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Deborah Jeffries serves as one of the Co-President for HR Answers, Inc. She has over 34 years' experience in the human resources field (29 in consulting). As a consultant, recruiter and trainer, Deborah works with organizations on the employment processes/activities, performance management, coaching/counseling, recognition, customer service, harassment, supervision, leadership, improved communication and more.

She spent 4 years with a staffing firm that covered administrative to executive level positions. Her talents were used from sourcing and interviewing to placement and support of candidates for her clients. Clients often comment on her ability to get "to the real person" during the interview. She seeks to find alignment between employer and applicant.

Clients comment on her no nonsense practical approach and her positive attitude. Those that know Deborah describe her as energetic with a quirky sense of humor, a passion for HR, and a contagious laugh.



MULTIFAMILY NW
The Association Promoting Quality Rental Housing

Spectrum
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Interview For Your Best Fit

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Screening for Character Qualities

Have you ever thought about help-wanted ads that emphasize character qualities instead of job skills? Screening job applicants for positive character traits is a growing trend. Following is a list of character traits that, if practiced, can help employers reduce their workers' compensation costs and turnover, improve morale, and increase profitability.

Possible Characteristics of Potential Job Candidates. Not all characteristics will apply equally to all jobs. Select (or add) the suggested characteristics below that fit the job being considered, and rate for importance.

	Not Very Important	Average Importance	Extremely Important
<input type="checkbox"/> Able to deal with people well			
<input type="checkbox"/> Able to handle pressure			
<input type="checkbox"/> Able to work with minimal supervision			
<input type="checkbox"/> Careful and precise			
<input type="checkbox"/> Common sense			
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative attitude			
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative			
<input type="checkbox"/> Decisive			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dependable			
<input type="checkbox"/> Detail-oriented			
<input type="checkbox"/> Diligence			
<input type="checkbox"/> Fast			
<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible			
<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality			

	Not Very Important	Average Importance	Extremely Important
<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative			
<input type="checkbox"/> Organized			
<input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing			
<input type="checkbox"/> Patient			
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant			
<input type="checkbox"/> Punctual			
<input type="checkbox"/> Results-oriented			
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-starter			
<input type="checkbox"/> Sincerity			
<input type="checkbox"/> Team player			
<input type="checkbox"/> Thorough			
<input type="checkbox"/> Well-spoken			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			

Structured Interview Guide Creation

1. Review the Job Description. What skills, traits, and knowledge are necessary? Draft questions that will get you that information if it isn't clearly stated on the application. Identify the importance of each function to the probable success of the applicant in the position:

What is required? (Must)

What is highly desired? (Should)

What is "nice to have"? (May)

Draft questions aimed at getting the desired information:

What answers are you looking for?

How do you know what's a good answer?

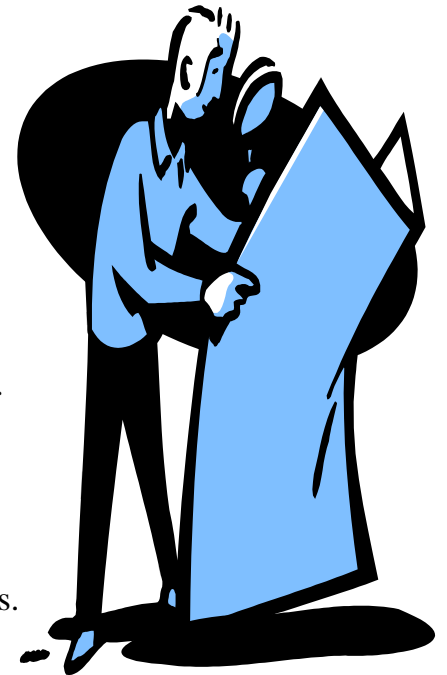
How will you measure it?

What's the best kind of question to use?

2. What situation is the employee going to be working in? What questions can you ask that will tell you if the applicant will do well in that environment?
3. How independent will the employee be? What questions can you ask that will tell you if the applicant can handle that well?
4. Basic habit patterns rarely change. What questions can you ask that will uncover the applicant basic habit patterns?

Resume Review Tips

- Create a template that identifies key skills, requirements and experience.
- Review cover letter first to see how person describes interest in organization and position.
 - Consistency with position and/or organization
 - Skills
 - Effort
- Resume tips:
 - Look for clues in the Job Objective. Is objective consistent with position?
 - What is missing?
 - How specific?
- Review resume against template. Look for “extras” that would add value.
- Identify any gaps or concerns that will need probing during interview.
- Frequency of job changes
- Unexplained gaps in employment
- Reasons for leaving jobs
- Spelling and grammatical errors
- Promotions that show a pattern of increasing responsibility
- Don't forget to compare to current employees in position, if any.
- Don't believe everything you read.
- Don't fall for “hype.”
- Look for tangible contribution to previous employers' businesses.
- Look for specific skills that will enhance your bottom line.
- Search for signs that the applicant is interested in growing within the job.
- Look for signs that the applicant is a team player.
- Look for signs that the applicant is loyal and ethical.



