

A Guide to Conducting Behavioral Interviews with Senior Career Job Candidates



Table of Contents

A Guide to Conducting Behavioral Interviews with Senior Career Job Candidates.....	
Purpose of this Guide.....	3
Section 1: Why and How to Conduct a Behavioral Interview.....	4
Why is Interviewing Important?	4
Why use Behavioral Interviewing?	4
What Should We Be Looking for in Candidates?	5
How do I Write Behavioral Interview Questions?.....	7
Using the STAR Model.....	7
How do I Create Rating Scales?.....	7
Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)	8
How Do I Conduct a Behavioral Interview?	9
Selecting Interviewers.....	9
Opening the Interview	10
Asking Behavioral Interview Questions	10
Taking Notes	11
Closing the Interview	12
Section 2: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions	13
Targeted Competency: Ethical Practice	14
Targeted Competency: Leadership & Navigation	32
Targeted Competency: Business Acumen.....	41
Targeted Competency: Consultation	65
Targeted Competency: Critical Evaluation.....	75
Targeted Competency: Communication	86
Targeted Competency: Global & Cultural Effectiveness.....	95
Targeted Competency: Relationship Management	103
Section 3: What to do After Conducting a Behavioral Interview.....	116
Interviewer Debrief Meetings.....	116
Making and Documenting the Final Hiring Decision.....	117
Appendix A: Question & Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale Template	1
Appendix B: Additional Competency-based Behavioral Interview Questions.....	1

Ethical Practice.....	1
Leadership and Navigation	1
Business Acumen	2
Consultation	3
Critical Evaluation	3
Communication.....	4
Global and Cultural Effectiveness	4
Relationship Management.....	5
Other Organizational Competencies.....	6

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide HR professionals and hiring managers with additional practical information about how to conduct effective behavioral interviews along with specific competency-based, behavioral interview questions. This guide is divided into three sections:

- The first section “*Why and How to Conduct a Behavioral Interview*” starts with a reminder of why interviewing is important, why behavioral interviewing in particular can be a valuable tool for organizations, and how to prepare for and conduct behavioral interviews.
- The second section “*Sample Behavioral Interview Questions*” provides samples of competency-based, structured behavioral interview questions with associated behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) that HR professionals and hiring managers can use to assess job candidates at the **senior** career level.
- The final section “*What to do After Conducting a Behavioral Interview*” provides information about what to do after a behavioral interview, including evaluating candidates, conducting a debriefing meeting, and making a hiring decision.

In addition to the sections listed above, this guide includes two appendices. Appendix A contains a template for creating your own structured behavioral interview questions and BARS, including space for capturing candidates’ responses. Appendix B includes additional behavioral competency questions that you may want to consider for your organization.

Section 1: Why and How to Conduct a Behavioral Interview

Why is Interviewing Important?

Interviewing is an important step in the employee selection and succession planning processes for most organizations. Interviews offer several benefits to those organizations, including:

- Serving as an employer's initial opportunity to meet with job candidates.
- Providing time for HR, hiring managers and others to interact with candidates to gain insights into their experience, skills, knowledge, behaviors, and more, beyond what can be found in a recommendation, resume or application.
- Enabling the employer to determine if a candidate's skills, experience and personality meet the job's requirements.
- Helping the employer to assess whether an applicant would likely fit in with the corporate and/or team culture.

Accordingly, the goal of interviews is to identify and select a candidate whose skill set and behaviors match that which are needed for a particular role and whose personality, interests and values match the culture and mission of the organization. To find this ideal candidate, Human Resource professionals and hiring managers must be well informed on how to conduct interviews effectively.

Why use Behavioral Interviewing?

In implementing accurate and fair selection methods that include interviewing, employers can select from a variety of interviewing techniques. It is important to choose the right kind of interviewing technique that matches the performance and retention needs of the organization and position as well as the culture of the organization/team. This guide focuses on *behavioral interviewing*, considered by many to be the most effective type of interviewing technique in nearly any type of organization. For more information on other techniques, see shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/interviewingcandidatesforemployment.aspx.

Behavioral interviewing focuses on a candidate's past experiences by asking candidates to provide specific examples of how they have demonstrated certain behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities. Answers to behavioral interview questions should provide verifiable, concrete evidence as to how a

candidate has dealt with issues in the past. This information often reveals a candidate's actual level of experience and his or her potential to handle similar situations in your organization. Behavioral interview questions tend to be pointed, probing and specific.

In addition, the behavioral interviewing method falls under the category of *structured interviews*. The main purpose of structured interviewing is to objectively match candidates to and compare candidates for positions by asking a specific set of job-relevant questions and using the same set of pre-determined rating scales to evaluate all candidates. This straightforward approach limits the amount of discretion for each individual interviewer, making it easier for the employer to evaluate and compare applicants fairly because all applicants are asked the same questions and evaluated using the same criteria. Thus, structured interviewing is not only effective for making a hiring decision, it can be crucial in defending against allegations of discrimination in hiring and selection.

Beyond their structured approach, there are additional benefits to using behavioral interviews. Because behavioral interviews are based on an analysis of job duties and requirements of the job, bias and ambiguity are reduced because candidates are evaluated on job-related questions. In addition, job-relatedness and consistency of the interview process may increase the perception of fairness among candidates. The job-related questions may also help candidates obtain a realistic perspective of the job.

The following is an example of a behavioral interview question:

- Describe a situation in which you used persuasion to convince someone to see things your way.

If answers seem to be thin on detail, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions:

- Can you tell me a little more about the situation?
- What exactly did you do?
- What was your specific role in this?
- How did this turn out?
- What other challenges did you come across? What did you do to address those?

The premise behind behavioral interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations. To evaluate this most effectively and fairly, the main interview questions are delivered to every job candidate with the same wording, in the same order, and using the same scoring system. Because of this, the behavioral interviewing technique can take a great deal of effort and planning before an interview can ever take place.

What Should We Be Looking for in Candidates?

In using any method for hiring new employees, one of the first things that an employer needs to determine is what exactly it is looking for in candidates. This can sometimes be challenging; however, behavioral interviewing is specifically designed to make that decision more straightforward.

When we think about the behavioral interviewing process, we typically start by asking the question,

“What knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) are most critical for success in this position?”

You might also ask,

“What behaviors are important or strategically critical to my organization?”

You can then decide:

“What competencies (i.e., clusters of KSAOs) are most strategically important to my organization when evaluating candidates?”

Accordingly, behavioral interviewing typically lends itself to a competency-based approach for identifying the requirements of a job. *Competencies* are specific employee behaviors that relate to an organization’s strategic goals, are correlated with job performance and can be measured and strategically leveraged across multiple HR and other business systems to improve overall performance. There are several benefits to using a competency-based approach to behavioral interviewing:

- *Competencies provide direction.* Competencies provide organizations with a way to define—in behavioral terms—what it is that people need to do to produce the results the organization desires, in a way that is in keeping with its culture.
- *Competencies are measurable.* Competencies enable organizations to evaluate the extent to which employees demonstrate the behaviors that are critical for success and are critical for strengthening an organization’s capacity to meet strategic objectives.
- *Competencies can be learned.* Unlike personality traits, competencies are characteristics of individuals that can be developed and improved.
- *Competencies can distinguish and differentiate the organization.* Competencies represent a behavioral dimension on which organizations can distinguish and differentiate themselves.
- *Competencies can integrate management practices.* Competencies can provide a structured model that can be used to integrate and align management practices (e.g., recruiting, performance management, training and development, reward and recognition) throughout the organization.

By interviewing for job and organizational fit based on competencies, employers can gather important information regarding whether a job candidate is capable of successfully performing all the necessary requirements for that job while also being a good fit for the organization.

