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*Hire Better*

A GUIDE TO INTERVIEWING FOR CULTURE FIT

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# *Introduction*



Culture fit is the glue that holds an organization together. That’s why it’s a key trait to look for when you’re hiring marketing talent for your team. The result of poor culture fit due to turnover can cost an organization between 50-60% of the person’s annual salary, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Cultural fit is the likelihood that someone will reflect and/or be able to adapt to the core beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that make up your organization. When you interview candidates, be sure to conduct a “culture fit” interview and ask questions based upon your core values. Here’s a great list of interview questions to help you assess your candidates on ten of the most common core values:

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Integrity      | 6. Innovation      |
| 2. Respect        | 7. Achievement     |
| 3. Excellence     | 8. Passion         |
| 4. Responsibility | 9. Leadership      |
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“**Poor culture** fit due to **turnover** can cost an organization between **50-60%** of the person’s annual salary.”

It’s important to find a job candidate with the skills you’re looking for, but if they aren’t a cultural fit for your organization, even the most talented people will likely be leaving

your company sooner than you would like. Studies show that employees who are the “right fit” outperform their counterparts two to three times over. They are more productive, more engaged, and they turnover less frequently.

# *Integrity*

# INTEGRITY

## What to Look For

Not having integrity is a deal-breaker for most organizations. Companies want employees who have a high degree of trustworthiness, honesty, good-will and ethics. We expect ethical behavior in all business activities and decisions. We want those employees who have personal standards of conduct that meet or exceed our company's requirements. Picture that employee you can trust. That person who owns up to their mistakes. That individual who models and reinforces ethical behavior in themselves and others.

## Questions to Ask

1. How would you describe the ethics of your last employer?
2. In which areas do you feel comfortable and uncomfortable with those ethical standards? Why?
3. Have you ever observed someone stretching the rules at work? What did you do about it?
4. We've all done things that we regretted. Can you give me an example that falls into this category for you? How would you handle it differently today?
5. Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for a mistake before anyone else even knew that you had made a mistake.

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Use a scorecard to keep track of how each candidate ranks on your hiring criteria. This is a simple step, yet it is one of the most important. You will certainly interview more than one candidate for each opening; how do you plan to keep track of what you learn about each person? How will you compare and contrast candidates? Develop a form so you can go back and reference each candidate to help you make the best hiring decision.

# Respect



## RESPECT

### What to Look For

We want employees who understand and live the golden rule: “treat others the way you want to be treated.” We’re seeking that person who treats all people -- clients, coworkers, strangers on the street-- with dignity. Through consistent words and actions, these employees establish credibility and make everyone around them feel as if they are important.

### Questions to Ask

1. Describe a situation when you experienced difficulty getting along with people who had different backgrounds and interests than yours.
2. What is your personal definition of credibility, and how do you think you earn it? Can you provide me with an example of a time when you consciously needed to establish your credibility?  
What was the situation, who was involved, what did you do? How do you feel about the outcome?
3. Tell me about a person you know whom you really respect. Why do you hold them in esteem?
4. How do you currently encourage people on your team to express their ideas and opinions? Can you give an example? How do you handle disagreement? Give us an example.
5. Tell us your experience in working with others of diverse backgrounds from yours. How do you handle differences that come from different backgrounds?

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Be efficient with your hiring process. There’s a difference between being thorough and wasting time and this gap can influence how engaged a candidate will remain, especially if they feel like the process is redundant and they are answering the same questions for different people.

When there are multiple interviewers involved, make sure each interviewer covers a different aspect of the job. This will help you appear organized to the interviewee, which positively impacts the candidate experience and your employer brand.

