Finding
Great People

An interview guide

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Introduction

Dear fellow leader,

This guide is designed for use as a real-time tool, to assist you in planning and conducting employment interviews.

In the next section, "How to Use This Guide", we'll provide detailed instructions on getting the most from this document.

The first step in designing the most effective interview is to determine the most significant dimensions of the jobs you're trying to fill.

You can determine these dimensions yourself, or, if you'd like to take a more targeted approach, we can help you do that with an easy-to-administer online survey process.

We can also train your managers to conduct interviews that will help them Find Great People.

Please call us at 904-720-0870 or visit us online at ContentedCows.com, to let us know how we can be of service to you.

We hope you find this guide enjoyable and valuable to use, and above all, that it helps you do a better job finding great people.

Good luck, and Godspeed.

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How to Use This Guide

Step 1: Determine the significance of each of the 25 job dimensions listed on the next page. We'd suggest going through the list, or the more detailed descriptions of them on the following pages, and assigning a significance of from 1 to 10 to each dimension. A score of 1 means this dimension is never used in this job; 10 means it is an essential part of the job. Numbers in between are, well, in between. You get the picture.

We can help you select these dimensions more scientifically, and accurately, with an online survey and analysis process. And it doesn't cost an arm and a leg. Just call us or visit us online to learn more about this.

Step 2: Identify the 6 or 8 most significant dimensions for this job. If you've got more than 6 or 8 with really high significance scores (from 8 to 10), you need to re-think your assignments, and try to narrow it down to 6 or 8 dimensions of high significance. You may want to expand your interview to include a second tier of questions based on dimensions that are moderately significant (scoring 5-7). We would suggest not using more than about 12 dimensions in all.

Step 3: Read the questions associated with each of the most significant dimensions in your analysis. Make modifications to those questions that need it, to make the question more relevant to the people you're interviewing. Toss a few questions away if they don't make sense, or wouldn't be helpful to you. Add questions that aren't suggested, but that you think would be helpful.

Step 4: Practice asking the questions, and think through how the answers can help you find the best people for the job.

Step 5: Conduct the interview. Use the notes section for each dimension you use, and also assign a "Candidate Rating" based on your perception of how well the candidate did in answering the questions.

Step 6: Use the combination of Dimension Significance and Candidate Rating to help you determine the best candidates for the job.

Job Title

Significance Scale
How significant is this dimension in performing this job?

Not
At all   Somewhat   Essential

⟵—————————————————⟶

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score		Dimension
		Communication Skills
	1	Listening
	2	Oral Communication
		Interpersonal Skills and Attributes
	3	Presence
	4	Rapport Building
	5	Consideration and Respect
	6	Team Orientation
		Personal Habits and Qualities
	7	Integrity
	8	Reliability
	9	Resilience
	10	Tolerance for Repetitive Tasks
	11	Initiative
	12	Attention to Detail
	13	Creativity
	14	Flexibility
	15	Job Affinity and Happiness
	16	Courage
	17	Sense of Mission
	18	Confidence
	19	Influence
		Analytical and Organizational Skills
	20	Problem Solving and Decision Making
	21	Self-Organization
	22	Multi-Tasking
	23	Decisiveness
	24	Technical Knowledge and Proficiency
	25	Learning Capacity

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Listening

Attends to, understands, and values the oral communication of others. Remembers and can use information presented to them orally.

1. Tell me about a time when listening (or lack thereof) was crucial to your success.

2. Describe for me how you see listening fitting into this job, if at all.

3. What in your estimation does it take to be a good listener?

4. On a 1 (lousy) to 10 (terrific) scale, how good a listener are you? How would a relative or close friend rate you on that same scale?

5. Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to listen to someone.

6.

7.

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

2. Oral Communication

Clearly conveys information and ideas to others through effective oral, nonverbal and tonal expression.

1. Tell me about a time when you had to really sell an idea to others.

2. Give me an example of a time when you had to communicate effectively with a person you didn't especially like.

3. Tell me about your most recent oral presentation of 5 minutes or longer.

4. How do your oral communication skills vary in regards to communicating in person as opposed to over the phone? Which do you find easier? Why?

5. Tell me about the best (and worst) oral presentations you've ever made.

6. Describe a situation where you observed effective oral communication by someone else. What did they do and why do you feel it was effective?

7.

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

3. Presence

Through both manner and appearance, makes a favorable first and continuing impression on others. Acts in ways that show awareness and concern for their behavior and image relative to their environment.

