. Here are some options:

CLOSE-ENDED

These, of course, are “yes” or “no” questions. They do not encourage a candidate to talk. These should be used sparingly. Close ended questions can be effectively used to confirm your understanding of a particular aspect of the candidate’s background or experience.

Example: “Do you enjoy supervising people?”

HYPOTHETICAL

This is a “what if” question. This style of questioning can give good insight into how the candidate thinks. These questions should be limited as they may not be as effective in learning about the competencies a candidate may have actually demonstrated on the job.

Example: “What steps would you take to prepare for supervising new staff?”

LOADED

Loaded questions are questions in which you ask the candidate to choose the lesser of two evils. Loaded questions should be avoided.

Example: “Do you enjoy firing people or do you consider yourself to be a softy?”

MULTIPLE

A multiple question is several questions at once. The problem with this style of questioning is that you can rarely expect to get satisfactory answers to all of them at once.

Example: “Tell me about your last supervisor. What were her strengths and weaknesses? What did you think you learned from her?”

OPEN-ENDED

These force the candidate to elaborate on a response. Most of your questions should take on this form. There are two types of open-ended questions to use in an interview. The first is a primary open-ended question. The other is a secondary open-ended question.

Primary Questions:

Primary open-ended questions allow you to introduce a new topic or area for discussion during the interview. Primary open-ended questions enable a candidate to follow your train of thought in terms of what you want to cover or probe next.

Example: “Let’s move on to another area. How does your current assignment compare to other positions you have held?”

Secondary Questions:

Secondary open-ended questions are follow-up questions to a primary one. They focus on the specifics and require a candidate to provide additional, detailed information on the topic being discussed. Much of your candidate evaluation is made from information uncovered through a series of secondary open-ended questions. A common error most inexperienced interviewers make is to ask only primary open-ended questions without following up with a series of secondary open-ended questions.

Example: “Tell me about a specific situation in which you exceeded expectations for an objective. How was this accomplished?”

There are two types of interviews to consider when developing your questions for the candidate:

- Phone Interviews
- Face-to-Face Interviews

Whether you conduct an interview by phone or face-to-face, follow a logical, structured process and use behavioral interviewing techniques. Before conducting any interview, spend the time up front planning and preparing to maximize the interview effectiveness.

What follows is a resource library of possible questions you can use, modify or supplement when developing questions for interviews you plan to conduct.

LIBRARY OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PHONE SCREEN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions seek depth of experience, grasp of functional responsibilities, highlight the preference for how time is spent at work, and demonstrates the applicant's ability to contribute in crucial areas.

1. *What kind of experience do you have?*
2. *What aspects of your work do you consider most crucial?*
3. *Of all the work you have done, where have you been most successful?*

KNOCK-OUT QUESTIONS

If the candidate cannot answer them, he/she is removed from further consideration. These questions will help you determine whether the candidate has a firm grasp of what it takes to do the job. Answers that are way off base from the required job success factors and competencies identified for the position should raise a red flag.

1. *What would you say are the broad responsibilities of a _____ (position title)?*
2. *What would you say are the major qualities this job demands? Or, What would you say are the traits a good (title of position) would possess?*
3. *Describe to me how your job relates to the overall goals of your department and company.*

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Purpose: These questions focus on an individual's broad ability to take the rough that goes with the smooth in every job. These questions give you the opportunity to see if the candidate's needs match what the opening can genuinely provide.

1. *What would you change about your current job? And, What aspects of it do you like least?*
2. *What aspects of your job do you like most?*
3. *What are the most repetitive tasks in your job? How do you handle them?*
4. *What are you looking for in your next position?*
5. *What kinds of things bother you most about your current position?*

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

DRIVE FOR RESULTS

Purpose: To determine candidate's energy, desire and commitment to achieve business results. Ability to set and prioritize realistic, specific goals and objectives. Ability to make quality decisions quickly and take action. Can be counted on to exceed goals successfully. Is consistently one of the top performers, bottom-line oriented and pushes self and others for results.