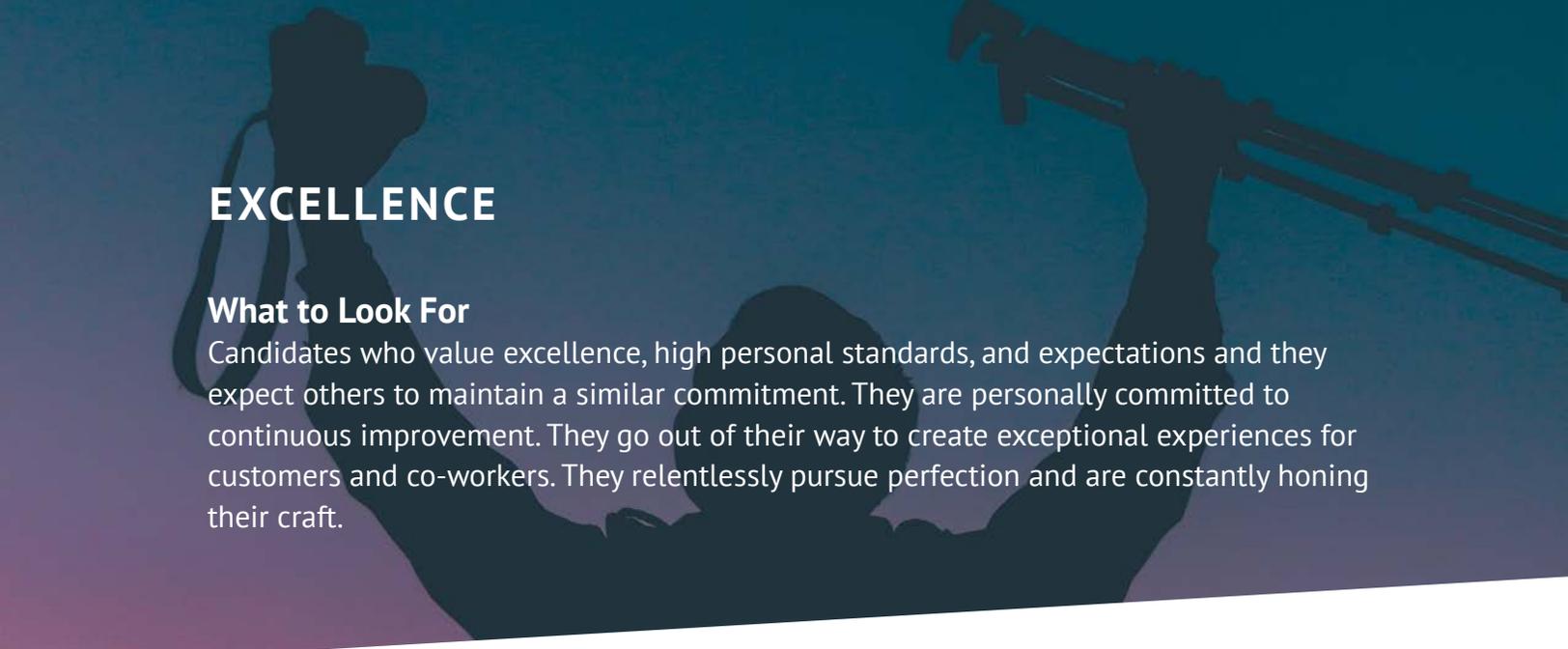


# *Excellence*



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## EXCELLENCE

### What to Look For

Candidates who value excellence, high personal standards, and expectations and they expect others to maintain a similar commitment. They are personally committed to continuous improvement. They go out of their way to create exceptional experiences for customers and co-workers. They relentlessly pursue perfection and are constantly honing their craft.

### *Questions to Ask*

1. Tell me about a time when you had to sacrifice quality to meet a deadline. How did you handle it?
2. Describe for me a situation at work in which you went the extra mile to achieve excellence.
3. How would you describe your personal quality standards?
4. What was the best mistake you made on the job? Why was it the best?
5. What are your standards of success in your job? What have you done to evaluate and improve these standards?

### HIRE BETTER TIP

The premise behind behavioral interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations. Behavioral interviewing, in fact, is said to be 55% predictive of future on-the-job behavior, while traditional interviewing is only 10% predictive.

When asking behavioral interviewing questions, look for specific responses that tell a real story about the candidate's experience. If the candidate gives you a general, non-specific response, probe for more details. If they are still unable to tell you a real example, they have not had experience with that situation and you should note that regarding their candidacy.

