<u>**Behavioral Interview Questions**</u>

Many candidates have the skills or experience that an employer may be looking for in a job opening. With the overwhelming number of applicants in today's market how is an employer able to find the right candidate which will seamlessly integrate into the organization and grow to be your top talent?

One technique is to incorporate interview questions that focus strategically on the behaviors and competencies that you feel are imperative to that position. Committees should meet in advance of the interview to identify their top 3-4 competencies and behaviors for the position. This allows for discussion and agreement as to what the entire team's goals are in the candidate selection. Sample questions are available below to provide a starting point in identifying interview questions.

Committees should keep in mind that many candidates are well versed in preparing for interviews. With that said, committees should not only take into account non-verbal communication but also listen to candidates answers to see if they addressed the following areas when answering your questions.

1. **Situation** - Make certain that the candidate includes specific information by addressing your question with an actual example. Listen for the Who, What, When, Where and How.
2. **Task** - What exactly did they complete/accomplish and what challenges did they overcome doing so?
3. **Approach** - What was their role in the activity? Did they use action verbs to describe it or were they not a key contributor?
4. **Results** – What was the outcome of the individual's activity/role? What consequences/gains/benefits did their behavior have on the outcome?

There are no right and wrong answers to these questions, they are simply providing you context in seeking to understand how someone behaved in a situation and if that behavior would be an attribute that would fit well into the context of your organization.

Remember to avoid the following interview committee blunders:
1. Don't lead your interviewees by prefacing a question with detailed information. This tips off your candidates as to how you want them to respond.
2. Avoid interview questions that are generic. Probe deeper if the candidate doesn't provide background context, the action taken and the results.
3. Avoid hypothetical and/or theoretical questions. You want to know how that person has already handled that situation.
4. Don't accept answers that are not in the first person. Don't let people take credit for the action of others.
5. Avoid the temptation to fill the silence. Give the candidate time to recall the event. Refrain from filling the void for them by rephrasing the question or offering leading information.

**Teamwork Questions**
1.  Give me an example of when you worked on a team, describing your role and contributions.
2. Describe a project that required input from people at different levels of the organization.

3. Share a rewarding team experience.
4. Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult team member.
5. Give me an example of a team project you worked on which failed.
6. Tell me about a time you stepped into a leadership role as part of a team.
7. How do you motivate others to perform?
8. Have you been required to mediate disagreements?
9. Tell me about a time where you disagreed with a team member and how it was handled?
10. If provided the opportunity would you elect to work independently on a project or as a team?

## Leadership Questions
1. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.
2. Tell me about a time that you took the lead on a difficult project.
3. Who have you coached or mentored to achieve success?
4. Tell me about a time that you led an important meeting.  What was your role?
5. Describe a situation that gave you a great challenge as a leader and how did you overcome or resolve it?
6. Tell me about your approach in leading people which do not report to you.  What techniques do you use?
7. Describe your definition of leadership.  Based upon your description, describe a time where you have had an opportunity to use these attributes in your work.
8. What attributes do you feel make a good leader?  Describe a time where you have demonstrated those attributes at the workplace.
9. Please describe in detail a project that you were responsible for.  How did you carry out the project and what were the end results?

## Handling Conflict
1. Tell me about a team project when you had to work with someone difficult?
2. Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work.
3. Give an example of a time you had to respond to an unhappy manager/customer/colleague.
4. Tell me about a time that you disagreed with a rule or approach.
5. Tell me about a time you had a conflict on a team project.
6. Tell me about a time where you felt that a colleague had misrepresented your idea.
7. When have you been under tremendous pressure on the job and how did you handle it?

## Problem Solving
1. Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult/challenging problem.
2. Describe a situation in which you found a creative way to overcome an obstacle.
3. Tell me about a time that you identified a need and went above and beyond the call of duty to get things done.
4. Tell me about a time when you came up with a new approach to a problem.
5. What's the most innovative new idea that you have implemented?
6. Tell me about two improvements you have made in the last six months.
7. What was the best idea you came up with in your last job?

8. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
9. Describe a difficult problem you have encountered at work and how you dealt with it.
10. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation.

**Biggest Failure/Agility**
1. What is your greatest professional failure?
2. Tell me about a mistake that you made.
3. What was your biggest mistake and what did you learn from it?
4. Tell me about a decision you regret.
5. What is your greatest professional regret?
6. Tell me about a project that did not go according to plan.  What corrections did you make and what were the results?

**Work Ethic/Self-Starter**
1. Tell me about a time that you went above and beyond the call of duty to get things done.
2. When have you worked the hardest?
3. Describe a time when you had to overcome a significant obstacle on an important project.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to juggle multiple important projects.
5. What is your proudest or creative career accomplishment to date?

**Willingness to Learn**
1. Give me an example of a goal you reached and how you achieved it.
2. What was the most useful criticism you received and how did you use it to change?
3. If there was one area you've always wanted to improve upon, what would that be?

**Critical Thinking**
1. Describe the steps you go through to make an important decision.  Please provide an example.
2. Tell me about a situation where you had to make a quick decision.  How difficult was it to do so?
3. Describe the thought process you went through to make one or two of the most critical decisions of your career.
4. Have you ever had to bend the rules?  Tell me about an example of a time which this occurred and the items you took into consideration to make that decision.

**Persistence**
1. Tell me about a time when you got results when others tried and failed.
2. Have you ever persuaded management to do something they were reluctant to do?  Describe how you did it and the outcome.

**Efficiency and Organization**
1. What is your process for prioritizing responsibilities?  Provide an example.
2. What could you do to be more efficient?
3. Please provide me an example of a typical work day and how you go about prioritizing tasks.

**Communication**

1.  Describe a time when you receive information about a project or work related item that was critical to success.  How did you share the information with the team?  When did you share your information?
2.  Describe a time and approach that you used to explain a complex technical problem to a non-technical audience.
3.  What is the most important piece of professional writing you have produced?
4.  Tell me about a time when you had to teach/train someone on a new skill or business process.  What approach did you take?
5.  Provide an example of when you used your verbal communication skills to influence a person or group.
6.  We find that what works with one person does not necessarily work with another, so we must be flexible in our style of relating to others.  Give an example of when you had to vary your communication style with a particular person.