You may already have identified the competencies critical for success in your organization. If not, you can learn about the steps for developing competencies here: shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/Pages/leveragingemployeecompetencies.aspx. Once you have identified the core competencies for your organization and have determined what qualities and behaviors you are seeking in a candidate, you are ready to create your behavioral interview questions.

How do I Write Behavioral Interview Questions?

The questions for behavioral interviews should be written to elicit details about a candidate's past experience that would reflect the identified job-related competencies. These questions should be clear and concise and should encourage candidates to share openly about their typical behaviors that demonstrate the job-related competencies in question. To help you in developing your interview questions, we have provided a list of sample questions at the end of this guide (see [Appendix B](#)).

Using the STAR Model

One particularly useful and popular approach to developing behavioral interview questions is the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Results) model. The STAR model helps candidates frame their responses to behavioral questions by encouraging them to respond with a story about a past behavior.

An example framework for developing a structured, behavioral interview question using the STAR model is presented below.

- **Situation:** What was the situation the candidate was in?
 - e.g., *"Tell me about a time..."*
- **Task:** What was the task the candidate needed to accomplish?
 - e.g., *"where you were faced with multiple competing deadlines."*
- **Action:** What were the actions the candidate took to accomplish this task?
 - e.g., *"What did you do and..."*
- **Results:** What were the results of these actions?
 - e.g., *"how did it turn out?"*

Thus, the complete behavioral interview question presented to the candidate would read, *"Tell me about a time where you were faced with multiple competing deadlines. What did you do and how did it turn out?"*

Once preliminary lead questions are developed in association with your competencies, it is recommended that you test their performance by interviewing position incumbents or employees who apply similar competencies in their daily work. This will help to evaluate the appropriateness of questions and will also help to develop potential probing questions to gain more insight about the candidate's behaviors.

How do I Create Rating Scales?

Once you have developed or identified your behavioral interview questions, you need to create an appropriate rating scale for your questions. A rating scale is the basis on which all candidates are

evaluated. The rating scale should be well defined so that all interviewers can easily understand the scale being used and the meaning of each rating on the scale.

A rating scale could be relatively simple and only include anchors such as “satisfactory” or “unacceptable.” A rating scale of this kind can be useful in that it simplifies the rating process by making it a “yes or no” type of decision, reducing variance and the need for much more deliberation by interviewers. The disadvantage to these kinds of scales is that it reduces variance in the results, meaning that you may end up with all of you candidates either “satisfactory” or “unacceptable.”

Rating scales can also be more complex, for example with multi-point Likert-type scales (e.g., a scale of 1-5). The advantages of a more complex scale are that they allow for more variance in the results, providing more nuanced comparisons between candidates and the ability to use other factors other than just interview responses to drive decisions. The disadvantage to more complex scales is that it increases the need to look more closely at the differences between each candidate.

In general, it is better to go with more variance than less when conducting behavioral interviews. However, the number of ratings in the scale is not nearly as important as how those ratings are defined. A generic example of a rating scale might look like this:

- **Far Exceeds Requirements:** Perfect answer. Demonstrates competency accurately, consistently, and independently. All points relevant. All good examples.
- **Exceeds Requirements:** Demonstrates competency accurately and consistently in most situations with minimal guidance. Many good examples.
- **Meets Requirements:** Demonstrates competency accurately and consistently on familiar procedures and needs supervisor guidance for new skills. Some good examples.
- **Below Requirements:** Demonstrates competency inconsistently, even with repeated instruction or guidance. Few good examples.
- **Significant Gap:** Fails to demonstrate competency regardless of guidance provided. No good examples.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

For behavioral interviews, rating scales should include criteria for tying suggested answers to each point in the scale based on the key behaviors that each question supports. This form of rating scale is referred to as a *Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS)*. BARS differs from more generic rating scales in that they focus on the behaviors that are determined to be key to performing the job properly rather than evaluating more general candidate characteristics, such as personality or experience.

For example, a superior response should look like X behavior, a satisfactory response should look like Y behavior, and an unsatisfactory response should look like Z behavior. The best representation of the most desired job-related behaviors should be tied to a top rating, whereas the weakest representation of job-related behaviors should be tied to the lowest rating. Using a BARS approach for standardizing the criterion used helps the interviewer rate candidates’ responses more equitably and improves rating consistency among interviewers.

BARS rating scales are used to evaluate the quality of a job candidate's responses to competency-based behavioral questions; thus the questions and rating scales will typically be developed in tandem. The *critical incidents technique* is one effective method for creating a BARS scale. The critical incident technique involves asking current job incumbents to provide examples of effective and ineffective behaviors that lead to positive and negative outcomes related to particular situations (i.e., incidents) one might encounter on the job. Interview developers then review this information to determine whether it should be used as the "anchors" in the scale.

How Do I Conduct a Behavioral Interview?

Once you have created your behavioral interview questions and their associated rating scales, it is time to prepare for and conduct your interviews. In addition to having a detailed understanding of the position, behavioral competencies necessary for success, questions and rating scale, it is critical that interviewers are clear on what is expected of them in the interviewer role. The first step, however, is determining who will conduct the behavioral interviews.

Selecting Interviewers

When selecting interviewers, do not base your selection decision solely on convenient schedules of the potential interviewers. It is imperative that you think strategically about the responsibility of conducting fair and effective interviews to ensure that the interviewers you have selected are the right people for that role.

You will want to involve interviewers who:

- Represent a strategic need in serving as an interviewer (e.g., hiring manager, key member of the team, informal supervisor, important organizational stakeholder).
- Have a thorough knowledge of the job and can assess for the job's critical behavioral and technical competencies.
- Can hold a comfortable discussion with potential candidates, rather than an interrogation. Can assess for fit team and organizational culture fit.

If possible, always use the same stakeholders to conduct all the interviews for a single position to help ensure consistency in ratings.

Once you have selected your interviewer or interviewers be sure they receive behavioral interviewing training, if they have not already. A good best practice when there is more than one interviewer is to have all interviewers review the behavioral interview questions and rating scale, then discuss the questions and scale as a group to ensure that everyone is on the same page in terms of overall approach to the interviews and ways to interpret answers. Either way, every interviewer must thoroughly review the interview questions and rating scale prior to the interview.

Opening the Interview

The manner in which HR professionals and hiring managers interview applicants can be pivotal in identifying and retaining the top candidates for a job. A successful and effective interview is one in which both the interviewer and the interviewee receive comprehensive and accurate information in order to make informed decisions about the applicant's suitability for the job.

The interview process can be stressful for both the interviewer and the interviewee. It is normal for an applicant to be nervous, so interviewers should try to put the person at ease from the moment he or she enters the room. Displaying a calm, confident and friendly demeanor through good body language is particularly important. It is important as well that the interview be conducted in a setting that is quiet and free of distractions so that both the interviewer and interviewee can stay relaxed and focused.

Before commencing with prepared questions, the interviewer should first introduce his or her self and his or her role in the organization. He or she should then describe the interview process to the applicant and ask if he or she has any questions before the interview begins. (It may be helpful for the interviewer to also let the candidate know that during the interview he or she may pause while writing down their notes.) At this point the interviewer will want to recap the position and what it entails. This helps the applicant to answer questions more knowledgeably and to consider again whether he or she is genuinely interested in the job.

The interviewer can ease tensions further by encouraging the applicant to talk about a particular interest—perhaps something on the person's resume. To gain as much information as possible from an applicant, the interviewer should create an atmosphere that promotes communication.

Some examples of appropriate opening questions include:

- Tell me a bit about your work background, and then give me a description of how you think it relates to our current opening.
- Tell me about your present or last job. Why did you choose it? Why did you, or why do you, want to leave?
- After learning about this opportunity, what made you take the next step and apply for the job?
- What do you like most about the [name of profession]? What do you like least, and what do you find the most challenging?
- What are your short- and long-term career goals? Tell me about two work accomplishments that were very successful or you are the most proud of.
- What three things are most important to you in a position?

