Need to Hire the "Just Right" Employee?

**An interviewing guide
to uncover a candidate's "will-do" factors
that make a big difference to hiring success!**

*Part of the HiringSmart Series
of Best Practices for
Hiring Managers and Recruiters.*

The PACE Staffing Network

BEST of Staffing® CLIENT SATISFACTION 2017

Of course, it's true!

A candidate's knowledge, skills, or work experience are very important to a successful hire. But when a candidate's motivational needs, work values and style — the **"will-do" factors** — match the realities of the job, the employee can deliver game changing performance!

Studies show that employees who are the "right fit" in all dimensions of job performance — both the can- and will-do factors — outperform their can-do only counterparts two to three times over. They are more productive, report greater job satisfaction, and have less turnover.

A great interview gathers information about a candidate's ability to do the job **PLUS** the likelihood they will want to do the job at the highest possible levels.

To help PACE clients conduct great interviews, we've prepared a set of interviewing questions designed to access typical **will-do factors** important to placement success. These are questions we use regularly. Let us know how they worked for you!

About HiringSmart

HiringSmart is a series of simple-to-use tools, checklists and "best practices" for Recruiters and Hiring Managers who are committed to hiring great employees!

For more information on the **HiringSmart** toolkit, email us at infodesk@pacestaffing.com.

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Look For:

How easily the candidate is able to talk about their career goals and priorities. How have they approached their job choices in the past?

Aspirational "fit" — are they likely to achieve their goals inside your work environment?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

If you ask each candidate the same questions in the same way, it is easy to compare candidates' responses.

Make sure each candidate knows you will be "verifying" their answers by calling former employers and co-workers. It is amazing how that simple "warning" will help moderate the candidate's responses.

Career. Focus. Goals.

Describe your career goals.

- In general terms, are you happy with the progress you've made in your career to date?

- Why do you believe this job will help you achieve your current goals?

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Look For:

Patterns of choosing jobs — purpose, analysis, focus, etc.

How have they dealt with the challenge of achieving personal goals while also achieving job objectives? How did they handle issues or obstacles?

Are they a good fit for your workplace reality?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

Look for patterns, not isolated events, in a candidate's responses. Share your observations and ask if the candidate agrees with your assessment. Why? Why not?

"I'm getting the impression that you prefer to work more independently than as part of a team. Is that what others, who know you better than I, would say about you as well?"

Keep digging until you feel comfortable that you have accurate information.

Job Satisfiers.

Why did you select the jobs you've had in the past?

- What did you hope to accomplish when you chose your last job?

- How did that work out for you?

Why are you leaving now?

- Was there a particular event that caused you to think about leaving? If so, please describe.

- What have you learned from this job that will impact what you look for in your next job?

   (Go back at least the last three jobs.)

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Look For:

Patterns of motivation, self-satisfaction.

Will your work environment match what has motivated them in the past?

A Best Practice from *HiringSmart*

Make sure your overall approach to the candidate is professional (prepared), friendly (warm, easy going), and attentive (no interruptions). The more comfortable you make your interviewee feel during the interview, the more you'll learn about them.

Motivators.

As you think about your prior jobs, when did you feel the most successful?

- What were you doing? What skills were you using?

- What were you achieving that mattered most to you? To your employer?

- What kind of recognitions or acknowledgements did you achieve?

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Look For:

Insight into situations that have been demotivating.

How resourceful were they in overcoming these obstacles?

Do they tend to blame others or empower themselves to fix issues?

💡 *A Best Practice from* HiringSmart

Don't share information about the job or the profile of the ideal candidate until after you've completed the interview.

Once the interview is over, sharing your assessment of the "match" between the candidate and the job requirements can temper the impact of future decisions.

"I paid attention to several things you said in the interview that make me wonder if this job is actually a good fit for how you prefer to work" (provide examples).

"You answered so many of my questions exactly how we envisioned the 'ideal' candidate would respond. You can expect to hear from us _____".

Demotivators.

As you think about your prior jobs, when did you feel the least successful?

- What were you doing?

- What skills were you using? Not using?

- What obstacles bothered you the most?

- How did you work through those obstacles?

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Look For:

How do they want to be managed/supervised?

Does their "preferred boss" match up with your style?

Will they value how and when you give feedback?

A Best Practice from *HiringSmart*

One of the goals of a behavioral interview is to obtain examples of the candidate's experiences in previous jobs that are relevant to the job you are trying to fill.

"Can you give an example?"

"Describe your experience dealing with _____."

Behavioral questions tend to start with "tell me about what, when, where, and how?"

Preferred "Boss."

Describe a boss who managed you well.

- How long did you work for them?

- What made them easy to work with?

  - How often did you meet with them?

  - How often/in what way did they give you feedback?

  - In what way did they acknowledge your contribution?

What did you learn from working with this boss?

Look For:

Information about how they *don't* want to be managed/supervised.

Is your management style compatible with what they need from a boss?

Do you (or the boss) typically provide the level of autonomy they enjoy most?

A Best Practice from *HiringSmart*

No matter how difficult it might be to hear what a candidate says, believe their self-reports. For example, if they say they didn't like a former boss' management style that sounds a lot like yours, don't make the mistake of thinking "they'll be different with me."