1. Tell me about a time when your department was going through long-term changes or working on a long-term project. What did you do to keep you staff focused?
2. Tell me about an important goal you failed to achieve.
3. Describe a time when you set a goal for yourself that was too low or too high.
4. Describe how you set your goals for last year and how you measured your work. Did you achieve your goals? If not, why not and how would you do it differently?
5. Describe to me about a major project you recently finished and specifically, how did you set the goals and monitor your progress?
6. Tell me about a time when you were not willing or not able to make the sacrifice or commitment necessary to achieve a goal.
7. Describe your organization's culture and how that culture made it challenging for you to achieve one of your goals.
8. Describe a time when the cards were stacked against you or your group completing a project on time, and you still met the deadline. What happened?
9. Tell me about a time when a goal you achieved was because you wanted to, not because others expected it of you.
10. What would your manager/peers say about your results orientation?
11. Tell me about some goals you have set for yourself and how you went about meeting them.
12. Describe a high pressure situation you had to handle at work. Tell me what happened, who was involved and what you did in terms of problem solving.
13. Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with frequent job changes or unexpected events on the job. What does this situation say about your ability to work in an ambiguous or unstructured circumstance?

14. Tell me about a specific experience of yours that illustrates your ability to influence another person so that an outcome was achieved. Use an example that involves changing an attitude, selling an idea or being persuasive.
15. What achievements are you most proud of?
16. How did you feel about your workload? How did you divide your time among your major areas of responsibility?
17. Would you give me an example of when you successfully sold your ideas to your peers? To upper management? What was important to your success in how you handled the situation?
18. Describe your most disappointing experience in presenting and gaining the support of top management for an idea or proposal. What happened? What would you do differently?
19. Think of a crisis situation where things got out of control. Why did it happen and what was your role in the chain of events?
20. Tell me about an occasion when your performance did not live up to your expectation.
21. How could you have improved your performance in your last position?
22. How would your manager grade your ability to cope with last-minute change without breaking stride?
23. How many projects have you handled at one time?
24. Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.
25. What was the most significant change you made in your organization in the last six months? How successfully do you think you implemented this change? What feedback did you get about how you implemented this change?
26. What projects or ideas were implemented or carried out successfully primarily because of you?
27. Describe a situation where you found your results were not up to budget or company expectation. What did you do to rectify the matter?
28. How do you get your work assignments? Do you generate any of your own assignments? Give me an example.
29. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

30. Do you set goals for yourself? Tell me about an important goal you set recently. What have you done to reach it? How did you organize and plan for it?
31. To what extent has your past work required you to be skilled in the analysis of technical reports or information?
32. Give me an example of a time when you actively defined several solutions to a single problem. Did you use any tools such as research, brainstorming, and mathematics?

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Purpose: To determine how the candidate approaches customer service. Is dedicated to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers. Gets first-hand customer information and uses it for improvements in products and services. Acts with customers in mind. Establishes and maintains effective relationships with customers and gains their trust and respect.

1. Tell me about some proactive measures you have taken to strengthen your relationship or develop a relationship with a customer. What was the result?
2. Provide an example of when you invested additional time understanding your customer's needs or perspective. What was the result?
3. Have you ever had a disagreement with a customer? Tell me how it was resolved.
4. Describe a situation with an unhappy customer that you wish you would have handled differently.
5. Give me an example of a time when you surpassed your customer's expectations.
6. How have you proactively addressed a customer's (internal or external) concern with your team or product?
7. In your present (or past) position, who are (were) your customers?
8. What metrics can be used to measure user satisfaction with _____?
9. Please explain your perspective towards customer service.
10. Is the customer always right? Why?
11. Describe a situation in which you had an unhappy customer. What did you do to correct the situation?
12. Describe a time when you were under pressure to make an immediate decision, perhaps without the aid of a manager.
13. Give me an example of a time when you stuck by a decision, even though it was under attack by your clients.
14. What types of experiences have you had in talking with customers or clients? Tell me about a time when the circumstances were difficult.
15. Some situations require us to express ideas and opinions in a very tactful and careful way. Tell me about a time when you were successful with this particular skill with a customer.

16. Just about anybody can give a routine, standard answer to common problems; however, the payoff is often in the development of unique solutions to common problems experienced by our customers. Tell me about a time when you were able to create a novel solution to an issue.
17. In the work situation, we must all compromise to make things happen at times. Tell me about a time when you felt it necessary to compromise with a client about a way to proceed forward on a tough issue.
18. Many times getting results necessitates development of a full understanding of the client's organization and business issues. Give me an example of when your astuteness or practical sense helped you to get positive results and gain credibility with the customer.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Purpose: To give you an insight as to how each candidate works and interacts with others. Relates well to all kinds of people, up, down and sideways, inside and outside the organization. Builds appropriate rapport and constructive and effective relationships. Uses diplomacy and tact and can diffuse high-tension situations comfortably.

