

Special Management Series

# Interviewing can be a Tedious and Stressful Time

This is a series of Training for your  
Management TEAM

Presented by J.W. Owens



A Management  
Perspective 303 Series



Management – JWO 307

# Interviewing can be a Tedious and Stressful Time



## Interviewing can be a tedious and stressful time.

Which questions should you ask, which ones are appropriate?

Are you going to pick the right person for the position?

**Below is a list of the top 14 interview questions hiring managers find most effective.**

These inquiries range from basic to complex and give descriptions of what the question accomplishes.

Some of the questions are very straight forward and some are tricky ones that bring out the candidate's personality and behavior without directly asking them.

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## **What circumstance brings you here today?**

This is one of the best opening questions ever. This open ended question surprises many candidates.

If they do not respond quickly, just sit quietly and wait for the response.

Some candidates reveal problems with their current employer, potential insubordination, and both positive or negative character traits.

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## How would your best friend describe you?

In most cases, the response to this question indicates **how the candidate wants you to feel** they are perceived by friends.

Take notes on the response and then ask, "**May I call your best friend and see how they describe you?**" You may or may not be interested in talking to the best friend.

However, the **response and body language** after the follow-up question can indicate if you received a truthful response.

I suggest asking this question near the beginning of the interview. It helps you get truthful responses for the rest of your time with the candidate.

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## What would you say are your 2 greatest weaknesses?

This question reveals the candidate's ability to **identify the need for personal improvement**. The best responses include a plan on how the candidate is addressing the weakness.

**Some candidates also do an effective job turning their weakness into a positive**, which indicates the candidate has good alternative thinking or good sales skills.

**Watch out** for candidates who are unaware or will not admit that they have weaknesses.

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## How do you alleviate stress?

**Every job has stress.** So if someone says they are not stressed or claim to not do anything about it, then **they are either lying or they do not know how to control it.**

**Look for positive activities or hobbies,** rather than substance use or dangerous activities as stress relievers.

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## What are your short and long term goals?

The response to this question usually reveals if the candidate has personal or professional goals. **If they do not have a quick response, it may indicate they do not plan ahead.**

I especially like **responses which indicate drive, planning and good work/life balance.**

You may also need to ask for more details about certain goals to gain insight into whether or not the employee **intends to stay for awhile or just gain a little experience and move on.**

Consider asking the **follow-up question, "What are 3 goals that you have achieved in the past year?"**

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**What type of work environment do you prefer?**

If the company is very professional and usually quiet, someone who likes a loud, casual environment **might not be the best fit.**

When choosing potential employees, it is **helpful to know what type of environment in which they prefer to work.** If the company is very professional and usually quiet, someone who likes a loud, casual environment might not be the best fit. It is sometimes good to hire someone who does not fit the mold, but it is **usually best to hire people who fit your work environment.**



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## What is your typical way of dealing with conflict?

As with stress, conflicts are something we deal with frequently. Conflicts may range from differences with a supervisor, to differing lunch preferences. Most employers look for someone who can deal with an issue without getting frustrated.

**Either ask for a real-life example or build a hypothetical scenario** and ask how they would handle the conflict.

Some managers, who prefer a more confrontational interview style, intentionally create conflict and stress in the interview to see how the candidate responds.

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**What tools or habits do you use to keep organized?**

Instead of asking are you an organized person, this makes the interviewee prove and describe their organizational skills.

Most **hiring managers expect that their employees have some type of system** to stay organized.

Whether it is using a planner, or electronic calendar, these tools confirm that **the potential employee is reliable and responsible.**

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**Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond to get a job done.**

This is an excellent question that **lets a potential employee really sell themselves**. In doing so, the hiring manager can see what type of person they are really interviewing.

They can also measure how out of the way this candidate had to go in order to complete their duty. **This gives a clearer picture about the work ethic of the potential employee.**

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**What was a major obstacle you were able to overcome in the past year?**

Problem solving is the major topic covered by this question.

**What kind of thinker is this candidate?**

Can they do projects on their own or does their manager need to hold their hand. It also **confirms how determined they can be toward a project.**

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**In what ways do you raise the bar for yourself and others around you?**

This question gives the interviewer an idea of **who is and is not** an above average performer.

It also **demonstrates leadership potential and the willingness to be a team player.**

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**Tell me about two memorable projects, one success and one failure.**

**To what do you attribute the success and failure?**

Asking this question helps determine the candidate's **ability to learn from successes and failures.**

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**What unique experience or qualifications separate you from other candidates?**

**Some candidates have interesting characteristics and experiences that will not be exposed without asking a question like this.**

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**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

**Save this question for the end of the interview.**

A good response should be consistent and defined when you asked about short and long term goals. **Beware of candidates who plan to be the same position five years from now.**

*My favorite response is, "I plan to have either your job or your boss' job."*



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Interviewing is about finding the right candidate for a position.