Once the interviewer has finished introducing his or herself, described the interview and put the applicant at ease, he or she can now dive into the behavioral interview questions.

Asking Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral interviews gain part of their strength from being standardized—the same group of lead questions are asked in the same order to each candidate. Thus, it is important that interviewers be

consistent in the way that they ask questions across candidates. In addition, when asking behavioral interview questions, the interviewer must listen closely and take clear and accurate notes without making the interviewee uncomfortable (see more about this in the subsequent section, [Taking Notes](#)).

When asked a behavioral question, candidates are expected to provide information, in the form of a short story, not just on *what* tasks and activities they have accomplished, but *how* they accomplished them. The interviewer should encourage candidates to provide specific details when responding, asking questions that pull evidence about the candidate's achievements, how they responded to challenges, and how they differentiated themselves. In addition, candidates should answer questions in terms of what they as individuals specifically did, not what was accomplished as a team (e.g., "when X happened, I did Y to complete the goal" rather than "when X happened, **we** did Y to complete the goal").

Although structured, behavioral interviews can be a bit flexible as well. The individual conducting a behavioral interview should use probing questions to dig deeper into a candidate's responses, based on verbal and non-verbal cues. Typically a behavioral question will trigger 3-4 probing questions based on the candidate's initial response.

Probing questions are follow-up questions asked of candidates when:

- Initial answers are vague, ambiguous, evasive, or do not fully address the lead question.
- The candidate's tone changes drastically or word choice becomes negative.
- The candidate seems to have difficulty forming an answer or takes extensive pauses.

Probing questions are not developed in advance of a behavioral interview; they are based on triggers that are prompted through the candidate's responses to lead questions. These types of questions are grounded heavily on an interviewer's use of active listening and observation as a candidate relates facts and experiences about how they have behaved in the past. These questions should be open-ended and should not direct a candidate towards a desired response. Here are a few examples:

- I'm not quite sure I understood. Could you please tell me more about that?
- I'm not certain what you mean by . . . Could you give me some examples?
- You mentioned . . . Could you tell me more about that? What stands out in your mind about that?
- This is what I thought I heard . . . Did I understand you correctly?
- Can you give me an example of . . . ?
- You just told me about . . . I'd also like to know about . . .

Taking Notes

Note taking is key to your ability to revisit and remember your candidates' responses; yet, too much note-taking may unnerve a candidate or could detract from one's ability to connect with a candidate on a personal level. Solid note-taking, however, may be your legal defense against litigation, so taking notes is a critical part to your interview documentation.

Finding the right balance can often be challenging for interviewers, since candidates may speak at different paces, with different tones of voice, or even with different accents. It is critical, however, that

the interviewer maintain focus and follow along as closely as possible to ensure minimal loss of information. As noted earlier, it is a good practice to let the candidate know at the beginning that you are taking notes and that there may be pauses, to minimize this as a disruption to the interview flow.

There is basic information that every interviewer should record on their interview form or at the beginning of their notes, such as the date, time, and length of the interview and the name and job title of the interviewer. In addition to that information, however, the interviewer should note the responses to each question, highlighting key pieces of information that will help in evaluating each candidate according to each competency. Because there is so much information to record during a behavioral interview, below are some key tips for taking effective notes:

- Use short-hand or key phrases to summarize the content and delivery of responses.
- Balance your note taking with maintaining eye contact and engaging in conversation (try taking notes without breaking eye contact with the candidate).
- Avoid writing down judgments of your candidate in your notes.
- Avoid rating a candidate's response until they have left the interview (but rate the candidate responses for yourself as soon as possible after the interview).
- Ensure that your notes support or justify your ratings (list actual answers along with how these answers apply to the competency being rated).

Closing the Interview

A popular method of closing the interview is to say the interview is ending and to offer the candidate the opportunity to ask questions. This will enable the candidate to gain clarification on aspects of the position and on employment conditions such as hours, salary and benefits. The interviewer should answer the candidate's questions as frankly as possible. If it is not an appropriate time to discuss compensation—perhaps others are present—the interviewer can suggest a follow-up discussion. Interviewers should be prepared to provide documents describing the company and its benefits.

In closing an interview, the interviewer may want to:

- Ask if the candidate is interested in the job based on the information provided during the interview.
- Ask about availability.
- Ask for a list of people who can be contacted for references.
- Explain the time frame for the rest of the interviews, the subsequent steps in the process and when a decision is likely to be made.
- Explain how to get in touch with the interviewer and when to expect to hear from him or her.
- Walk the candidate to the door and thank the person for the interview.

Such steps can ensure the applicant is left with a positive impression of the interviewer and the organization.

Section 2: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

On the following pages are sample behavioral interview questions that your organization can consider using for conducting competency-based behavioral interviews. These questions can be used as is, however, we recommend that you use the steps outlined above for developing behavioral interview questions to consider whether additional modifications be made prior to their use, including the potential addition of other questions.

Targeted Competency: Ethical Practice

Definition: The ability to integrate core values, integrity and accountability throughout all organizational and business practices.



Question: Think of a time when you were new to an organization. What steps did you take to establish yourself as a credible and trustworthy source for employees to voice concerns?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To e-mail staff about his/her credentials and success at his/her previous organization.



2

To create a personal profile with a picture and brief bio (both professional and personal) on the organization's intranet.



3



4

To meet with senior leaders and supervisors to understand their perspectives on issues that are important to employees.



5

Notes:

Question: Describe a situation in which ethics laws, standards, legislation, and trends have impacted your organizational behaviors and practice.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** recognize the impact of ethic laws, etc. on the organization.



2

To express his/her personal and professional values in support of ethical conduct in the workplace, acknowledging the impact of legislation specific to the industry.



3



4



5

To research all the facts and circumstances of a situation and its potential implications for the organization prior to reaching out to key stakeholders and bringing viable solutions to the senior leadership team.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to provide access to ethical standards and policies for all employees across organizational units?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To create a section on the organization's SharePoint or other Intranet site for management by authorization.

To ask managers to discuss ethical behavior with their teams.

To conduct regular ethics training for all staff, including role plays, case studies, and ethics pledge signing.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about the actions you have taken to establish your team's reputation within the organization. What steps did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** put forth a regular and on-going attempt to establish team's credibility and reputation.

To create a values statement and mission with his/her team, encompassing excellence in customer service, being present to employees, and earning a reputation as an employee advocate and trusted advisor to management.

To work hard to maintain positive working relationships with managers and staff by anticipating their needs, exceeding their expectations, ensuring they felt listened to, and treating matters in the strictest confidence.

Notes:

Question: Describe the system employees use to report unethical behavior at your organization. How did you play a role in developing and implementing this system?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To tell an employee to report unethical behavior to his/her co-worker.



2

To create a written policy posted on the intranet requiring employees to report unethical behavior to their direct supervisors or next-level supervisors.



3



4



5

To research effective systems for reporting unethical behavior and develop a system appropriate for his/her organization's industry and culture.

Notes:

Question: What processes have you overseen to protect the confidentiality of employee information?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** serve as a role model for the protection of private information.

To remind staff about confidentiality on a quarterly basis.

To develop and implement policies and procedures regarding the protection and preservation of employee information.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to establish yourself as a credible resource for employee- and management-related issues?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To expect employees and management to understand the nature of his/her role.



2

To schedule meetings to ensure that employees and management are comfortable coming forward with concerns.



3



4



5

To address difficult conflict situations in a straightforward manner, with courtesy, dignity, and respect.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you needed to evaluate potential ethical risks and liabilities to your organization. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To think that there is not much risk out there, so no action is needed.



