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**The Interview Structure**

It is hard to compare multiple candidates if they are not asked the same questions and you record their specific replies. Interviews also include other qualification indicators such as the questions they ask you, body language, and personality style.

To complicate the qualifying process, employers are competing for talent and have to market their job opportunity at the same time they are evaluating the candidate. This is why we are conscientious to add WIFM “What’s In It For Me” into what we share about the job. Although the interview is just one step in a long hiring process, it is a critical step. One key to a successful interview is to follow the same format with all candidates.

Interview Format

**1. Break the Ice:**   
Candidates can be nervous, put them at ease. Do not ask the candidate to tell you about themselves. Instead outline the interview process and start with an easy question.

2. Confirm Job Description:   
It is OK to use visual aids such as goal sheets, job descriptions, and input from employees. Then, confirm the deal breakers: software, production levels, education, job title, pay range (not actual offer), hours, days.

**3. Skill Match:**   
For each skill, ask drill down and open ended questions to solicit more information: “list 5 things, describe from A to Z, in detail what was, why, why, why.”

**4. Culture/Team/Trait Match:**   
Select the traits that are most important to you for this position, and ask behavioral questions that are designed to reveal those traits.

**5. Candidate Priorities Match:**   
Determine what priorities this specific candidate has. “What are your top 5 priorities for your next job?”

**6. Opportunity Match**:  **What’s In It For Me?**  
Upsell the position to the candidate’s priorities using appropriate job marketing statements you created on the Marketing Your Opportunity worksheet.

7. Closing:   
Give them an opportunity to ask questions if they haven’t. Document the questions they ask. Are they generic or do they seem genuinely interested? Set expectations for the next steps. Have them reach out to you if they are interested. It will help demonstrate their motivation.

**Sample Interview**

**1. Break the Ice**

*How was the drive? • What was it that prompted you to apply?*

**2. Confirm Job Description**

*What did you use that software for, how often, who for? • What % of your time was spent doing xyz each week? • How do you do \_\_\_\_?*

**3. Skill Match**

*Who else worked with you on that? • What was the turnaround time/project duration? • What tools did you use to complete that? • What was the benefit of doing that for the company? • What challenges did you encounter?*

**4. Culture/Team/Trait Match**

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| **Trait** | **Possible Questions** |
| **Sense of Urgency** | *Tell me about the last project you completed ahead of schedule.  What allowed you to beat your deadline? When did this last happen?* |
| **Strong Customer Service Skills** | *Can you tell me about a time you did something extra for a customer that you didn’t have to do, but you did it because it would be better for the customer?* |
| **Strong Work Ethic** | *Describe what work ethic means to you and give me three examples.* |
| **Reliability** | *When we check references, what percent of the time in a year will they say you were reliable?* |
| **Teamwork** | *Tell me about a successful team project. What was your role on the team? What did you contribute?* |
| **Proactive** | *What are two or three things you did last year to improve a process, save time or save money?* |

**5. Candidate Priorities and Opportunity Match**

*At this point in your career, what is your ideal next step? • What has been your biggest frustration with your current employer?*

**6. Opportunity Match:** **What’s In It For Me?**

*You said you struggle to get project approval. We have a culture   
that encourages innovation and a flatter hierarchy that makes it easier to get projects approved. What do you think it would be like working in an environment like ours?*

**7. Closing – Put the Ball in Their Court**

*Do you have any other questions for me? • We are meeting candidates for another week,   
and expect to invite top candidates for a second interview. • If you are interested in continuing the interview process, the ball is in your court to reply to me with your reasons why?*