Proper questions reveal the most promising candidate for a hiring manager.

Before interviewing, **write down the characteristics the ideal candidate** would possess and try to tailor your questions around those attributes.

Also, **open ended questions** make applicants create a clearer image of who they are for the hiring manager.

Interviewing is simply a matching game to see **which candidate is the best fit for the position.**

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## 7 Steps to a Fast Hire

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**When time is of the essence, use the following steps to find a great candidate quickly.**

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## Step 1: Know the Job Requirements

The first step in making a fast hire is **defining exactly what you need in a candidate.**

**A common mistake is to create a job advertisement that makes all desired skills appear to be required.** This often scares away potentially great candidates.

Start by **identifying the skills** that provide the basis for quick learning, versus those that a sharp new hire can learn quickly. For example, if you are looking for a car salesperson, the basic skill is most likely an art for sales.

**Do not consider** only candidates with car sales experience, but look for candidates with strong sales experience in any industry.

A good salesperson can quickly learn how to sell almost any product. This philosophy applies in many industries.

**Keep an open mind** about a candidate's work history.

Candidates with experience in other industries can **often bring new ideas and a unique way of thinking into an organization.**

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## Step 2: Write the Job Ad

After you have a list of absolute requirements, develop an honest job ad that includes the a few details about the job's responsibilities, required skills, desired skills, and a brief summary of your company.

**Keep the total ad relatively short**, while giving enough information to accurately describe the open position. Remember that most candidates will not take the time to read three pages of information about a job. **Try to limit your description and requirements** to a single printed page.

Also, be sure to note in your job description that a limited relocation package may be available for the right candidate (more info in Step 6).

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## Step 3: Distribute Your Job Ad

If you are in a hurry to hire, you should distribute your job ad via **three primary methods**:

- **Email your work contacts,**
- **Notify your personal contacts, and**
- **Post your job online.**

You may consider offering a **small finders fee** to anyone who sends you a candidate who you hire.

This **simple technique gives an incentive** for people to share your job ad with friends, neighbors, and acquaintances.

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## Step 4: Prepare Your Interview Questions

Even if you do not have interviews scheduled, it is very important to prepare your interview questions.

This article [Top Interview Questions](#) is an excellent resource on which you can base an interview.

Some of the best interviews I have given used the questions as the basis for **80%** of the interview.)

**The questions in that article are designed in a progressive manner that reveals much about a candidate's personality and history, even over the telephone.**

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## Step 5: Wait 24 Hours, Read Resumes, and Tweak Your Job Ad's Title

For most jobs, in most industries, you should have an initial list of applicants within 24 hours. **Carefully review the resumes of the candidates who have applied in the first day and determine if your job ad is attracting the right type of people.**

Note: When hiring for a Marketing Coordinator job last year, I changed the Job Title from Marketing Coordinator to Web Content Manager, and then to Web Designer. By changing only the Job Title, the same job description attracted vastly different candidates.) The Job Title shown online is what will get candidates to read the description. Do not describe your job with a title that only makes sense inside of your company. Use phrasing in the Job Title that communicates the actual job's responsibilities.

If your budget permits, also use an Online Resume Database. Resume Searching is the fastest way to develop a list of well qualified candidates. Candidates in the Resume Database are almost always interested in talking to a potential employer about a new opportunity, even if they are happily employed.

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## Step 6: Identify Candidates and Start Interviewing

A common mistake is to let **resumes and applications grow old** while a large list develops. Candidates applying for jobs are likely to have applied for other jobs on the same day they applied to yours. Great candidates are snatched up quickly.

**Start by reviewing the resume to identify if a candidate is worth calling.** If he/she is qualified, make a phone call and do a quick phone screen. **Ask a couple of basic questions from your Interview Questions list**, and confirm that you and the candidate are in the same salary range.

Also, keep an open mind about relocation candidates. Your perfect fit candidate may currently live in another city. The world has changed and most people are more open to relocation than ever. Surprisingly to some, many workers are willing to relocate at their own expense, or for a very small relocation bonus. Always remember, a perfect fit candidate can be the difference between great success and overwhelming disappointment.



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## Step 7: Make the Offer Quickly

Finally, **be prepared to make an offer quickly.**

If you followed the steps above, you should already know your requirements and had have a list of common questions for your interviews.

If you interview someone who you know will do the job well and seems to fit your corporate culture, do not feel obligated to continue interviewing additional candidates. **Remember, that candidate is likely to be interviewing with other companies.** Make an offer, hire your new employee, and start the training process.

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This is a series of Training for  
your Management TEAM

# Good Selling !



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Perspective 303 Series**



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