2

To brainstorm potential ethical dilemmas with leadership or in a focus group.



3



4



5

To explain the implications of ethical risks to the top management team, and offer alternative recommended solutions, in priority order.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a situation in which you were faced with great political pressure while attempting to implement and enforce a policy or procedure. How did you respond to this pressure?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To cave to pressure and not express his/her opinion.



2

To include people in the organization who are against the policy/procedure in group meetings, focus groups, or individual meetings, to understand what they are against, and make adjustments as needed.



3



4



5

To propose alternative solutions that will support future organizational objectives.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time in which you served as a role model of ethical behavior. What actions did you take to conform to ethical standards and practices?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To give preferential treatment.

To operate with integrity in all interactions.

To convince organizational leaders of the value of ensuring ethics are maintained for the long-term organizational image.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to set standards for the confidentiality of employee and privacy of organizational data?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** have responsibility for setting standards for confidentiality.



2

To send an e-mail to all staff reminding them about the confidentiality policy, practices, and procedures.



3



4



5

To make standards known organization-wide through various delivery channels, including posting on the organization intranet and storing in print and electronic formats.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you needed to support an executive's difficult decision. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To tell employees that s/he didn't agree with the decision but had to say s/he did agree.



2

To find something in the decision that s/he agrees with and communicate it from that perspective.



3



4



5

To meet with other members of senior management to make sure everyone presents a unified message.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you had to make a difficult decision. What factors did you consider?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** include any substantive analyses when making a decision.



2

To rely on his/her past experiences with similar situations when making a decision.



3



4



5

To consider multiple viable alternatives, conduct cost benefit analyses for various scenarios, and examine a number of factors based on organizational needs.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you developed and implemented an ethics policy or procedure.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** have developed and implemented an ethics policy or procedure.

To create a policy and procedure to report employees who **fail** to adhere to the policy.

To align policy with the organization's mission and vision.

Notes:

Question: Think of the last time you dealt with a report of unethical behavior. How did you respond?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** have experience addressing reports of unethical behavior.

To determine if the behavior breaks the organization's ethics policy.

To advocate strongly for necessary action supporting standards of ethical behavior.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you championed organizational values. What approach did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** champion organizational values.

To discuss the organization's vision, mission, and values with employees.

To lead efforts to promote programs to enhance organizational values.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you briefed executives on reports of unethical behavior or conflicts of interest that threatened the organization. What was the outcome?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To tell executives about unethical behavior, but **fail** to influence action.



2

To speak to executives and ask them to address the situation.



3



4



5

To gain executive buy-in to develop and implement conflict of interest and ethical behavior policies, including training for employees and managers.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Leadership & Navigation

Definition: The ability to direct and contribute to initiatives and processes within the organization.



Question: Tell me about a time when you created a program, policy, or procedure. What was its purpose?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** design a program properly or consider the impact of his/her actions.



2

To present the plan to his/her boss and/or key operations manager.



3



4



5

To design a program to create positive outcomes for both employee and employer.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you developed an action plan. What specific steps did you take? How did you evaluate your plan?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** develop an effective action plan.

To develop and implement an effective plan and respond to concerns as they arise.

To ask for specific feedback on the plan, during and post-implementation, and incorporate these ideas into future initiatives.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you needed to drive alignment and gain buy-in at all levels in business units across your organization. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to effectively identify the issues for which alignment/buy-in was needed.

To share the reason for the change/need for alignment with staff members and repeat the message as needed.

To charge key business leaders with delivering and implementing change management in their respective areas.

Notes:

Question: Provide me with an example of a time when you recognized that a change was needed in your organization. What was the situation? What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To make a decision without consulting key stakeholders.



2

To develop a plan based on feedback from relevant experts.



3



4



5

To put together a proposal including a comprehensive implementation plan, incorporating research and key expert feedback.

Notes:

Question: Walk me through the steps you have taken to promote your department’s capabilities to your organization.

Rating Scale: Candidate’s response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To use flyers and brochures to promote department capabilities.



2

To share the department's business plan with key managers.



3



4



5

To identify the needs of his/her organization and develop new training to address every level of the organization through classroom, webinar, and online learner-led presentations.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you had to develop a project or initiative. What specific steps did you take throughout the process?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** solicit and/or consider feedback from others.



2

To plan for the project or initiative using feedback from stakeholder groups.



3



4



5

To discuss the proposed project with staff, key operational managers, and other stakeholders to secure input and buy-in.

Notes:

Question: Think of the last departmental/functional decision you made. How did you arrive at your decision?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** research best practices prior to making a decision.

To speak to external stakeholders prior to making a decision.

To consider organizational policies/practices, stakeholder feedback, and best practice research prior to making a decision.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you had to meet a planned objective for an initiative. How did you manage your available resources?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To launch an initiative without considering available resources.



2

To enter relevant due dates into his/her calendar and encourage team members to do the same.



3



4



5

To hold teammates accountable for meeting objectives on time and within budget.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Business Acumen

Definition: The ability to understand and apply information to contribute to the organization's strategic plan.



Question: Tell me about a time when you used business terms/vocabulary in communication with senior leaders.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To believe that professionals only need to know generic language.



2

To know enough business terms to communicate goals and objectives.



3



4



5

To use organizational metrics to explain situations to senior leadership and request support for additional resources.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when business and HR metrics helped you make a business decision.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To only look at HR data to make decisions.



2

To use internal business and HR metrics to make decisions.



3



4



5

To use internal and external business and HR metrics to make decisions and develop strategies for improvement.

Notes:

Question: What process do you use to determine goals, plans, and budget requirements? What steps do you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To focus solely on financial data without taking organizational needs and goals into account.



2

To adjust budget and plans as needed without sacrificing goals.



3



4



5

To work with staff to develop specific individual goals that align with the goals of business unit leaders and the department and organization as a whole.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you developed the strategy for a departmental marketing message. How did you convey the message to both internal and external audiences?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To launch an initiative without considering available resources.



2

To solicit ideas for marketing the message.



3



4



5

To develop a communication plan including audience, content, timing, and mode.

Notes:

Question: What principles (e.g., finance, marketing, economics, sales, technology, business systems) do you apply to internal processes and policies? How do you apply them?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** consider other departments when developing processes and policies.

To have other departments assess the policy after it has been created by the team.

To take into account during the creation process how policies will be implemented and communicated across departments.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you used your working knowledge of the labor market. How did you apply this knowledge to make a difference within the organization?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** be familiar with the labor market.

To inform business executives that certain positions are difficult to fill.

To positively change the way talent decisions are made.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you had to build a business case for a project or initiative.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To implement a project/initiative without building a business case.



2

To verbally explain the benefits of a project/initiative to stakeholders.



3



4



5

To develop and present a business case, including research and data, to senior management for approval.

Notes:

Question: Describe a policy/procedure/practice you put in place to support organizational success. What was your thought process during its development?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** have an effective plan for development/implementation.



2

To develop a policy/procedure based on employee sentiment and feedback.



3



4



5

To develop a policy/procedure based on data driven best practices which align with organizational objectives.

Notes:

Question: Describe a situation in which you developed the business acumen of a team. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** share work goals and objectives with the team.

To ask the team how they would like to learn about business acumen and develop an action plan to accomplish team goals.

To develop goals and objectives with each individual and as a team, explaining how each has an impact on the organization.

Notes:

Question: Walk me through the last business decision you made. How did you maintain a systems-thinking perspective during your decision making process?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** consult others prior to making the decision.



2

To consider the impact of the decision on other departments.



3



4



5

To consider talent, political implications, processes, and the possibility for unintended consequences.

Notes:

Question: Think of a critical activity you have evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis. How did you determine the value added, impact, and utility?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** use cost-benefit analyses.