1. What thoughts go through your head before you attend an important event?

2. How do you think others perceive you in business situations? In social situations?

3. If a colleague asked you to recommend someone to be his or her 'image coach,' whom would you recommend? Why?

4. What steps do you usually take to ensure that people get a good first impression of you?

5. Tell me about a time when your appearance or behavior was inappropriate to the setting? How did you handle it?

6.

7.

Interpersonal Skills and Attributes

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

4. Rapport Building

Is able to quickly establish effective relationships with others.

1. What steps do you generally take to build rapport with people? Tell me about a time when you really had to work hard at it.

2. In a situation where you do not see a customer very often, how would you maintain rapport?

3. In your last job, how did you connect with customers?

4. What kinds of people do you find it easiest (hardest) to bond with?

5. Tell me about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.

6.

7.

Interpersonal Skills and Attributes

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

5. Consideration and Respect for Others

Consistently shows consideration for the thoughts, feelings, needs and ideas of others.

1. Aretha Franklin did a song called "RESPECT." What does that word mean to you?

2. If your cell phone rang in the middle of an important conversation, what action would you take? If my phone kept ringing during the middle of our conversation, here today, and I took every call, what would you do?

3. Tell me about a time when you were particularly perceptive regarding a person's feelings and needs.

4. Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile and made deliberate effort to get to know someone or make a person from another culture or 'station in life' feel comfortable/welcome.

5. Tell me about a time when you somehow offended someone. How did you handle it once you became aware of it?

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Interpersonal Skills and Attributes

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

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Candidate Rating

6. Team Orientation

Works effectively with others in a mutually dependent manner. Willing to subordinate personal interests to those of the group. Shares expertise and readily helps others when necessary.

1. What would motivate others to be on a team with you?

2. Have you ever been on a successful, winning team? What didn't you like about it?

3. What do you believe to be the essential ingredients for working in a team?

4. Tell me about a time when you found it difficult working in a team environment.

5. Who is your all-time favorite team of any kind? Why?

6.

7.

Interpersonal Skills and Attributes

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

PERSONAL HABITS AND QUALITIES

7. Integrity

Concerned with truthfulness and doing what's right. Places high value on meeting social and ethical responsibilities.

1. Tell me about a time when your integrity was challenged. What did you do?

2. Have you ever faced repercussions for doing the "right" thing? What were they? If you had it to do over, would you make the same decision?

3. If you noticed a coworker taking free samples home regularly for personal use, what would you do?

4. What does the word 'integrity' mean to you? What childhood lessons can you recall pertaining to that word?

5. How would you react to the statement "selling and lying go hand in hand?"

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

8. Reliability

Can be depended on to carry out responsibilities and complete assignments. Keeps agreements. Responsibly handles and cares for the property of others.

1. Tell me about the most recent time you missed a deadline or showed up late for an event. What was your reasoning and what did you do to recover? What have you done to keep it from recurring?

2. What is you definition of reliability? How do you think you rate on a scale of 1 to 10 as being a reliable individual? Why?

3. If you had your own company, what would the sick day policy be?

4. When you give your word to someone, what does that mean?

5. What was the last thing you borrowed from someone?

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

9. Resilience

Ability to adjust to and recover from duress.
Maintains composure, objectivity, and stability of performance under pressure.

1. How would you cope with the repetitive rejection of selling a product when 90% of the time the buyer says no? How would you stay motivated to continue?

2. Give me two specific examples in which you have worked well under pressure.

3. Tell me about a specific event in your life that has shaped your approach to dealing with difficult people or situations.

4. Describe the biggest challenge you have faced to date, and how you handled it.

5. Tell me about a situation where you constructively dealt with disappointment or criticism, and turned it into a positive learning experience.

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

10. Tolerance for Repetitive Tasks

Is able to maintain productivity, effectiveness, and pleasant personal demeanor when required to perform highly repetitive tasks for protracted periods.

1. How would you handle a job that involved a lot of repetitive tasks?

2. Tell me about a time when you were bored to tears with some mindless, repetitive tasks. How did you handle it?

3. If you were working on an assembly line doing the same task all day, what would you do to stay alert and make the job more tolerable?

4. People say that repetitive tasks lead to lack of effort and dissatisfaction on the worker's behalf. What are your thoughts?

5. Which do you prefer, a steady routine, or having different things to do?

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

11. Initiative

Self-starting, originates action without specific direction from others. Consistently maintains high activity level and can be counted on to complete work in a proper and timely fashion without direct supervision.

1. Tell me about a time when you went well above and beyond the call of duty.

2. If you knew that there wasn't enough business coming in to your company or department, what kinds of things would you do to try to turn things around?