1. Give me an example of a time when you were able to build rapport quickly with someone in your organization, even though the situation was a difficult one.
2. Tell me about a situation where you had to work closely with a difficult coworker in order for you to successfully accomplish something. Did you make it work? How (or why not)?
3. Provide an example where you misread another person and made the situation worse instead of better, at least initially. How did you correct your actions?
4. There are some people who are more difficult than others to get along with. Tell me about your least successful working relationship. Why do you think it was not a successful relationship?
5. Describe a time when you knew you had the 'right' answer, but misread the political landscape. What were the issues? How did you resolve them?
6. What is an example of a time when you did not effectively identify an emotionally charged work situation? What would you have done differently?
7. In working with new people, how do you go about getting an understanding of them?
8. What kinds of people did you have contact with in your previous two jobs?
9. What type of person do you get along with best?
10. How would you define a conducive work environment?
11. Give me an example of a time when you had to be assertive in giving directions to others.
12. Sometimes it is important to disagree with others, particularly your boss or team members, in order to keep a mistake from being made. Tell me about a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.
13. Eventually we all deal with interpersonal conflict or personal rejection at work. Give me an example of a time when you had to cope with these demands.

14. Being empathetic to another person's problems entails putting forth a special effort to understand the situation or dilemma. Give me an example of a time when you were able to give empathy. How did this contribute to a work outcome?
15. Being skillful in dealing with other people on the job is an important factor in being productive. Describe a time when you were successful in dealing with someone because you had built a trusting and harmonious relationship.
16. Tell me about a time when your perceptiveness helped you to make sense out of another person's behavior.
17. Give me an example of when your knowledge of personality differences benefited your effectiveness.

DIRECTING OTHERS

Purpose: Able to work with people in such a manner as to build high morale and group commitments to goals and objectives. Establishes clear direction and sets stretch objectives. Lays out work in a well-planned and organized manner and distributes workload appropriately. Maintains two-way dialogue with others on work and results, and brings out the best in people.

1. We cannot do everything ourselves. Give me an example of a time when you dealt with this reality by creating a special team effort at work. Highlight the special aspects of the situation which best demonstrate your skill in this area.
2. It is sometimes important to deal with a negative attitude to build team motivation. Give me an example of a time when you confronted a negative attitude successfully with the result of building teamwork and morale.
3. There is a big difference between being committed to an individual or to a team. Tell me about a time when your commitment to a person was tested because of your commitment to the team. Explain what you did and why.
4. The term “participative management” has been used for years to describe a technique of building a team spirit by collecting suggestions from others. Describe a time when you used suggestions to build team commitment.
5. What is your role as a group member?
6. It has been said that one of the best ways to manage people is to teach them how to manage themselves. Tell me about a time when you contributed to a working group’s ability to direct itself by building group standards for performance.
7. Building a team spirit to get results is often a difficult thing to do. Tell me about a time when you had your greatest success in building a team spirit. What specific results were accomplished by the team?
8. At times, it is very important to understand how communication channels, interpersonal networks, and politics influence decisions of specific members on a team. Describe a time when your understanding of these dynamics was put to the test with a team member.

COMMUNICATION

Purpose: Most jobs today require interaction with others in one form or another. Depending on the level of interaction, our candidate's communication skills can be vital to their ability to get the job done successfully. Both verbal and written communication should be assessed.

Verbal Communication

Explains concepts or points concisely.

1. Pauses occasionally to separate topics and give the listener time to comprehend
2. Creates a verbal organizing structure when explaining multiple or complex topics
3. Uses stories, metaphors, or analogies to explain concepts
4. Avoids needless jargon
5. Please provide an example of the most difficult or complex idea, situation, or process you have ever had to explain to someone. How did you explain it? Were you successful?
6. From time to time, we have encountered individuals we may not like. Give me an example of a time when you successfully communicated with a person you personally did not like.
7. Describe how you handled a sensitive or volatile situation that required very careful communication.
8. Tell me about a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when you felt the individual did not value your perspective.
9. Describe a time you failed to communicate important information to your supervisor.
10. Tell me about a time you failed to communicate effectively with a direct report/client/customer. How did you discover you had failed to communicate effectively? What was the implication of this communication failure? What did you do to remedy or change the situation? What did you learn from this?
11. At some time, someone may have misunderstood something you said. How did you determine that you had been misunderstood? How did you make yourself clear? How have you improved your communication skills from these types of instances?
12. How much of your job involves listening? Why?
13. What does it take to be a good listener?