To analyze financial impact and work productivity.

To use quantitative and qualitative data to determine the value added, impact, and utility.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you needed to recommend business practice/plan improvements. How did you develop your recommendations?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



To **not** align recommendations with financial impact or strategic goals.



To research the financial impact and solicit feedback from the team.



To conduct research to determine timeline, budget, and impact on stakeholders.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a business technology plan you have developed to solve business problems and needs. What actions did you take to develop this plan?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** consider time, scope, quality, or outcomes when developing a plan.



2

To solicit feedback from stakeholders at every level regarding the current system.



3



4



5

To develop a plan with specific information on the problem/need, optional solutions, input needed from stakeholders, budget, timeline, and implementation.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you developed departmental business strategies. How did your strategies drive key business results?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** consider the impact of external factors.

To develop internal analyses, taking into account future business needs.

To work with stakeholders to ensure that department strategies align with business strategies.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when your ability to use business terms/vocabulary allowed you to effectively communicate with senior leaders.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** be comfortable using business terms and vocabulary.



2

To demonstrate his/her understanding of the business by validating his/her position using business terms and vocabulary.



3



4



5

To gain credibility and buy-in for organizational issues by speaking to executives using general and industry specific business terms and vocabulary.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to review the return on investment (ROI) of your business initiatives?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** be familiar with ROI.

To be able to calculate ROI.

To gather input from senior leaders regarding the focus on ROI and ultimate expectations.

Notes:

Question: Describe a time when your knowledge of key industry and organizational metrics helped you in your job.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** view industry/organizational metrics as advantageous.

To compare industry data to organizational data to make determinations.

To compare organizational metrics to external benchmarks and analyze multiple sources of data to determine what issues might be present.

Notes:

Question: Describe a time when you used your knowledge of business lines and products/services. How did you contribute to addressing the issue or project at hand?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To focus on HR, **not** business lines.

To refer a business unit leader to relevant articles to help him/her complete a project.

To be a strong contributor to projects, due to his/her firsthand knowledge of business lines and products/services.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to align departmental strategy, goals, and objectives with overall business strategy and objectives?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** review the organizational strategic plan with his/her team.

To hand out copies of the organizational five year strategic plan to his/her team.

To discuss business strategy and objectives with senior management to determine priorities and share with the team.

Notes:

Question: Walk me through an action plan you have created for managing talent within the confines of the labor market. What steps did you take to create this plan?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** conduct analyses.

To look to bring in individuals at an entry level/trainee position and develop them for a hard to fill position.

To meet with management to devise incentive plans for key talent to retain employees in a tight labor market.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when your knowledge of the organization and its operations helped you successfully implement a policy or procedure.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To implement policies regardless of knowledge or **lack** thereof.



2

To implement a policy/procedure based on the organization's "busy season," which is consistent with industry standards.



3



4



5

To use information from government regulations, existing organizational procedures, and organizational metrics to identify and resolve gaps before implementing.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you developed business strategy with top organizational leaders of the organization. What was your role?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** develop business strategy with top organizational leaders.



2

To tell top organizational leaders that implementing a certain process/policy will make employees happier.



3



4



5

To serve as a resource to the strategic planning committee, consisting of top organizational leaders, in developing a plan to impact the organization.

Notes:

Question: Describe a time during which you had to evaluate a number of proposed business cases for organizational projects and initiatives. How did you make your selection(s)?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To do what is easiest.



2

To consider urgency and importance and prioritize accordingly.



3



4



5

To research the project/initiative at length and choose a business case that aligns with the organization's overall mission and business strategies.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Consultation

Definition: The ability to provide guidance to organizational stakeholders.



Question: Tell me about a time when you had to champion your business solutions. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To add a program to his/her budget without an explanation.



2

To write a memo or e-mail to relevant internal stakeholders.



3



4



5

To present a business case to senior leadership detailing the cost/benefit and return on investment (ROI) of the proposed solution and highlighting its impact on the organization.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you had to oversee an employee investigation. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to appropriately investigate.

To reassign workflow based on the complaint.

To gain executive team buy-in for solutions to mitigate future issues.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when a manager or business unit team came to you with a problem. What guidance did you provide?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** take into account unique aspects of the situation.

To use past experience to advise the manager on a course of action.

To ask the manager for his/her thoughts on how to handle the problem prior to offering suggestions.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you had to support a business unit leader on a major project. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To wait to be told what to do.



2

To obtain relevant information/data from within the company.



3



4



5

To support the business unit leader by driving buy-in among key stakeholders.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when frontline managers and business unit leaders needed to be coached on HR- and business-related issues. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to provide coaching.

To develop a step-by-step coaching plan to prepare managers/ business unit leaders to deal with the identified issues.

To explain the business philosophy behind HR processes and the risk involved with not handling issues properly.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you designed a long-term business solution in partnership with internal customers. What was the situation? What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To seek little input from customers.



2

To develop a feedback survey to be given to internal customers.



3



4



5

To work with top management to elicit understanding, buy-in, and support to develop a culture that will support the business solution.

Notes:

Question: Describe a time when you encountered a problem requiring a creative solution. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to provide creative recommendations.

To ask a colleague for ideas.

To consider external benchmarking and hold a brainstorming session with HR and department leaders to develop possible solutions.

Notes:

Question: Think of a time when you were faced with a challenge at your organization. What steps did you take to develop a solution?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** identify the root cause of the problem.

To privately interview all individuals involved and track data for the appropriate length of time.

To present solutions to department managers for input, critique, and buy-in prior to solution implementation.

Notes:

Question: Walk me through the specific steps you have taken to develop business solutions.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** consider quality, scope, and time.



2

To collect, analyze, and synthesize data.



3



4



5

To prepare a business case with metrics and new income implications to elicit senior management support.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Critical Evaluation

Definition: The ability to interpret information to make business decisions and recommendations.



Question: Walk me through the process you use to identify critical messages from research, pilot study findings, and/or best practices.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To ignore critical messages or findings from research.



2

To jot down notes & ideas and share those with colleagues to further refine his/her personal thoughts and ideas.



3



4



5

To make sure that s/he understands the most effective information for industry research by conducting independent research, networking, and talking to key executives within the organization.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you needed to manage an evaluation of an organizational program or intervention. What actions did you take? What was the outcome of the program/intervention?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To implement changes without tracking the effects of the change.



2

To evaluate program metrics and implement changes as needed to ensure program success.



3



4



5

To identify measurable success factors as part of the program implementation, and use these factors to assess the success of the project.

Notes:

Question: Think about a time when you had to evaluate complex data. What actions did you take during this process? What resources did you consult?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



To review data, but **fail** to take action.



To create a spreadsheet to organize and sort data.



To review and evaluate data, discuss issues with credible experts, and make recommendations or adjustments where necessary.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you provided training and mentoring to upper and lower level employees on critical evaluation.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To ask employees to put together a training outline for the specific areas they feel knowledgeable about.

To ask employees who are well versed in certain aspects of the training to be available to mentor or answer questions.

To create a development program (mentor, succession, etc.) with measurable success factors based on a needs assessment.

Notes:

Question: Describe the actions you use to validate processes. What actions do you take to evaluate the outcomes?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** use a formal process for validation.



2

To review surveys and other key measures at the end of the process to see if the outcome was successful.



3



4



5

To use process mapping and stakeholder feedback to determine process improvements.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when data, evidence-based research, benchmarks and/or business metrics allowed you to make a critical decision at work.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To survey all employees to gain their input.

To use information from benchmark data to make a decision.

To put together a report showing the data, and present it to senior managers to seek input from various departments prior to making a critical decision.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you dissected an organizational issue in order to create changes or opportunities. What was the outcome?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To raise the issue to the senior team, prior to thoroughly investigating its relevance or importance.