- Consider sorting into “no,” “maybe” “yes.” Know the bottom line of what is a “yes.”

Phone Screening Tips

Confirm skills, experience, and education.

Check for phone skills if position requires phone work.

Visualize the person while talking; consider whether they can communicate information and ideas sufficiently to meet job requirements.

Listen for level of enthusiasm, any hesitancy, or sensitive areas.

Ask about current status of job search.

Ask what questions s/he has.



Interviewing Tips

1. Be prepared – know the job so you can answer questions.
2. Ask rapport-building questions that start an easy conversation about non-threatening topics.
3. Ask open-ended questions which encourage the interviewee to share a large amount of information in the interview.

Avoid common errors:
 - A. “Yes” or “No” Questions
 - B. Leading Questions
 - C. Value Judgments
 - D. Expected Questions
4. Allow silence while the interviewee is thinking of an answer to an interview probe.
5. Control the interview by redirecting the conversation when the interviewee is digressing or trying to avoid answering a question.
6. Seek contrary evidence by asking questions that will provide evidence about both strengths and weaknesses.
7. Gain behavioral examples by asking the interviewee to relate specific situations and how they handled them.
8. Take notes (on your Interview Guide). These will come in useful when you sit down to compare all the interviewees.
9. The key to what people will do is what they have done. Basic habit patterns rarely change.
10. The applicant should leave feeling good about self and potential employer.

Employment Interviewing

This is a fact gathering process which:

- Determines qualifications for the position
- Allows candidate to learn about the position
- Interviewer tells about position, department and organization
- May include skill verification through exercises/tests or other assessment processes

Competency review (Can Do):

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Abilities

Job behaviors (Will Do):

- Stability
- Initiative
- Loyalty
- Leadership
- Ability to get along with others
- Confidence

Traits to consider (Alignment):

- Job motivation
- Degree of maturity
- Supervisor's management style
- Organization's culture
 - Artifacts
 - Norms
 - Conscious & subconscious values, beliefs and ideology

Interviewing Techniques

- Repeating.
- Indicate understanding.
- Pause for implied questions.
- Go from generalities to specifics.
- Always have follow-up questions (or 2nd questions)
- Downplay negative information.
- Pay attention to non-verbals.
- Take notes.
- Summarizing.

What Not to Ask

Questions which imply preferences as to race, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, and disabled status are violations of federal and state laws. In the left-hand column below are topics of discussion which are of questionable legality and should *not* be asked, in any form, during the interviewing of an applicant. In the right-hand column are notes which *may* be acceptable relating to the particular area in question.

Subject	Unlawful Inquiries	Permissible Inquiries
Age	Birthdate or age, asked before hiring.	If at least 18 years of age, you may ask birthdate after hiring.
Arrest Record	Any inquiry as to arrests.	Relating to criminal convictions (on applications).
Citizenship	Any direct inquiry as to citizenship.	Whether applicant can provide proof of citizenship, visa, or alien registration after being hired.
Family	Specific inquiries concerning spouse, spouse's salary, or employment, children, childcare arrangements or dependents.	Whether applicant has any outside commitments that would conflict with work requirements.
Marital Status	Any inquiry into present or past marital status or name which would divulge marital status.	None.
Military	Type of discharge, request for discharge papers, inquiries as to experience in other than U.S. Armed Forces.	Education, training experience in U.S. Armed Forces.
National Origin	Inquiries into birthplace, ancestry, mother tongue, etc.	Inquiry as to applicant's ability to read, write, and speak a foreign language when based on job requirements
Religion or Creed	Inquiries concerning applicant's religious denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed.	None.

Subject	Unlawful Inquiries	Permissible Inquiries
Memberships	Inclusive list of organizations to which applicant belongs.	Inquiry as to memberships in organizations <u>excluding</u> those which would reveal race, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, or disability status.
Residence	Whether applicant rents or owns home; names of persons with whom applicant resides.	Inquiry on address needed to facilitate contacting applicant.
Relatives	Names and addresses of any relative other than those listed as references.	Names of applicant's relatives already employed by this company or by any competitor.
Race or Color	Any inquiry concerning race or color of skin, hair, eyes, etc.	None.
Sex	All.	None.
Name	Inquiry into original name where it has been changed by court order or marriage. Inquiries about a name which would divulge marital status, lineage, ancestry, national origin or descent.	Whether applicant has worked for this company or a competitor under a different name; if so, what name. Name under which applicant is known to references if different from present name.
Photographs	Request that applicants submit a photograph mandatory or optionally, at any time before hiring.	May be requested after hiring for identification purposes.
Pregnancy	All questions as to pregnancy and medical history concerning pregnancy and related matters.	Inquiries as to a duration of stay on job or anticipated absences which are made to males and females alike.
Disability	All questions relating to physical or mental health.	None.
Workers' Compensation	Any inquiry regarding past claims, injuries, etc.	None.
Sexual Orientation	All.	None.
Salary History	None	Can ask about <i>desired</i> salary.