14. Describe the toughest communication situation that you have had to deal with. What happened? How did you handle it?
15. What have been your experiences in making presentations or speeches to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in speech making?
16. This job will require you to spend a large amount of time talking to others. When have you had to work in this kind of situation and how did it affect you?
17. Careful listening and effective communications go together. Tell me about a specific time when your skill in listening helped you communicate better.

Written Communication

Is able to write clearly and succinctly in a variety of communication settings and styles.
Can get messages across that have the desired effect

18. Give me an example of the kind of writing you do best.
19. Tell me about a time when someone misinterpreted something you wrote. How did you discover you had been misunderstood? How did you make yourself clear?
20. Describe the most important or creative written presentation you had to complete.
21. Tell me about a time when you used your written communication skills to convey an important message.
22. Tell me about a time where you didn't document something that you wish you would have.
23. Describe your communications plan before, during and after a major business change.
24. What was the most complex document you ever had to write? What made this the most difficult document to write? How did you handle it?
25. How do you go about putting together a presentation?
26. Give me an example, taken from your experiences in report writing, preparation of memos or general correspondence which illustrates the extent of your written communication skills.
27. Tell me about the most complex information you have had to read – perhaps involving research you had to complete. To what extent did this project test your comprehension skills and technical knowledge?

28. How much reading of new information is required in your current job? How often do you have to expose yourself to new written communications?
29. Describe your experiences in editing manuscripts, articles, documents, or any other form of written communication. Be specific.

LEADERSHIP

Purpose: Able to influence the actions and opinions of others in a desired direction. Exhibits judgment in leading others to worthwhile objectives, doing the right thing. Actively shapes ideas and attitudes toward goals and attainment of goals. Changes the way people think about desires, possibilities and necessity. Produces change and movement.

1. Even though the use of authority in a leadership role is not popular, it is necessary in some situations. Give me an example of the greatest success you ever had using delegation.
2. Describe a work situation when your example served as a model for others.
3. Give me an example of how you have used your own personal qualities and appeal to lead others.
4. Communications and leadership go hand in hand. Give me an example of a time when your communication skills were powerful enough to enable you to influence the way others thought or acted, even in a very difficult situation.
5. Give me an example of a time when you stuck by a decision even though it was under attack by others.
6. What kinds of experiences have you had in using prizes, contests, or financial rewards to motivate others? How do you evaluate the success of these techniques in general? How successful were you in a specific case?
7. Tell me about a time in which you used competition successfully as a means of encouraging others to try hard.
8. It is sometimes desirable to use recognition to build motivation in others. Describe a time in which you were able to use recognition to create positive energy in a direct report.
9. Describe a time when you had to communicate something unpleasant or hard-to-say to a direct report or to your work team. How did you assert yourself?
10. Tell me about a time when you had to challenge another's ideas. What was the outcome?
11. Give me an example of your ability to facilitate progressive change within your organization.
12. Tell me about a program you introduced to improve morale?

MANAGEMENT

Purpose: Effective Managers play with possibilities, tinker with systems and use all their resources to find workable solutions. They are problem solvers coping with complexity, producing order and consistency. They are focused on outcomes and doing things right.

1. How do you typically stay in the information loop and monitor your staff's performance?
2. What are the criteria you used in hiring new staff?
3. What was the turnover in your department over the last 2-3 years? Why?
4. How many people have you had to let go? What is the most common cause of termination?
5. What steps do you normally take to get a new employee oriented?
6. How do you analyze the training needs of your department or of specific individuals?
7. How do you keep your staff aware of information and company activities that might affect them?
8. How do you typically confront subordinates when results are unacceptable?
9. How do you mentor, train, and develop your employees?
10. Do you delegate responsibilities or do you expect your direct reports to come to you for added responsibility?
11. What methods have you found successful in setting job objectives for your employees?
12. What problems do you have with the day-to-day management of your staff? How do you handle them?
13. Are you satisfied with your department's performance? Why?
14. In terms of managing your staff, do you "expect" more than you "inspect", or vice versa?
15. Do you hold budgetary responsibility for your department? What was it? What problems do/did you have staying within the budget?

SECTION IV

COMMODITY MANAGER INTERVIEWING SAMPLE

What follows is an example of a Commodity Manager job opening. You will review the:

1. Job description
2. Required competencies
3. Behavioral interviewing questions that have been developed
4. Candidate evaluation form tailored to assist in the objective assessment of the candidates interviewed.