To fully review the problem, analyze relevant data (such as internal and external benchmarking data), and consult with managers prior to proposing any changes.

To present the changes to the organization for acceptance and validation after gaining the support of leadership.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a project you have worked on in which you interpreted data to make recommendations. What was the outcome?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



To implement a new project based on data that is ineffective or unreasonable.



To implement a new project based on reliable data.



To present recommendations and a plan for implementation to senior leadership for input and review.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you needed to develop best practices. What actions did you take? What resources did you consult?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



To make recommendations based on commonly used practices.



To make recommendations based on the current situation.



To develop practices based on research, credible resources/ experts, and input from peers, making adjustments to fit the organizational culture.

Notes:

Question: Describe a situation in which you had to select the best course of action. What steps did you take during this process? What resources did you consult?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To agree with a solution that did **not** result in change.

To seek input from relevant experts.

To gather data and take into account priorities of importance to the organization prior to making a suggestion.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Communication

Definition: The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders.



Question: Walk me through the process you use to communicate messages to stakeholders.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To communicate messages by speaking loudly.



2

To provide stakeholders with a brief summary via phone of the written communication to follow.



3



4



5

To schedule recurring meetings with stakeholders, establish an agenda, send out pre-reading materials, and maintain an action plan with assigned follow ups.

Notes:

Question: Describe your role in overseeing your organization's culture communication strategy. What actions have you taken?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To wait until there is an issue regarding understanding of the organization's culture and respond to management with recommended actions.



2

To develop and manage a plan to convey the organization's culture.



3



4



5

To provide a design for strategy and communication of the organization's culture, including training for management and employees.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you needed to solicit feedback on or buy-in for initiatives from organizational stakeholders. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To ask for input prior to implementation, but not early enough to realistically act on or seriously consider the input.



2

To spend time meeting one-on-one with stakeholders to discuss initiatives and their benefit to the organization.



3



4



5

To incorporate organizational stakeholder needs into initiatives and follow up with stakeholders on the actions taken as a result of their feedback.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you needed to communicate with stakeholders regarding an important initiative. What communication modes and methods did you use?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To communicate with stakeholders on a need to know basis.



2

To talk to and e-mail stakeholders as identified in a stakeholder analysis.



3



4



5

To formally present the new initiative, including a cost-benefit analysis that demonstrates its value.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to create channels for communication across and within levels of your organization?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To provide suggestion boxes.



2

To help the organization schedule communications sessions.



3



4



5

To create both formal and informal opportunities to communicate up, down, and throughout the organization.

Notes:

Question: Describe a time when you communicated a plan for alignment between departmental initiatives and organizational strategies.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To present departmental initiatives and organizational strategies as two separate, unrelated documents.



2

To ask business units for feedback on the department's plan and on how the department can support them in meeting organizational strategies.



3



4



5

To communicate senior leadership's vision to the department staff and refine the plan as needed to align departmental strategies with organizational strategies.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about the steps you have taken to foster your organization's vision for practice and policy. What approach did you use?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** develop a formal approach to practice.



2

To consistently reinforce the organization's vision for practice and policy by communicating its basic elements.



3



4



5

To ensure that staff members understand the organization's vision and work together to develop a vision for the department that complements the organization's vision.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you had to communicate your strategy and initiatives to business unit leaders and staff. What methods did you use?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** provide information on how the strategy and initiatives will impact others.

To provide written documentation of the strategy and initiatives and impacts on others.

To develop and execute a detailed communication plan, taking into consideration stakeholders, timing, mode, messaging content, and how the plan fits into the overall communication plan for the departmental function.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Global & Cultural Effectiveness

Definition: The ability to value and consider the perspectives and backgrounds of all parties.



Question: Describe your role in fostering a culture of inclusiveness within your organization.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To provide a copy of the diversity policy to employees.

To find resources, both internal and external, to help managers understand how to be inclusive and the benefits of being inclusive.

To be a champion for sustaining inclusiveness within the organization.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you needed to develop a policy that would apply to members of various backgrounds. What factors did you consider? What steps did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To implement a policy without input from staff.



2

To ask a small representative sample of the workforce to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan and how the policy would be received and understood.



3



4



5

To consider the organizational cost/benefit of the policy and why it is necessary.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you needed to execute a program, practice, or policy related to diversity and inclusion. What factors did you consider? What steps did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To schedule a diversity training presentation by a consultant.



2

To develop a method to gather diversity data internally.



3



4



5

To research the benefits and value of diversity, present this data to key organizational leaders, and discuss the benefit of diversity training for business objectives.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a process or system you have developed in order to implement a culture of inclusion. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to provide an action plan that includes follow up and a measure of success.

To immediately respond to and address issues or negative comments about employee differences.

To gain full support from the CEO and executive team.

Notes:

Question: Give me an example of a time when you provided mentoring or training on cultural trends and practices to all levels of your organization. What actions did you take to provide mentoring/training at each level?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To conduct internal research to determine what cultures were most prevalent in the existing workforce.

To research cultural best practices from similar employers and share this information via e-mail with all levels of the organization.

To present a proposal to senior management outlining the cost/benefits of launching a training program on cultural trends and practice, along with key measures to determine program success.

Notes:

Question: Describe the methods you've used to learn about global and economic trends.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** review essential reports (technical, financial, etc.).



2

To attend industry events, conferences, and meetings.



3



4



5

To seek out various platforms to build knowledge and expertise (e.g., essential reports, boards, stakeholder groups).

Notes:

Question: Tell me the actions you've taken to implement global initiatives in strategic business units.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **lack** alignment with the strategic plan.

To identify alignment between the business initiatives and the organization's talent management objectives.

To create a global project plan, including putting together a multi-disciplinary team, developing a communication strategy, and defining a way to measure results.

Notes:

Targeted Competency: Relationship Management

Definition: The ability to manage interactions to provide service and to support the organization.



Question: Think of a time when you were new to an organization. What actions did you take to get to know mid and entry level staff members?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To wait for the staff to come visit.



2

To walk around the office to have informal drop-in conversations with the staff.



3



4



5

To meet individually to express appreciation for employees' contributions and find out about their work, hobbies, and families.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a project you have worked on in which you had to negotiate with internal and external stakeholders, such as vendors, staff, and leaders.

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To **not** consult with local internal stakeholders prior to interviewing vendors.



2

To work with staff, small employee focus groups, and vendors on different plan options to meet pre-determined criteria or goals.



3



4



5

To first consult with internal stakeholders and develop clearly articulated organizational needs and objectives, along with necessary vendor deliverables.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you encountered a dispute regarding internal policy and practice. How did you address the situation?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To ignore the dispute.



2

To explain the purpose of the policy/practice and provide data on its results.



3



4



5

To offer to partner with internal business partners to brainstorm possible solutions and develop a new practice that is legally compliant.

Notes:

Question: What steps have you taken to develop your network of contacts (e.g., senior leaders, operational teams, staff, peers, suppliers/vendors, and community leaders across organizations)?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To have limited experience building a network of contacts.



2

To build a network based on situational awareness and environment.



3



4



5

To develop a plan to reach out to internal and external contacts on a proactive and regular basis.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you developed relationship management objectives and resources. What factors did you consider?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** take into account the organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

To develop objectives based on consideration of feedback from his/her immediate team.

To review the organization's strategies, interview organizational leaders, and hold focus groups to understand strengths and developmental opportunities of relationships throughout the organization.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about the programs and policies you have designed to cultivate a strong customer service culture in your department or organization. How did you convey the customer service culture to others?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** design programs or policies to cultivate a strong customer service culture.

To announce reminders about existing programs and policies to employee groups at organization meetings.

To set clear standards with specific behavioral examples regarding what staff are expected to deliver to co-workers and external customers.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you needed to resolve a conflict where a policy or practice did not exist. How did you develop a policy or practice to address the situation?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** develop policies or practices for conflict resolution.