Interview Questions: Most Frequently Asked

What are your major strengths? Weaknesses? What is your biggest strength/weakness?

How is your previous experience applicable to the work we do here?

Why did you leave your former job(s)?

Is there someone we can contact who is familiar with your activities?

Where do you see yourself in this organization ten years from now?

What are your long-range career goals?

Tell me about yourself.

Why did you choose this career?

What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen career?

What kind of compensation are you looking for?

What do you expect to be earning in five years?

Which is more important to you - the money or the type of job?

What kind of salary are you worth?

How would you describe yourself?

How would someone else who knows you well describe you?

How would you describe your personality?

What are your own special abilities?

What skills have you gained from your interests outside of work that apply to this job?

Why should I hire you?

How do you determine or evaluate success?

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

What was your biggest accomplishment in your last job?

How do you work under pressure?

What can you add or bring to this organization?

How long would it take you to make a contribution to our organization?

How would you describe the ideal job for you?

What jobs have you enjoyed the most? Least? Why?

What two or three things are most important to you in your job?

Why do you think you would like this particular type of job?

What interests you about our product or service?

What do you know about our organization?

Why do you think you might like to work for our organization?

What kind of education have you had that relates to this job?

Do you have plans for future education?

Really Tough Questions

Covering Competencies

- Describe a few situations in which your work was criticized.
- Are you analytical? Give an example.
- Are you creative? Give an example.
- Can you delegate responsibility? Give an example.
- Imagined situations that test a person's job knowledge. "What would you do if...?"
- Can you describe for me a typical day in your job?
- Tell me about the people you hired in your last job. How long did they stay with you and how did they work out?
- What specific strengths did you bring to your last job that made you effective?
- What have been the biggest failures or frustrations in your business life?
- What did you do in your last job to make yourself more effective?
- Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- Tell me about a time in which you had to use your spoken communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Can you tell me about a job experience in which you had to speak up in order to be sure that other people knew what you thought or felt?
- Give me an example of a time in which you feel you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or subordinates at work.
- Describe a situation in which you felt it necessary to be very attentive and vigilant to your environment.
- Give an example of a time in which you had to use your fact-finding skills to gain information for solving a problem - then tell me how you analyzed the information to come to a decision.
- Describe the most significant document/report/presentation which you have had to complete.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their individual needs or values.

- Describe the most creative work-related project that you have carried out.
- What did you do in your last job in order to be effective with your organization and
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- Give me an example of a time when you had to carefully analyze another person or a situation in order to be effective in guiding your action or decision.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others in a desired direction.

Covering Job Behaviors

- Do you like to work? Why?
- What interests you most about this position? What interests you least about this position?
- What do you want to be remembered for?
- What other kind of job would you be interested in doing besides the one this one?
- What risks did you take in your last few jobs and what were the results of those risks?
- What do you do when you are having trouble solving a problem?
- Describe a time on any job which you've held in which you were faced with problems or stresses which tested your coping skills. What did you do?
- Give me an example of an important goal which you have set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Describe a time in which you felt it was necessary to modify or change your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person.
- Give me an example of a problem which you faced on any job you have had and tell me how you went about solving it.

Covering "Alignment"

- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinate.
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- What kind of people do you like? What kind of people do you dislike?
- What do you think of your previous boss? What do your subordinates think of you?

- What makes you angry?
- Can you tell me how you go about making important decisions?
- What are some of the things your company might have done to be more successful?
- Give me an example of a specific occasion when you conformed to a policy that you did not agree with.
- What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a teamwork environment? Be specific.

Covering Cultural Questions

These are sample interview questions that will help you assess whether your prospective employee is a good match with your workplace culture and environment for employees..