# Responsibility

# RESPONSIBILITY

## What to Look For

We all need employees who are responsible and accountable. These employees can be counted on to have ownership of their work. They accept personal responsibility and can be counted on when times are tough. They are willing to champion an idea or position, and they would be the last person on your team to blame another person.

## Questions to Ask

1. Describe for me how you have approached seeking a new job. What has your search been like? What steps have you taken?
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to work without close supervision but still made sure the work got done.
3. Tell me about a situation when you had to work in a group or with a team that wasn't functioning well. What happened? What did you do?
4. Give me an example of a project for which you were ultimately accountable. What was the scope of the project? How many people were involved? What was the end result?
5. Tell me about a time when you took charge as a leader in a work situation without being formally assigned to that role by your boss.

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Candidates are all too often left in limbo between steps in the interviewing process. It's hard to reply to hundreds of applicants, but if a candidate is actively interviewing with you, be responsive.

Mismanaging candidates after they've started interviewing with you will cause you to lose potentially high talent, and it also damages your employer brand. Never let a full week pass without updating your candidates. Be respectful of your candidates' time, and be decisive in your screening process.

# Teamwork

# TEAMWORK

## What to Look For

We're trying to find that employee who works collaboratively with the team to accomplish our goals. These employees respect the needs and contributions of others. They are the moral boosters, the spirit committee, the people who create that feeling of belonging in his/her team. They are always willing to share their expertise and success with others. They know that "true success" is the success of the whole team. They cooperate to resolve problems and achieve goals.

## Questions to Ask

1. Tell me how you increased teamwork among a previous group with whom you worked.
2. Describe a time in which you had to handle a difficult situation with someone at work. Did you resolve the situation? If so, how?
3. In a new work environment, what has generally been your style of developing relationships with colleagues?
4. What type of person do you get along with best? What type of person most annoys you?
5. Tell me about a time when you had to get others or another person to do something they were reluctant to do. What was the situation? What did you do? What were the results of this situation? What did you learn from this experience that you could use in the future?

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Has the candidate done their homework? Preparation and research demonstrate a candidate's enthusiasm for your role. Being prepared also shows how a candidate will work on your team.

There's so much information available on the Internet today. Between corporate websites, social media, LinkedIn... there's no excuse for a candidate who doesn't know something about your company. The best candidates will use their research to prepare questions to ask YOU.

# *Innovation*



## INNOVATION

### What to Look For

This employee constantly examines the “status quo” and looks for better ways of doing things. They’re good at bringing creative ideas out of others. They also have good judgment about which creative ideas and suggestions will work. This is the “out of the box” thinker who can develop and introduce new ways of looking at things in creative ways to solve problems.

### Questions to Ask

1. Describe the most creative work project you’ve ever completed. Describe the impact the project made on your organization.
2. Tell me about a time when you came up with a new idea that was implemented in your company.
3. How are you adapting your work to changes in your industry?
4. If you had one month and a \$50,000 budget to tackle any project, what would it be?
5. Which external jolts or wild cards have the potential to significantly impact our industry?

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# *Achievement*



## ACHIEVEMENT

### What to Look For

This is the person who likes to win. They thrive on meeting - or better yet, exceeding - their goals. They are consistently the top performers and they often push others to achieve results, too.

### Questions to Ask

1. Think about a favorite work experience, a one-time event, that gave you a great deal of personal satisfaction. Describe it and tell me why it was important to you.
2. Give an example of an important goal that you had to set and tell about your success in reaching it. What is the biggest new goal you've set for yourself?
3. What achievements are you most proud of? Why do you consider this a significant accomplishment?
4. Give me a quick overview of your current/prior position and describe the biggest impact you've made - or a time when you took initiative to create a positive change.
5. Describe how you set your goals for last year and how you measured your work. Did you achieve your goals? If not, why?

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Give your candidates clear instructions for their interview. Where should they park? Will they need to go through building security? What floor are you on? Will someone greet them when they arrive? Will they have to fill anything out before they interview? Should they bring any special information? Should they complete something online beforehand? Any specifics on how to dress?

Your applicants should never be embarrassed because they guessed wrong on something. Take the time to tell candidates any of the little details. Better yet, create a template that candidates get via email before the interview. Finding a job is hard enough; make this part easy and create a great candidate experience.