To discuss the conflict with the department manager.

To conduct internal and external research on similar situations, and use conflict resolution effectively.

Notes:

Question: Think about a time when you had to facilitate a difficult interaction among organizational stakeholders. What steps did you take? What was the outcome?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** facilitate difficult interactions.

To explain the need for his/her presence to keep the interaction respectful and honest.

To help stakeholders enter into a principled negotiation and dialogue to reach a solution for the organization's benefit.

Notes:

Question: Describe a specific situation in which your network of new and existing partnerships was of value to your organization. How did you use your network to benefit your organization?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **not** have partnerships that would help the organization.

To join an association of colleges and employers that led to improved campus relationships and recruiting success.

To gather detailed information from contacts and conduct a cost comparison among providers being considered for a contract.

Notes:

Question: Tell me about a time when you encountered a challenging issue in a union environment. What steps did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To decline to meet with union reps.



2

To begin a meeting by advising an employee of his/her Weingarten rights.



3



4



5

To review collective bargaining agreements before meeting with union reps.

Notes:

Question: Describe a situation in which you acted as a neutral party to mediate a difficult employee interaction. What actions did you take? What was the outcome?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1

To believe that nothing could be done to resolve the problem.



2

To listen to the issues and ask about past interactions and expectations.



3



4



5

To take an active, but neutral role in focusing stakeholders on the problem statement and encouraging compromise and consensus.

Notes:

Question: Consider a time when you encountered an escalated conflict among stakeholders. What actions did you take?

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

To **fail** to take appropriate action in response to a conflict.

To use personality profiles to help stakeholders understand their styles and how to improve their working relationships.

To mediate a shared resolution both parties support for the good of the organization.

Notes:

Section 3: What to do After Conducting a Behavioral Interview

Because interviewers are all coming to the interview process with different perspectives, biases, and beliefs about the role and the job candidates, there is always a chance that this bias will show up in the candidate ratings for the open position. When there are multiple interviewers involved, to maintain fairness when evaluating a candidate, it is critical that all interviewers have the same candidate expectations, and that the interviewers all rate each candidate in a similar way. If the raters all have agreement in their scoring, this can make discussions about job candidates more standardized. If not, the interviewers will need to work to gain inter-rater agreement.

Interviewer Debrief Meetings

To gain inter-rater agreement, the interviewers should conduct a debrief meeting to discuss their individual ratings for a candidate's responses to each competency assessed. As these ratings should be based on the rating guide provided, the hope would be that all interviewers would reach a consensus about the score assigned. If consensus is not reached by all interviewers, the rating selected for each competency should either represent the majority rating vote or the average of all rating votes. This activity should be repeated for every candidate to help the voting become more standardized across the candidates. The goal is to select the top candidate for employment, but in doing so ensuring that a fair selection process has been used.

The interview debrief should involve those who interviewed the candidate as well as the hiring manager for the position. A debriefing meeting can take place either immediately after each candidate interview or after all candidate interviews have been completed. The hiring manager can act as a facilitator to keep people on task and fact-based.

During the debriefing meeting, attendees should discuss the following:

- *First Impression:* This is a tallying of the interviewers' initial gut reactions to the candidate's appropriateness to this role. It can be a yay or nay vote or as simple as a thumbs up or down. This vote's outcome should be recorded, but should not be considered the final vote.
- *Review of Questions/Responses:* This is an opportunity for each interviewer to review the questions he/she asked, the responses that were provided, and what was expected in a response.

- *Final Voting:* Based on the information shared by the interviewers, a second vote is taken. If the decision is not unanimous, additional discussion may take place, and another vote may be captured. The final vote is taken into consideration by the hiring manager when deciding the top candidate.

Making and Documenting the Final Hiring Decision

The hiring manager will use the notes and feedback from the debrief meeting to help inform his/her hiring decision. An HR professional does not need to be in attendance at such a session, but should be informed of all decisions by the hiring manager.

Once all candidates have been evaluated by those who conducted the interviews, it is the responsibility of the hiring manager to make a final hiring decision. To help with this decision, the hiring manager should:

- Review each candidate's ratings.
- Ensure that the notes provide support to the ratings given to the candidates.
- Ensure that the ratings relate to specific behavioral examples.
- Ensure that the candidate is a match both in terms of his/her job and organizational fit.

On this is completed, the hiring manager should provide the following to HR, who is responsible for maintaining all documentation regarding the decision and the process used:

- Job analysis data and outcomes.
- Job description.
- Behavioral interview questions.
- Rating scale.
- Rating guide.
- Interview notes.
- Candidate evaluations for this interview.

Appendix A: Question & Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale Template

Question:

Rating Scale: Candidate's response indicates that in a similar situation, he or she could be expected...



1



2



3



4



5

Notes:

Appendix B: Additional Competency-based Behavioral Interview Questions

Ethical Practice

- Describe a time when you came across questionable business practices. How did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. How did you deal with this situation, and what was the outcome?
- Have you worked in a situation in which an employee, vendor or supplier had a conflict of interest? How did you handle this?
- Describe a time when you had an opportunity to personally profit from your employer's product.
- Tell me about an ethical situation you have encountered and the part you took in resolving it.
- Describe the most difficult employee relations situation you have had to handle. What did you do to try to resolve it, and why?

Leadership and Navigation

- What are some of the most important steps you've used in making business-related decisions?
- Give a specific example of a decision you made that was not effective. Why do you think it was not effective, and what did you do when this realization was made?
- Describe a time when you had to make a very important and difficult decision that affected everyone in your department.
- Recount a time when you were not the authority but had to make a decision about the team's next step(s).
- Can you tell me about a time during your previous employment when, unsolicited, you suggested a better way to perform a process?
- Describe a time when you performed a task outside your perceived responsibilities. What was the task? Why did you perceive it to be outside your responsibilities? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you kept from getting bored when dealing with routine tasks.

- Give me an example of a time you were able to take the lead in changing a policy for your department and for the organization.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to help other employees learn a new skill set. What did you do?
- Have you ever been in a position in which you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it? Tell me about problems you had and how you handled them.
- Have you ever managed a situation in which the people or units reporting to you were in different locations? Tell me how this worked.
- Tell me about your experience working with a board of directors. What approach and philosophy did you follow in working with boards?
- Tell me about a time when you organized, managed and motivated others on a complex task from beginning to end.
- Give me an example of how you have motivated your employees.
- Tell me about a situation you wish that you had handled differently based on the outcome. What would you change (or will you change) when faced with a similar situation?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult boss, co-worker or customer. How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you inherited a process that wasn't working and you had limited time to fix it.
- Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? What was the situation, and how did you handle it?
- Have you ever had to persuade a peer or superior to accept an idea that you knew he or she would not like? Tell me about the resistance you met and how you overcame it.
- Have you ever had to persuade a group to accept a proposal or idea? How did you go about doing it? What was the result, and how did you feel about it?
- Have you ever had to persuade an executive (or other superior) to accept a proposal or idea? How did you go about doing it? What was the result, and how did you feel about it?
- Describe an occasion when you recommended a change to procedure. What did you learn from that experience? How did you apply that learning in other situations?
- What was the most challenging employee performance issue you've had to deal with, and how did you handle it?
- Explain, step by step, how you have handled an employee who had performance problems.
- Describe a time when you needed to discipline an employee who reported directly to you.
- What coaching or mentoring experience have you had? With groups or one-on-one? How did you determine the appropriate way to coach or mentor, and what were the results?

Business Acumen

- Tell me about a time you used your knowledge of the organization to get an idea approved.
- Tell me about a time you used financial data to support a successful project.
- Tell me about a time when you used industry data to support a successful project.
- Tell me about a time when you used economic environment data to support a successful project.