Boss "Turn Offs."

Describe a boss who didn't manage you well.

- How long did you work for them?

- What did they do that bothered you the most?

    - How often did they interact with you?

    - How often/in what way did they provide feedback?

    - How often/in what way did they acknowledge your contribution?

What did you learn from working with this boss?

Look For:

Attitudes towards conflict; patterns of resolving conflict.

Does their style of problem solving match the "norms" of your team?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

Ask for specific examples of how the interviewee has handled a particular situation in the past, rather than how they "might" deal with a situation should it come up in the future!

Give the candidate time to come up with an example, then probe for more details.

Handling Workplace Conflicts.

Describe a work situation in a prior job where you disagreed with a decision made by others.

- What was the decision?

- How did it impact you?

- Did you make your views known? To whom?

- How did you/others manage through the disagreement?

Look For:

Attitude and behavior towards others who are different from them.

Ability to control emotions.

Interpersonal communication style. (Direct? Indirect?)

How will this person fit in with the culture of your team/how you relate to one another?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

Instead of asking a candidate to describe their behavior, strengths, or weaknesses, you can get at the same information differently…

"When I talk with your best friend/previous boss, favorite coworker — what comments do you think they would make about_____."

Teamwork, Co-Worker Relationships.

Describe a situation where you didn't get along with someone you worked with closely.

- What didn't you like about this person?

- Did you discuss your feelings or concerns with this person directly? With others? Your boss?

- How did your relationship change over time?

Describe a team that you enjoyed being a part of.

- What about that team worked well for you?

- Did you become personal friends with anyone on the team?

Look For:

Experience levels with decision making.

Do decisions they have made in past jobs align with the decisions they will need to make in your environment?

Will they decide quickly enough? Explore options?

Will they be comfortable if their decisions are reviewed?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

One of the keys to conducting an effective interview is to maintain your role as "Switzerland." Most interviewees take their cues from you, and will let you influence their future responses. Practice being neutral!

Decision Making. Initiative.

Describe some of the decisions you have made in previous jobs.

- How often did you make them?

- Did you consult with others before making these decisions?

Describe a time when you felt it important to act on your own, without involving others.

- Did you ever have your actions or decisions challenged by your boss or others after the fact?

- How did you deal with that?

What was the most challenging decision you had to make on the job?

- What were the challenges?

- What information did you gather before deciding?

- How did your decision work out?

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Look For:

Likely strengths and weaknesses.

Awareness of how others have evaluated their work.

Willingness to talk about both strengths and weaknesses.

A Best Practice from *HiringSmart*

A mistaken belief is that an interviewer should only ask open-ended questions. Equally important are the yes/no, closed-end questions designed to clarify what you've heard: "Were you satisfied with that outcome?"

Your interviewing toolkit should contain a variety of questions and questioning techniques!

Self-Awareness.

When I talk with your previous supervisors, what will they tell me regarding…

- What they appreciated most about your work?

- What they thought you should work on improving?

- How they saw you fitting in with others?

- The kind of job they would recommend for you?

Do you agree with their assessment?

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Look For:

Indicators of how they have behaved in past leadership roles. How they view the leadership responsibility.

Their willingness to learn from previous leadership experiences.

How their previous leadership experiences compare to the experiences they might face in the current job.

Leadership.

Describe a situation that you believe is an example of your best leadership qualities.

- Describe the situation or challenge you faced. What you did? The outcome?

Describe a situation where you could have been a better leader.

- Describe the challenge. What you did? The outcome?

- In hindsight, what you would have done differently?

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Look For:

Awareness of how their work impacts outcomes… and their experience with high impact work.

Patterns of taking responsibility for both good and off target performance.

A willingness (or lack of willingness) to take full responsibility for their work outcomes.

A Best Practice from *HiringSmart*

When interviewing, try not to disclose to the candidate the personal qualities or behavioral traits that are important to the selection process. Ask questions designed to reveal information about the candidate that will help you evaluate those traits without disclosing their importance to the hiring decision.

Only when the interview is over can you say, "Accountability is really important to us… and I liked how you answered my questions about how you have taken personal accountability for your work in the past."

Accountability:

Describe a situation where you made an error that impacted others — your team or your boss.

- Who did you tell first?

- When and how did you let others know about the problem?

- What was your role in fixing the problem?

Give an example of when you went "above and beyond" to achieve an important goal.

- What prompted you to do that?

In thinking about your past jobs, which of them put you under the most pressure to perform?

- In what way?

- What were the consequences to yourself or others if you didn't do your job as expected?

- How did you respond to that type of pressure…

    - In positive ways?

    - In negative ways?

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Look For:

General impressions. Level of interest in the job.

Resourcefulness.

Connection skills — what did they do to "connect" with you?

A Best Practice from HiringSmart

You often can learn about what is really important to a job candidate by paying attention to the type of questions they ask when the interview is over — when the pressure is off.

Engagement.

How did you prepare for this interview?

Did our conversation accomplish what you hoped it would?

Did you get any insights into what it might be like working here?

Is there anything you would change about our interview? Any of your answers?

What questions do you have for me?

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