CHECKLIST OF STANDARD HIRING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

☐   Why did you leave your last job? (Or, why are you considering leaving your current job?)

Listen between the lines: Applicants completely content in their current jobs probably wouldn't be looking for another. But be on the lookout for applicants who speak badly about their current/past employers; they may say the same things about you and your company someday. Instead, look for applicants who discuss their current/last jobs and employers diplomatically (e.g., they are looking for more responsibility, greater opportunities, etc.).

Suggested follow-up: Why have you changed jobs so frequently? (Or, why did you stay in your last job so long?)

Listen between the lines: While you may not want to become involved with a job-hopper, you shouldn't eliminate applicants who have moved on for personal growth, more responsibility, or other career-enhancing experiences.

For those applicants who have remained in the same positions for a long time, particularly in dead-end jobs, it may indicate that they are too comfortable with the status quo and are not "go-getters."

☐   Why did you choose to interview at our organization?

Listen between the lines: The answer to this question will show you if applicants are thorough and have done their homework. Watch out for applicants who haven't made the effort to find out at least something about your company; they may not be particularly serious about working for you.

Suggested follow-up: Why would you like to work here?

☐   Where do you see yourself in five years?

Listen between the lines: Watch out for applicants whose long-range goals are completely different from the job for which they're applying. Also beware of applicants whose goals are too lofty. Eliminating these types of candidates will help you to minimize turnover caused by flighty employees, or those who aren't progressing up the corporate ladder as fast as they'd like. Look for applicants whose long-range career goals "fit" with the position, and are attainable in a three- to five-year period.

☐   Please describe a typical working day in your current/last job.

☐   Have you ever been fired from a job?

☐   What skills do you enjoy using most, and why?

☐   What is your greatest strength, and how do you take full advantage of it?

☐ What is your greatest weakness, and what have you done to overcome it?

☐ How did you do on your last performance appraisal? What were the key strengths and weaknesses pointed out by your supervisor?

☐ What's your definition of the word "success"? How about "failure"?

☐ What is the biggest mistake you've made in your career? What steps have you taken to ensure it doesn't happen again?

Listen between the lines: Be wary of those individuals who blame others for the mishap, or who excessively relied on others to pull them through.

☐ Have you ever worked in an environment similar to this one? Please describe the similarities and differences.

☐ Are you familiar with the corporate culture here? How do you think you'll fit in?

☐ What would be the ideal way you'd envision spending your first day here?

☐ What were the worst working conditions you ever experienced? How did you handle them?

☐ What contributed to the best working conditions you've ever experienced?

☐ What types of work do you like best? Why?

☐ What types of work would you prefer to avoid, and why?

☐ Describe your work ethic, with examples.

☐ What interests do you have outside work that might positively affect your on-the-job performance?

☐ Tell me about the best boss you ever had. What made him/her so great to work for?

☐ Tell me about the boss you found it the hardest to work with. What made him/her so difficult to work with?

☐ Tell me in what areas you believe your current supervisor could do a better job.

Listen between the lines: The answer to this question will give you an idea of how applicants want to be supervised, as well as how they don't. An applicant who complains about a boss who delegates a job and then supervises every step of the way is giving you a different message than the applicant who objects to a lack of direction.

☐ How does your boss get you to do your best work?

☐ What do you feel an employer owes its employees? How about what employees owe their employers?

☐ If you started working for us tomorrow, what could you contribute immediately?

☐ If you are offered this position, how much notice will you have to give your current employer?

☐ How would your co-workers describe you?

☐ Did you ever have to deal with a co-worker who wasn't pulling his/her weight? What did you do about it?

☐ How would you respond to a co-worker who suggests an improvement that you know won't work?

☐ Have you ever been faced with another person stealing credit for an idea you came up with? How'd you handle it?

☐ Have you ever been a member of a committee or workplace task force? What issues did you tackle, and what were the results?

☐ Do you consider yourself more task-oriented or project-oriented?

Listen between the lines: Task-oriented individuals generally assume a strict interpretation of their job responsibilities and require a structured environment with feedback and direction. Project-oriented individuals are more apt to make independent decisions and prefer a hands-off management style. Check the job description carefully to determine which type is best suited to the job.

☐ What strategies have you found to work best when trying to sway someone to your point of view?

☐ How do you handle breaks in routine, interruptions, and last-minute changes?

Suggested follow-up: Tell me about a time you became frustrated or flustered because of job pressures. How'd you handle it?

☐ If you could attend a class or seminar, what would the topic be, and why?

☐ Have you ever been passed over for a promotion for which you felt you were most qualified? What did you do about it?

☐ What aspect of this job as I've described it appeals to you most? The least?

☐ What will you do if you don't get this position?

☐ Why should I hire you?

Use the following spaces to fill in additional questions to ask the applicants for this particular position.

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