- What have you done in your previous positions at other companies that made a significant difference to the business and for which you believe you will be remembered?
- Recall an occasion when you had to explain your department's losses.
- Have you ever been over budget? Why? How did you handle this?
- Recount a time when you had to prioritize bill or invoice payment.
- If you could pick a stock to add to this company's portfolio, which one would it be? Why?
- Describe a tough financial analysis problem you were able to solve and how you solved it.
- Walk me through a financial statement (pick one).

Consultation

- Tell me about a long-term project that you were responsible for that required you to communicate with numerous people and departments.
- Think of a specific project that you've completed. Were you successful in achieving the desired results?
- What was the most interesting or challenging technical proposal you've ever written?
- Tell me about the most challenging project you managed.
- Have you had a nonproductive team member on your project team? What happened, and how did you handle this situation?
- What did you bring to the last team on which you were a member? Describe how your strengths improved the team.
- What was the last big project you worked on? How did you start this project? What obstacles did you overcome? Were the deadlines met? Why or why not? What would you have done differently?
- Tell me about a project you worked on and how it helped the organization meet its business goals.
- What have you done to help your human resource department become a strategic partner?

Critical Evaluation

- Describe for me a decision you made that would normally have been made by your supervisor. What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you needed to use the principles of logic to solve a problem.
- Have you ever solved a problem that others around you could not solve? Tell me about it.
- What was one of the toughest problems you ever solved? What process did you go through to solve it?
- Tell me about a time when you had a work problem and didn't know what to do.
- Tell me about a time when you solved one problem but created others.
- Tell me about a time when a work problem was more than it at first appeared to be.
- How have you approached solving a problem that initially seemed insurmountable?
- What have you done when faced with an obstacle to an important project? Give me an example.
- How do you analyze different options to determine which is the best alternative?
- Describe for me how your prior positions required you to be proficient in the analysis of technical reports.

- Give an example of when you used analytical techniques to design solutions to solve problems.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to engage in future planning.
- Tell me about a time when you participated in developing your departmental or organizational business strategy. What was your role? How did you approach it?
- Tell me about a time when you identified a need for a new approach or product to meet a market need.
- Tell of how your job (at a current or former employer) was directly related to a strategic goal.
- The last time that you experienced a technical problem during your workday, to whom did you go for help? Why did you choose this person?
- Tell me about a time when you used your technical knowledge to solve a problem that appeared to be unsolvable.
- Describe a technical report that you had to complete. What did the report entail? What was the purpose? Who was the audience?
- Describe a time when you had to share data electronically.

Communication

- Give some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current (or most recent) company.
- Give an example of how you carefully considered your audience prior to communicating with them. What factors influenced your communication?
- Describe a time you used your communications skills to negotiate with an angry person.
- Have you ever given a presentation to a group? How did you prepare for it? What would you do differently?
- Describe a time when you were able to overcome a communications barrier(s).
- Tell me about a time when effective listening skills helped you in a problematic situation.
- Tell me about a time when you thought someone wasn't listening to you. What did you do?
- Recount an occasion when you were greeted with a greeting that was not normal for you. How'd you respond?

Global and Cultural Effectiveness

- On your last expatriate assignment, what did you do to ensure that your adjustment into the new environment went smoothly?
- Tell me about a time when working in a different country you had to adapt to the culture. What adaptations did you have to make? How did you go about it?
- Describe a situation in which you have had to work in a multicultural environment and the challenges you had. How did you approach the situation, and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you worked in a remote location or situation that was totally foreign.
- Talk about a time when you worked abroad.
- What has been the most challenging aspect of being in a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?
- Tell me about a time you had to alter your work style to meet a diversity need or challenge.
- How have you handled a situation when a colleague was not accepting of diversity of others?

- What strategies have you used to address diversity challenges? What were the positives and negatives?
- Describe a time when you included someone in your team or on a project because you felt he or she would bring a different perspective.

Relationship Management

- Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker. How did you handle the situation?
- Describe a difficult time you have had dealing with an employee or customer. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you were instrumental in creating or improving a good relationship with another department within your company.
- Recall an occasion when you had to work with people from different divisions to accomplish a single goal.
- Recount an occasion when you were able to connect individuals from different backgrounds or cultures in a unified organizational effort.
- Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to give great service to a customer.
- Tell me about a time when you asked for feedback on your customer service skills from your manager or co-worker and then used that response to improve your work.
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult guest- or client-relations problem. What was the outcome? What did you learn?
- 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?
- Tell me about a time when you had to say "no" to a customer because his or her request was against company policy.
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble working with a difficult or demanding customer. How did you handle this?
- Tell me about a situation in which you "lost it" or did not do your best with a customer. What did you do about this?
- Describe a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations.
- Describe a time when you lost a customer. What would you do differently?
- Tell me about a time when a team project failed.
- Tell me about a time when you needed to work as part of a team to satisfy a client or resolve an issue.
- Tell me about a time you worked on a cross-functional team. Were there different challenges compared to a departmental-task team?
- When groups work together, conflict often erupts. Tell me about a time that conflict occurred in one of your workgroups and what you did about it.
- Tell me about a time you pitched in to help a team member finish a project even though it "wasn't your job." What was the result?
- Tell me about a situation in which political power plays affected team dynamics. How did you or the team overcome this situation, and how could the situation have been avoided?

- Tell me about a time when you were a part of a great team. What was your part in making the team effective?
- Tell me the role you play within workgroups and why.
- Tell me about the most effective contribution you have made as part of a task group or special project team.
- Have you ever worked on a virtual team? If so, tell me about this experience. What were the team dynamics? Was the team successful? If not, what do you perceive to be the advantages and disadvantages of this type of team? What would you do differently? How would you suggest creating team cohesiveness in a virtual setting?

Other Organizational Competencies

Time Management

- Have you worked under time constraints before? Give us an example.
- Was there a time when you struggled to meet a deadline? Tell us about it.
- Describe a time you identified a barrier to your (or to others') productivity and what you did about it.
- When you have a lot of work to do or multiple priorities, how do you get it all done? Give me an example.
- Give an example of how you stay organized when juggling multiple tasks.

Thoroughness

- What means have you used to focus on detail and to keep from making mistakes?
- When there's a decision for a new critical process, what means do you use to communicate step-by-step processes to ensure other people understand and will complete the process correctly?
- Tell me the steps you take to monitor the quality of your work in your current job.
- How do you decide when something is "good enough" or when it needs to be as close as possible to perfection? When have you had to make this determination? Explain.
- Describe a time when you failed to satisfy a client or customer due to some minor neglect. What did you do to correct it?

Flexibility

- Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline and you were interrupted and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?
- Give an example of a time when you had to quickly change project priorities. How did you do it?
- Recount a time when you accommodated someone beyond your comfort level, though you didn't have to.
- How have you reacted when you found yourself stalled in an inefficient process?
- Tell me about a time when significant changes took place in your job. What did you do to adjust to the change(s)?

Learning Orientation

- Describe a time when you took a new job that required a much different set of skills from what you had. How did you go about acquiring the needed skills?
- Have you had an occasion when a prior strength actually turned out to be a weakness in another setting? How did you cope?
- Throughout your career have you learned more about your profession through course work or through on-the-job experience? Explain.
- What area of your last job was most challenging for you? Why was this specific part of the position difficult? Is this still challenging? Why or why not?
- Tell me about a time when you volunteered for an assignment to expand your knowledge and skills.
- Tell of a time when you had to educate yourself about a topic to make a presentation.

Stress Management

- Tell me about a work "nightmare" you were involved in. How did you approach the situation, and what was the outcome?
- Have you ever been caught unaware by a problem or obstacle that you had not foreseen? What happened?