Commodity Manager Job Description

Primary Responsibilities

Commodity Managers ensure an efficient and cost-effective process in the supply chain. They provide our sales force with exceptional pricing on the latest technology giving us a competitive advantage. They are responsible for the Global Sourcing Strategy and Policies which includes alignment with product life cycles and PPV optimization.

The Commodity Manager has three primary responsibilities.

- 1) Build strategic relationships with our suppliers and negotiate contracts that yield quarterly cost savings, enhancing our competitive advantage.
- 2) The centerpost between Quotation Management, Engineering, Cost Accounting and Operations.
- 3) Provide market intelligence to enhance Cost Engineering, Quotation Management and BOM data.

Work Activities

In general, the Commodity Manager may engage in many of the following activities in order to achieve their assigned responsibilities:

Strategic Relationship/Negotiations

- Design and implement Global Sourcing Strategy and Policies by commodity
- Establish negotiation processes and methodology supported by purchasing contract, policy and service level procedures
- Build a strong rapport with strategic suppliers/EMS, utilize and nurture these relationships enabling the delivery of phased cost reductions and competitive pricing

Centerpost – Quotation, Engineering, Accounting, Operations

- Work closely with Engineering to ensure cost efficient pricing
- Work closely with Cost Accounting to ensure quarterly cost savings achievement
- Work closely with Quotation Management to ensure accurate pricing
- Work closely with Operations and Demand Management to ensure ample supplies without causing excess inventory issues
- Develop, implement, report and publish EMS quarterly Cost Reduction Plans

Market Intelligence

- Gather and report market information and intelligence for Cost Engineering and Quotation Management in terms of market trends, Best BOM data, allocations, etc.

Required Capabilities

In general, Commodity Managers will need the following skills, knowledge, and attributes to be successful in fulfilling the responsibilities of the position:

- **Dealing with Ambiguity:** Ability to deal with a high level of change in technology, products, and priorities.
- **Peer Relationships:** Ability to build strong working relationships across various organizational functions and externally with vendors/suppliers. A proven track record of working within a team environment. Is viewed as candid and cooperative with peers. A team player who easily gains trust and support of peers and encourages collaboration.
- **Interpersonal Savvy:** Relates well to all kinds of people -- up, down, sideways, inside and outside the organization. Ability to build appropriate rapport. Builds constructive and effective relationships using diplomacy and tact; can diffuse high-tension situations comfortably.
- **Managing and Measuring Work:** Clearly assigns responsibility for tasks and decisions. Sets clear objectives and measures, monitors process, progress, and results; designs feedback loops into work.
- **Written Communications:** Strong demonstrated communications abilities. Can create clear and concise communications for reporting, problem solving, planning and execution.
- **Time Management Skills:** Ability to develop systems, processes, and procedures in order to achieve high quality output.
- **Functional/Technical Knowledge:** Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of product and component cost structures, bill of materials and total cost of acquisition models. Ability to identify key cost drivers. In-depth knowledge of the semiconductor market including technology roadmap trends and obsolescence avoidance. Experience in commercial negotiations and familiarity of EMS style negotiation tactics and strategies.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

COMMODITY MANAGER

The following capabilities should be assessed when considered a candidate for a Commodity Manager position. Please select one of the questions under each required outcome, skill, or knowledge to probe for the candidate's strength in that area. Feel free to modify these questions to better suit the situation and the individual candidate, and supplement these with other questions you may have about education and experience. Don't forget to record your assessment on the Candidate Assessment Worksheet.

Dealing with Ambiguity

Describe a situation that required some personal adaptation on your part. What were the circumstances, what would have been your "normal" reaction, how did you actually act?

Tell me about a situation you found it extremely difficult to adapt to. Why?

Occasionally our needs and plans cause difficulty for someone else. During the last year, what was the most critical interaction in which you and someone else were pressed to bargain to reach both of your goals? How did you act? What was the result?

We cannot do everything ourselves. Give me an example of a time when you dealt with this reality by creating a special team effort at work. Highlight the special aspects of the situation which best demonstrate your skill in this area.

Peer Relationships

Describe a time when the cards were stacked against you or your group completing a project on time, and you still met the deadline. What happened?

Give me an example of a time when you had to be assertive in giving directions to others.

Building rapport is sometimes a very challenging thing to do. Give an example of a time when you were able to build rapport with someone at work, even when the situation was a difficult one.

Being skillful in dealing with other people on the job is an important factor in being productive. Describe a time when you were successful in dealing with someone because you had built a trusting and harmonious relationship.

Interpersonal Savvy

Tell me about a specific experience of yours that illustrates your ability to influence another person so that an outcome was achieved. Use an example that involves changing an attitude, selling an idea or being persuasive.