# Passion



## PASSION

### What to Look For

This is the employee who approaches work with energy and enthusiasm. They see a deeper meaning to the work that they do, and they get great satisfaction out of their job, their team, and their company. This employee is excited to come to work each day. Their enthusiasm is infectious and spreads around them.

### Questions to Ask

1. What work projects have you most enjoyed? What work projects have you least enjoyed? Why?
2. Describe a time when you were in a position and felt you did not love what you were doing.
3. How do you stay up to date in the field?
4. What is it that excites you about this position?
5. Who inspires you and why?

### HIRE BETTER TIP

Move things along. Have a defined hiring plan and be able to clearly articulate the steps each candidate will go through. Move candidates quickly and efficiently through the steps. A swift cadence through your selection process builds momentum that will help you hire the best and brightest.

When you are not transparent about your hiring process or when it takes too long, you open the window for candidates to pursue other opportunities. Don't lose out on good candidates by taking too long or being fuzzy.

# Leadership



## LEADERSHIP

### What to Look For

With leadership, we're not only talking about titles and authority, we're also talking about personal leadership...the employees who might not have "manager" in their title, but they can still be counted on to rally their teammates and lead others to success. We're looking for people who set the standard for others. They inspire the people around them to do their best. They are often a manager's "right hand" person for getting things done.

### Questions to Ask

1. Tell me about a time when the going got really tough. How did you rally the staff and build morale?
2. All leaders have to deal with conflict situations. Describe a recent disagreement you personally had to handle.
3. Tell me about a time you showed personal leadership.
4. Describe a work-based situation where you had to lead by example to achieve an objective.
5. Describe a situation where you inspired others to meet a common goal.

### HIRE BETTER TIP

Assess a candidate's ability to do the real work. Take a job content approach by having a candidate actually do some of the job during the interview process.

Interviewing a social media manager? Have them explain their strategy for growing your subscriber base. Hiring a content writer? Have them submit a short (400 or less words) writing sample. Hiring a graphic designer? Give them a sample project and evaluate their real work. Other ways to do this include giving them a real-life problem that your team is facing and asking them to give you ideas on how to solve it.

# *Customer Focus*



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# CUSTOMER FOCUS

## What to Look For

We all need individuals who are dedicated to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers. These employees know how to establish and maintain effective relationships with customers. They are skilled in gaining customer trust and respect. They are proactive in addressing customer needs and concerns. They follow through on problems until they are resolved, and they meet commitments (or advise when delays are necessary).

## Questions to Ask

1. Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to give great service to a customer.
2. Give me an example of when you had to form a relationship with a customer you really disliked. What steps did you take to form the relationship and what was the outcome?
3. Tell me about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this?
4. Describe a time when you lost a customer. What would you do differently?
5. How would you define customer satisfaction? Describe a time when someone failed to provide satisfactory service to you. How could that person have improved his or her performance in that particular situation?

## HIRE BETTER TIP

Don't abuse "culture fit" as a reason for ruling out candidates. First of all, be true to the meaning of culture fit. Culture fit means how a person matches up to your company values.

Many companies use culture fit as a crutch for rejecting people they should really consider hiring. You could not only miss out on great talent, you could lose the value of diversity on your team. Ask yourself if the reasons you're rejecting someone really relate to the type and caliber of work they do, the belief in your mission, and how they communicate.

# A TRUSTED PARTNER TO HELP YOU COMBAT THE TALENT SHORTAGE—WUNDERLAND GROUP

Leaders across the country face a critical juncture in the changing employment landscape. A critical element to manage your turnover risk is having a trusted partner who is always thinking about the talent your company will want to hire and should hire in the future – even when you're not. What does working with a trusted partner really mean?

- ✓ A consultative business partner (not a requisition filler) who knows your company's long-term plans, knows the current talent in your organization and the potential talent gaps
- ✓ An expert who knows the competitive landscape, understands who the key players are and follows the trends in the market
- ✓ Someone who has strong industry knowledge and can engage in meaningful conversations with your business to help make smart hiring decisions
- ✓ A proven professional who has respect from talent in the industry and will represent your company's employer brand well

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