3. If you were a team leader in a group, and a colleague was not pulling their fair share, what would you do?

4. If I asked your last boss to describe you, would he /she be more apt to describe you as a go-getter or more of a reserved person? Why?

5. Tell me about a time when extra effort on your part really made a difference in the outcome.

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

12. Attention to Detail

Notices and is persistently inclined to "take care of the little things."

1. Tell me about a time when your attention to detail had substantial outcomes.

2. Discuss a time where your lack of attention to the "fine print" had negative consequences.

3. What is one situation in which you think paying extreme attention to detail would be imperative?

4. Can you think of an instance where detail is not crucial to job performance?

5. Do you balance your checkbook to the nearest dollar, penny, or what?

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

13. Creativity

Displays imagination and the ability to approach situations and problems in a unique or non-traditional manner.

1. When was the last time you were really thinking "outside the box"? What were you doing? How did it turn out?

2. In addition to raising buffalo on a huge Montana ranch, Ted Turner also owns a restaurant chain. Given one minute with him in an elevator, what kind of suggestions would you make about selling buffalo meat in the restaurants?

3. In your last job what was one way in which you best showed your creativity?

4. If you woke up tomorrow and found a purple elephant in your yard, what would you do with it?

5.

6.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

14. Flexibility

Ability to adapt to new, different, or changing circumstances.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you handle change?

2. When working in a team, do you ever find it hard to adjust your style according to the group's way of thinking? Explain.

3. Describe a time when you had to approach a diverse group of people for their cooperation. Knowing these people all thought very differently, how did you make adjustments when approaching them? What did you do differently?

4. What approach has worked best for you in dealing with changing priorities?

5.

6.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

15. Job Affinity and Happiness

Likes and appears well suited to what he/she does.
Pleasant, upbeat, and enthusiastic… a joy to be around.

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being extremely important, how important is your happiness at work? Tell me more about that.

2. On that same 1 to 10 scale, how happy were you in your last job? Was job satisfaction a reason for you leaving?

3. Tell me about a time when you were really happy at work for a prolonged period of time. What were you doing, and what caused your satisfaction?

4. What makes you think you would be happy working in this job?

5. As far as job affinity and happiness goes, what would be your ideal job?

6. Name two accomplishments that have given you the most satisfaction.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

16. Courage

Stands up for unpopular ideas, faces confrontations, gives negative feedback when warranted. Consistently does the right thing in spite of adversity, personal hardship, or sacrifice.

1. Tell me about a time when you did something you didn't know you had the courage to do.

2. What is one of the toughest decisions you have ever made? Why was it tough?

3. If your boss told you to do something that you considered unethical, what would you do?

4. Tell me about a time when you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully tell others things they did not want to hear.

5. Tell me about a time when you made a decision that you knew would be unpopular.

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Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

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Notes/Behaviors

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Candidate Rating

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17. Sense of Mission

Consistently operates with a keen sense of purpose and direction.

1. Every organization has a mission statement. The more successful ones have a keen sense of mission. They are ON a mission. What's your mission, if you have one?

2. What is your long-term career objective, and when did you arrive at that conclusion? How satisfied are you with your progress? Besides you, who else knows that is one of your main purposes in life?

3. Take a look at our organization's mission statement, then tell me if that is in any way consistent with where you're going, and if so, how.

4. Sometimes you find yourself in the company of others upon whom you depend, who do not share the same sense of purpose and direction. How do you resolve that?

5.

6.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

18. Confidence

Has faith in their own abilities, and exudes that feeling to those around them.

1. Give me 2 believable reasons why you are better than any other candidate I'm going to speak with today.

2. What kinds of situations are you most (least) confident in? Tell me about one.

3. Tell me about a time when your confidence served as an inspiration to others.

4. If I told you I didn't think you'd be good at this job, how would you react?

5. What kinds of things do you do to keep your confidence up?

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

19. Influence

Ability to positively affect the views and behavior of others through deeds and persuasive argument.

1. Tell me about a time when you were able to gain support for an idea that initially had strong opposition.

2. Tell me about one of the toughest groups you had to gain cooperation from. What was your role?

3. How do you go about trying to change a person's minds on important issues that you disagree on?

4. What is your greatest weapon in influencing others?

5. Have you ever thought about why people do or do not respect what you have to say?

6.

7.

Personal Habits and Qualities

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

ANALYTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

20. Problem Solving and Decision Making

Identifies problems in product/process and either corrects them, or brings them to the attention of those who can. Makes rational and realistic decisions based on the information at hand, logical assumptions, available resources, and constraints.