How do you stay up to date on changes in technology and industry?

Tell me about a time when a goal you achieved was because you wanted to, not because others expected it of you.

Tell me about some goals you have set for yourself and how you went about meeting them.

How would your manager grade your ability to cope with last-minute change without breaking stride?

Managing and Measuring Work

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

How do you analyze the training needs of your department or of specific individuals?

What methods have you found successful in setting job objectives for your employees?

Describe how you have used metrics in your current role. What kind of tracking did you put in place? Did you report out on this data? How broad was the audience?

How many projects have you handled at one time?

Tell me about a time when measuring your work provided pertinent data to address an issue.

Written Communications

Things to take note of: past experience; examples; quality of written document such as resume submitted.

What was the most complex report you ever had to write? What made this the most difficult report? How did you handle it?

Careful listening and effective communications go together. Tell me about a specific time when your skill in listening helped you communicate better.

How do you go about putting together a presentation?

Time Management Skills

Take note of the candidate's ability to set and maintain priorities; schedule and accomplish work in an efficient manner.

Tell me about a recent time in which you just had too much work. You couldn't humanly do it all. How did you cope? What tools and techniques did you employ?

How do you get your work assignments? Do you generate any of your own assignments? Give me an example.

Technical Knowledge

*All of us are better on some products or technologies than others. If you had to pinpoint where you are best, what is it? Why? Where are you weakest (**everyone** is weaker on some product than another)? Why?*

When doing your degree/certificate, what courses did you find most interesting? Why?

How do you stay up to date on changes in your field?

Describe work you have done with product and component cost structures, BOMs and total cost models.

Tell me about your experience with technical product roadmaps? What did you do if you thought there was an error on the roadmap?

What steps have you taken to avoid excess materials and obsolescence?

What was the toughest negotiation you ever had to conduct? What did you do well? What could you have done differently?

General	Candidate Assessment Form		Date:
	Candidate Name:	Hiring Manager:	
	Recruiter Name:	Evaluator Name:	
	Position:	Requisition Number:	
Guidelines	<i>Please evaluate the applicant in the following categories based on the relevance and requirements of the position. It should be filled out immediately following the interview. Register your comments and insert a check under the rating that best describes your assessment of the individual.</i>		
	4. Outstanding = Exceeds Requirements 3. Competent = Meets Requirements 2. Below Average = Below Requirements 1. Not Applicable		

Circle appropriate Motivational Theme					
Achievement		Affiliation		Power	
Categories for Assessment:	Comments & Examples:	4	3	2	1
Key Employee Behaviors		☐	☐	☐	☐
Passion for Customers		☐	☐	☐	☐
Never Give Up		☐	☐	☐	☐
Rapid & Informed Decision Making		☐	☐	☐	☐
Transparent Communications		☐	☐	☐	☐
Lean Behavior		☐	☐	☐	☐
Winning Attitude		☐	☐	☐	☐
Dealing with Ambiguity: Ability to deal with a high level of change in technology, products and priorities. Ability to combine seemingly opposites like being compassionately tough or setting strong but flexible standards. Perceived as balanced despite the conflicting demands of the situation		☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer Relationships: Ability to build strong working relationships across various organizational functions and externally with vendors/suppliers. A proven track record of working within a team environment. Is viewed as candid and cooperative with peers. A team player who easily gains trust and support of peers and encourages collaboration.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpersonal Savvy: Relates well to all kinds of people -- up, down, sideways, inside and outside the organization. Ability to build appropriate rapport. Builds constructive and effective relationships using diplomacy and tact; can diffuse high-tension situations comfortably.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Managing and Measuring Work: Clearly assigns responsibility for tasks and decisions. Sets clear objectives and measures, monitors process, progress, and results; designs feedback loops into work.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Written Communication: Ability to create clear and concise technical course materials such as participant and facilitator guides. Can apply sound instructional design principles to the creation of course materials.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Time Management Skills: Ability to develop systems, processes, and procedures in order to achieve high quality output.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Functional/Technical Skills: Demonstrated knowledge of product/component cost structure, BOMs. Semiconductor roadmap trends and E&O. Commercial negotiations		☐	☐	☐	☐
OVERALL RATING		☐	☐	☐	☐
RECOMMENDATION: Hire ☐ Possible Hire ☐ Future Interest ☐ No Interest ☐					
<i>Please return as soon as possible to the Hiring Manager to expedite the hiring process. Thank You.</i>					