Interviewing to STM Assessments

Behaviors are observable and fairly easy to figure out by spending some time with your candidate, but they actually tell you little about whether or not they have what it takes to be successful in the job or on your team. We need to find out about what motivates them, what they value, their attitudes, competencies, energy, and drive. Questions designed to uncover information about these key factors go below the surface and identify if you have someone with rock star potential.

Interviewing to Motivators

Knowledge & Discovery (intellectual curiosity)

- Which is more important, action or knowledge?
- Would you consider yourself to be an expert in something? What is it? How did you go about gaining the knowledge?
- Tell me about what you especially enjoy about learning things. What topics or subjects do you enjoy?
- How comfortable are you in taking the time, energy, and effort required to master a subject or topic you currently know very little about? How about one in which you have very little interest?

Leadership (command and control)

- What role does being in control of a situation play in your job satisfaction? How important is it for you to control your own destiny?
- How important is independence to you? Power? Influencing others? What would be your level of satisfaction with a job if you had none of these?
- How good are you in taking directions from others? How much do you like doing so?
- How do you go about influencing others to act? Give me a concrete, real-world example of a time when you were able to move a group of people to action and exactly how you did it.

ROI (bottom line and practical results)

- How important is earning a lot of money to you? What do you consider to be a "lot of money"?

- Where would you like to be, financially, in 5 years? 10 years? Why?

- What role does earning a significant income play in your job choices? In staying in a job?

- Would you consider yourself to be a bottom line, practical thinker or are you more theoretical or philosophical? Why do you say that?

Aesthetics (creativity and order)

- How would you rank the importance of creativity and self-expression in your work?

- How do you personally express your unique creative side?

- Within your work environment, what single event, problem, and/or unexpected situation has the potential to throw you off balance more than anything else?

- Describe how you would feel if you were to discover that an organization you worked for was misusing the earth's natural resources. How would you show your feelings?

- Describe your strategy for achieving and maintain a comfortable level of balance and harmony in your life.

- What would you say you are most sensitive to in your work environment and/or in general?

Guiding Principles (rules, values, and beliefs)

- Is there an absolute right and absolute wrong?

- How do you decide what is right and what is wrong?

- Tell me about "rules". Give me an example of a rule that you follow relative to managing or leading others. Where did you learn that rule? How flexible is it?

- Have there been situations in your work experience when you were absolutely convinced that your rules or standards were superior to your employer's? If so, why were they better? Were you able to convince your employees that yours were better?

- Do you sometimes feel that things would be easier and better if there were fewer rules and procedures? Please elaborate.

Helping Others (service and support)

- Is there ever such a thing as "too much" service? Explain your answer to me, please.

- Is there ever a point when employees should stand up and tell their manager that they are being mistreated? Give me an example of a circumstance where that might be the case.

- Tell me how you would service an account that kept having problems with your product and kept coming back yet showed no promise of future business.

- What would you do if an employee was missing an undue amount of time due to a family crisis? How would you handle it? At what point would you take corrective action? What would that action be?

Peace & Harmony (balance and tranquility)

- Do you often find yourself taking on the role as the peacekeeper in a group or on a team?
- How do you feel about the importance of having a balanced work/life?
- Do you prefer to avoid conflict situations or face them head on?
- As a reward for good performance, would you prefer to be given paid time off or no time off but you get a bonus check?

Interviewing to Competencies

Customer Focus

- Give me an example of a time when you knew the customer was wrong, but you had to accommodate their wishes. How did you handle it? What did you say? What did you do? How did you feel about it?
- Tell me about a situation where you were able to anticipate a customer's needs before the customer even brought up what they wanted.
- Describe a situation where you went over and above what was expected to exceed a customer's expectations. How did you feel about that? How comfortable would you feel about doing that regularly?
- In your view, what makes some customers more valuable than others? Should all customers be treated the same?
- Give me an example of when you had to go the extra mile to meet a commitment that someone else had made to a customer. What, specifically, did you do? How did you feel about having to meet a commitment made by someone else?

Results Orientation

- Give me an example of one thing in your life that you have worked on for what you consider to be a very long time with no distraction or break. What did you dislike most about that? How successful were you in completing it? How long a time did you work on it?
- Give me an example of a time when someone didn't follow through on a commitment to you. What did you do about it? How do you make sure that others around you follow through on their commitments? How do you ensure that you do?
- Give me an example of a project that you have completed and the outcome. Please give me the most essential components of that project that played the biggest role in its completion.
- Tell me about a time when you missed a deadline. What were the consequences? What did you differently the next time you faced a deadline?
- Have results ever been less than stellar for a project you've worked on? What caused the results to be less than great? How did it happen and what were the consequences?

Self-Management

- Give me a specific example of a project that you were responsible for organizing from beginning to end. How did you go about it? How did you deal with changes or challenges that arose? How did you ensure that the project stayed on track? What was the final outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

- Have you ever faced a day in which you just couldn't get everything done that you had planned? How did you handle it? (If the position sometimes requires extra hours, simply ask the candidate if they are able to fulfill that requirement.)
- We have all had times when it was necessary to balance work and personal or family time. Give me an example of a time when you had too many things to do in both areas of your life and describe how you went about prioritizing your time.
- How much time do you spend getting organized on a daily basis? When do you do it? What impact do you think this habit has on your results?
- What is the difference between activity and results? How do you personally define this difference?

Personal Accountability

- Tell me about a time when it was necessary to admit to others that you had made a mistake. How did you handle it?
- Give an example of a situation where others had made an error or mistake and you had to take the blame for their actions. How did you feel about doing that?
- What is the worst business decision you've ever made? What made it the worst? Would knowing what you do now have helped you to avoid making that decision?
- Give me an example of a lesson you have learned from making a mistake. What did you do differently going forward as a result of this lesson?
- Give me an example of someone you know whose personal actions led to disastrous results. How much accountability did that person take for what happened? What advice would you give to that person.

Self-Starting

- What time of the day are you at your best? How do you organize your activities around your most productive times?
- Tell me about the most aggressive, self-starting person you ever knew. What did you admire most about that person? Least?
- Give me an example of a time when you made something happen without much outside prodding?
- How would you approach a new task that you've been assigned without being given much direction?
- Describe a time when you were proactive. Describe a time when you were reactive. How did the results differ?

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