1. Have you ever suggested a change that would benefit the company you were working for? How did you present it? How was it accepted?

2. What steps do you feel are necessary in solving a problem?

3. In a culturally diverse environment, how would you deal with ethnic differences in order to promote a healthy workplace?

4. Tell me about the most difficult problem you have ever solved, and how you went about it.

5. What kinds of problems are you good (bad) at solving? Give me an example.

6.

Analytical and Organizational Skills

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

21. Self-Organization

Allocates appropriate amount of time to activities, maintaining an awareness of priorities and the inter-relatedness of functions. Keeps self, work area, and resources well ordered.

1. What are your life/career goals? What steps have you taken today toward achieving them?

2. Describe a time when you were given a number of tasks at once. How did you get them done?

3. How do you keep track of dates and contacts? If I were to spend the next 10 minutes going through your calendar, day planner, or PDA, what would I see?

4. How did you prepare for this interview?

5.

6.

Analytical and Organizational Skills

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

22. Multi-Tasking

Is able to maintain composure and effectiveness when dealing with multiple simultaneous tasks and priorities.

1. Tell me about the last time when you seemed to have about "8 balls in the air at one time." What did you do?

2. It's 4:09 PM on Friday. You've got about 50 minutes more work to do on a report that must be e-mailed to your boss at 5 PM sharp. The phone rings and a customer you've been trying to get to for days is calling and wants to talk about your recent proposal. While you're talking with the customer, you receive a text message from Ticketmaster that you've got exactly one minute in which to secure tickets you've been trying to get for 3 months to a sold out show tomorrow evening. What do you do – in what order, and why?

3. On a 1 (crummy) to 10 (outstanding) scale, how good a multi-tasker are you?

4.

5.

6.

Analytical and Organizational Skills

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

23. Decisiveness

Timely recognition and reaction to the need for a firm, well considered decision.

1. Have you ever had to make a decision that you usually have to run by your boss, however your boss was not there? What did you do? How did your decision play out?

2. Tell me about a time when you had to make an important decision instantly, even though all the information was not available.

3. How often do you find yourself going back and changing a decision that you previously made?

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Analytical and Organizational Skills

Dimension Significance

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Candidate Rating

JOB KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

24. Technical Knowledge and Proficiency

Possesses the knowledge, skill, and ability to successfully and safely perform all job duties. Maintains appropriate licenses/certifications.

1. *Note to interviewer: In this place, you would ask a few technical questions that specifically relate to the candidate's technical knowledge and proficiency in the job for which he or she is being considered.*

   Other questions you may wish to consider asking:

2. What business-related computer programs are you familiar with?

3. Sell me this pen/pencil in the next 60 seconds.

4. What languages are you fluent in? Have you ever found it necessary to converse with someone who had a very poor mastery of your primary language? If so, what did you do, and what was the outcome?

5. What kind of shape are your car and your driver's license in?

6.

Job Knowledge and Skills

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Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

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Candidate Rating

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25. Learning Capacity

Able to quickly digest, assimilate, apply and retain needed information.

1. What types of training was required at your previous job? Did you find it beneficial? If so, how/why was it beneficial?

2. Some people learn best by reading, listening, or watching. Others learn by doing? How do you learn best?

3. Where do you see yourself ten years from now? What steps are you taking to get there?

4. You've just been introduced to the Vice President of this department, along with one of our best customers, and the technical representative from one of our suppliers. How are you going to remember their names?

5. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something complex in a short time. How did you do this?

6.

7.

Job Knowledge and Skills

Dimension Significance

Notes/Behaviors

Candidate Rating

Score Tabulation

Dimension	Significance X Candidate = Dimension Rating Score		
Communication Skills			
1. Listening			
2. Oral Communication			
Interpersonal Skills/Attributes			
3. Presence			
4. Rapport Building			
5. Consideration and Respect			
6. Team Orientation			
Personal Habits and Qualities			
7. Integrity			
8. Reliability			
9. Resilience			
10. Tolerance for Repetitive Tasks			
11. Initiative			
12. Attention to Detail			
13. Creativity			
14. Flexibility			
15. Job Affinity and Happiness			
16. Courage			
17. Sense of Mission			
18. Confidence			
19. Influence			

Score Tabulation

Dimension	Significance X Candidate = Dimension Rating Score		
Analytical and Organizational Skills			
20. Problem Solving and Decision Making			
21. Self-Organization			
22. Multi-Tasking			
23. Decisiveness			
Job Knowledge and Skills			
24. Technical Knowledge and Proficiency			
25. Learning Capacity			
TOTAL SCORE			

Comments/Observations/Recommendations