- Describe [the work environment or culture](#) in which you are most productive and happy.
- What are the characteristics exhibited by the best boss you have ever had—or wish that you have had?
- In your experience, what how does an organization encourage your use of your [discretionary energy](#) and effort, that willingness each employee has, to go the extra mile, push harder, spend more time, and do whatever is necessary to get the job done?
- Describe the [management style](#) that will bring forth your best work and efforts.
- Describe what you believe are the most effective roles that a good manager plays in his or her relationship with reporting staff members.
- Do you have a best friend at work? How do you feel about becoming friends with your coworkers? Is this a wise practice?
- What are the positive aspects of your current job and work environment, or the last position you held before coming to this interview?
- What is the single most important factor that must be present in your work environment for you to be successfully and happily employed? Now that you have answered that question, what were two others that you debated about responding before you gave the response that you chose?
- What is your preferred work style? Do you prefer working alone or as part of a team? What percentage of your time would you allocate to each, given the choice?
- How would your coworkers describe your work style and contributions in your former job?
- What are the three to five expectations that you have of senior leaders in an organization where you will work successfully?

- Tell us about an occasion when you believe that you delighted a customer, either an internal or an external customer.
- When you work with a team, describe the role that you are most likely to play on the team.
- How would coworkers describe the role that you play on a team?
- When working with people, in general, describe your preferred relationship with them.
- How would reporting staff members describe their relationship with you? What would they like to see you do more of, less of, start, and stop?
- Provide an example of a time when you went out of your way and jumped through hoops to delight a customer.
- Tell us about a decision that you made that was made based primarily on customer needs and input.

Ask Questions That Reveal:

Motivation

Achievement and Initiative

Goals and Aspirations

Progress in Achieving These
Goals

Ambitions

Enthusiasm

Dedication

Personal Integrity

Getting Along With Others

Flexibility

Stress Management

Sense of Humor

Accepting Direction & Feedback

Decisiveness

Professional Development

Independence

Initiative

Leadership:

Oral Communication

Persuasiveness

Rapport Building

Planning & Organization

Stress Tolerance

Relationship with Their

Supervisor

Concluding the Interview

The interviewer should thank the applicant for his or her time, and outline what will happen next. The candidate should be informed when the hiring decision is expected to be made and how it will be communicated.

Common Interviewer Errors and the End Result

Error	End Result
Fails to build rapport.	Interview never gets off the ground.
Lacks preparation.	Interviewer doesn't know what questions to ask.
Concentrates on the applicant only as a person.	Interviewer does not compare an applicant's demonstrated abilities and experience with the actual job requirements.
Does not use the technique of silence – fails to listen enough.	Interviewer does most of the talking - fails to obtain meaningful info from the applicant.
Does not allow enough time to observe the applicant's responses and behaviors.	Interview is short and superficial.
Incorrect interpretation of the applicant's experience.	Interviewer draws the wrong conclusion about the candidate's ability to perform.
Stereotypes applicant and fails to control biases.	Hiring decision may not be legally defensible.
Allows one characteristic or trait of an applicant to be overly influential (favorably or not).	Hiring decision may not be legally defensible.
Makes a decision on the basis of intuition or first impression instead of facts and analysis.	Candidates who perform well on the interview may be overlooked.
Uses stress techniques designed to trap or fluster the applicant.	Interviewer may not collect relevant information.
Compares applicant's life with one's own life.	Important info relevant to the job is not obtained.
Fails to control or direct the interview.	Does not collect all the job-related information.
Asks closed-ended questions requiring yes/no answers.	Does not collect all the job-related information.
Makes judgmental or leading questions.	Candidate says what the interviewer wants to hear, not an authentic response.

Post Interview Process

Evaluating Information

As the interview results are assessed, review the minimum qualifications, job description, and other items included in any advertisement for the position to determine which candidate is the best match for the job. Use only information that is job related. The information included in the evaluation should be job knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, behaviors and personal characteristics that are key to successfully performing the job requirements. Do not use any information that was offered that is not related to a candidate's ability to successfully perform the job.

Common Evaluator Errors

Type of Error	Description
Halo Effect	The tendency to evaluate a person high on all selection criteria even though the applicant may have been outstanding only on one part.
Horn Effect	The inability to evaluate all or most of the candidates anywhere but in the middle.
Central Tendency	Interviewer may not collect relevant information. Placing "rating" information in the middle of the scale and not leaning one way or another.
Similar to Me	The tendency to evaluate higher those candidates who look, act, or have a background most like the interviewer.
Personal Bias	Allowing personal biases (personal feelings) to influence, to cloud decision-making or not allow for open-mindedness.
First Impression	Making the hiring decision within the first few minutes of the interview, instead of evaluating all the information from the entire interview.

Interviewing For Your Best Fit

One of the constants of an organizations responsibilities is interviewing. Some applicants are clearly the best, and that makes the process easy. But when no stand-out exists, the interview questions and process becomes more critical. This session will address:

- How can interviewers learn which applicants will actually do the job?
- What questions should not be asked, not because they are not legal, but because they do not reveal any useful information?
- What role should group/committee interviews play? Who should be involved?
- How can you get the applicant to help you get real information to make your decision?
- And a chance to answer your questions.

This session will help attendees refine their skills of interviewing techniques and questions along with practical tips.